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# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

## 2020: Perfect Vision of What is Important

By Tanni L. Anthony

Way back in January (remember then?), I wrote a title article about this year bringing a chance for perfect vision. Yep, that is what I wrote. No crystal ball last January, no psychic powers to envision March through the current days of endless zooming; virtual and remote instruction; cancelled trips; the rush on toilet paper; a long delay of in-dining at restaurants; health precautions, challenges, and loss of life ... it is a long list of changes, inconveniences, deferments, painful losses, and feeling sometimes sad and often overwhelmed. What is true, in a unique way, is that 2020 has been a time of confirming our perfect vision. Finding and creating opportunities. Learning new lessons. Confirming our priorities. These very opportunities, lessons, and priorities can guide our perfect vision when we return to more in-person opportunities in the days / months ahead. We know, without a doubt, what is important:

- ◆ Being together is precious. Being with people in real-time and real-life is precious. Touch is precious. Seeing a full-face smile is precious.
- ◆ Teachers want to be with their students. They want real contact, real teaching tools, and in-person kids.
- ◆ Parents want their children to be with their teachers. And their friends.
- ◆ Emotional health is tied to social relationships and meaningful routines. Checking-in with people in authentic ways is paramount.
- ◆ Technology is amazing. It has created and sustained so many opportunities. And it not equalized across our communities. It also makes us brain-weary to commute life via a computer screen. Turning off a computer can be more exciting somedays than turning it on.
- ◆ The great outdoors brings solace, joy, and rejuvenation.
- ◆ Accessibility continues to be a game changer. Great when it happens and devastating when it does not. A true requirement for all kids.

Still no crystal ball going forward, but I am hopeful we have appreciated our opportunities, learned new lessons, and secured our priorities going forward and toward what is truly important. People matter. School matters. Making it work matters. Being together matters. 2020 matters for our perfect vision ahead.

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# LOW VISION EVALUATION



## 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

### MEET YOUR LOW VISION REGIONAL EVALUATION CLINIC TEAM!

**Debbie Haberkorn**—Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Coordinator: Debbie has been with the CDE Regional Low Vision Evaluation (LVE) Clinics since 2012. In this role, she coordinates the dates and procedures of the clinics with the local site coordinators and oversees the involved paperwork. Debbie is also the Southern Region LVE site coordinator. These roles are built into her CIMC responsibilities with CDE support for her overtime on the clinic work. Under Debbie’s watch, her teammates are well prepared for each clinic and reports are disseminated on a timely basis at the conclusion of the clinics.

**Jim Olson**— Low Vision Therapist: Jim is a TVI, COMS, and Certified Low Vision Therapist. In his current role as the CIMC Coordinator, Jim understands how many Colorado learners with low vision can benefit from magnification tools. Jim works closely with the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) on materials and tools that benefit learners with low vision. Jim was a TVI / COMS with El Paso 11 District before his work at CSDB. Jim serves a Low Vision Therapist for the southern region clinics and has been with the LVE Regional Clinics since the beginning of our history!

**Wendy Stoltman**—Low Vision Therapist: Wendy is a TVI, COMS, and a Certified Low Vision Therapist. Her college education was from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Northern Colorado. She has been working with students with disabilities since the early 1980s, and taught in both the Madison Metropolitan School District and in Brighton School District 27J.

**Thomas Theune - Low Vision Specialist – Optometrist:** Tom shares that he has been honored to be a part of the Colorado LVE Clinic since it’s inception in 1998. His role is to provide insight into proper devices and strategies that can assist students with visual impairment to access and read print and support literacy. When Tom is not traveling to clinic sites, he is working in private practice as a low vision specialist in Colorado Springs. He is a 1985 graduate of Indiana University School of Optometry and he practiced primary care optometry in Colorado Springs for seven years. After being diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa and experiencing his own vision loss, Tom chose to specialize in the field of low vision. He uses low vision devices and adaptive technology on a daily basis. This provides a unique perspective in relating to students and adults who have low vision.

**Site Coordinators for 2020-21 Should We Have Live Clinics:** Angela Sims (Western Region), Debbie Haberkorn (Southern Region), Northern Region (Liz Wieder), and Metro Region (Morgan Fitzpatrick and Karin Hensel).

# Colorado Definitions, Resources, Professional Learning, and Support Activities Specific to Children and Youth who are Blind/Visually Impaired or Deaf-Blind, Their Families and Service Providers for School Year 2020-21

Compiled by Tanni Anthony

State Consultant on Blindness/Visual Impairment, Colorado Department of Education

## Legend for Acronyms:

<b>CCB</b>	Colorado Center for the Blind
<b>CDE ESSU</b>	Colorado Department of Education Exceptional Student Services Unit
<b>CIMC</b>	Colorado Instructional Materials Center
<b>CMAS</b>	Colorado Measures of Academic Success (our state assessments)
<b>COMS</b>	Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
<b>CSDB</b>	Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind
<b>O&amp;M</b>	Orientation and Mobility
<b>TVI</b>	teacher of students with visual impairments
<b>USABA</b>	United States Association of Blind Athletes



We have so many good things happening over the course of the upcoming school year! The following resources and activities are not exclusive to all that may be happening across the state in the area of supporting children and youth with blindness/visual impairment, their families, and service providers. If there is a resource or activity that was missed on this list, please be in touch with Tanni Anthony to post it in future editions of the newsletter.

**A Shared Vision:** This 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is Colorado's leading provider of early intervention vision services for children who are blind or visually impaired or have vision concerns. Our goal is that all families of children with visual impairments have access to and receive essential early intervention services from a community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals. A Shared Vision supports three programs. Through the Early Intervention Vision Services Program, our team of 15 EI-TVIs provide direct early intervention vision services to families and young children, birth to age three, throughout metro Denver as well as in 74% of Colorado's rural counties – a total of 50 counties in Colorado. The services are defined by the families' Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) developed in conjunction with A Shared Vision, CCB service coordinators and other early intervention providers. This program supports the key principles and research-based best practices of early intervention in Colorado by providing education and empowerment to families with very young children who are blind or visually impaired in their homes and in community settings.

Through our Family Support Program, A Shared Vision provides education, community connections and support for families of children with visual impairments through group activities, social media and other communications. Our Education Program builds the community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals who serve very young children with blindness/visual impairments. In 2020-21, A Shared Vision is rolling out training, developed in collaboration with EI Colorado, to help CCB and Child Find teams successfully conduct vision screenings via telehealth. For more information contact Paula Landry at [plandry@asharedvision.org](mailto:plandry@asharedvision.org).

**Anchor Center for Blind Children:** Headquartered in Denver for over 38 years, Anchor Center for Blind Children specializes in serving children with visual impairments or combined vision and hearing loss during their most formative years of development, birth – five years. Staffed by a transdisciplinary team of highly trained teachers of students with visual impairments, therapists and ophthalmologists, Anchor Center's vision services are customized to meet each child's unique needs and strengths. Families also receive support, guidance, practical knowledge, and connections to other important resources. Anchor Center's primary programming includes: vision assessments and pediatric ophthalmology exams; infant (newborn – 18 months), toddler (18 months – 3 years), and preschool (3 – 5 years) programs; occupational, physical, and speech/language therapies; recreational, music, and horticultural therapies;

summer camp and respite care; and family support, including programs for caregivers and siblings. Anchor Center charges a nominal tuition fee for toddler and preschool programs but does not charge for infant services; no child is ever denied access to services based on the family's inability to pay. In the 2019-20 school year, Anchor Center served over 351 children, caregivers and siblings in home and community-based settings, and at their state-of-the-art facility in the Stapleton neighborhood, located at: 2550 Roslyn Street,, Denver, CO 80238. For more information, please visit the Anchor Center website at [www.anchorcenter.org](http://www.anchorcenter.org) or call (303) 377.9732.

**Audio Information Network of Colorado:** Audio Information Network of Colorado (AINC), a non-profit (501) (c) (3), is the only service in Colorado providing audio access to local newspapers, grocery discount ads, transit guides, nutrition tips, and health promotion materials. Audio public service announcements for local events, services, and resources link listeners to their communities. Live interviews with interesting people are popular in Spanish and English. History, science, nature, and technology programs stimulate and entertain. Audio content allows listeners to make informed civic, economic, and health decisions; connect to their communities; maintain independence; and have a higher quality of life. AINC was founded in 1990. Kim Wardlow is Executive Director.

AINC is working on expanding its programming that is of interest to middle school and high school students as well as young adults. Students at the Colorado School for the Blind participated in a survey to identify areas of interest. The top three were careers, gaming, and suicide prevention. Additional input from students and teachers is welcome. New programming will be available in podcast format for access on smartphones, tablets, and computers. Pilot projects with Amazon Echoes are underway. For more information, go to [www.aincolorado.org](http://www.aincolorado.org) or call (303) 786-7777 or (877) 443-2001.

**Braille and Large Print Format Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) Test Review:** During previous assessment administrations, TVIs had the opportunity to meet with the CDE Unit of Student Assessment and the CMAS publisher to review braille CMAS tests. There will be continued work specific to these assessments and educators are always needed. If you are interested in signing up for the educator pool, please contact Arti Sachdeva, Special Education Assessment Specialist, at [Sachdeva\\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Sachdeva_a@cde.state.co.us) or at (303) 866-6709.

**Cane Quest:** Cane Quest is a challenging orientation and mobility contest for students with blindness/visual impairments in grades 3-12. Scout contestants team up with a sighted adult and earn coins as they navigate a route that demonstrates mastery of basic orientation and mobility skills and proper human guide techniques, within the boundaries of a school or agency. CSDB sponsors an annual event. Stay tuned for more details on if this event will occur during the 2020-21 school year.

**Colorado Administrative Units:** The term "administrative Unit" (AU) means a school district, board of cooperative services, or the State Charter School Institute, that is providing educational services to exceptional children and is responsible for the local administration of the Exceptional Children Education Act. For purposes of the education of school age (ages three through 21 years) children with visual impairment, including blindness, an administrative unit can be the family's local school district, as well as the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. There are currently 78 administrative units in Colorado.

The vast majority (over 90%) of school-age students with visual impairments, including blindness are served in their neighborhood school district with a locally hired TVI and/or COMS. Some administrative units may use contract services for their TVI and Orientation and Mobility services. For questions about main contact personnel for students with visual impairments, including blindness or deaf-blindness in each administrative unit, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CAER -- Colorado Chapter of AER:** As professionals who serve the community of individuals who are blind/visually impaired, we have an active Colorado chapter of our national Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER for short!) professional organization. Within our specialized field, there are a number of ways to access continuing education, network with peers and learn to serve the needs of our clients and students more effectively. The current CAER board is comprised of members from school district administration units, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the Colorado Center for the Blind. For more information about scheduled meetings and activities for member benefit, please contact Nancy Cozart at [ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us) or (303) 905-4074.

**CAER Annual Awards Banquet and Business Meeting:** This special event occurs in conjunction with the annual CDE O&M Seminar. The banquet is a time to celebrate colleagues and friends and to announce the recipients of the following awards: the Gary Schmidt Award, the Connections Award, the President's Award, the Ken Neve Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award. Information will be emailed to ask for nominations of awards and to provide more details about the date of the 2021 Awards Banquet / Annual Business Meeting. Nominations for the awards will be due eight weeks prior to the event and should be submitted to [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com)

**CAER Mini Grants:** CAER provides mini-grants to current AER members or those sponsored by an AER member. The maximum amount of the funds available will vary, but the allotted amount per grant must not exceed \$300. Recipients are only eligible to receive a mini-grant once every two years. Recipients need to fulfill their obligation to provide CAER with their product of how the mini-grant funds were used within 90 days of check issue. Applications are accepted throughout the year and are due November 1<sup>st</sup> for review. Mini-grants are awarded every year in November.

**CAER Reimbursement for ACVREP Certification:** Reimbursement for initial (\$100) and renewal (\$50) certification through ACVREP may be available to Colorado members. After receiving your initial and/or renewal, please submit a copy of the certification and letter requesting reimbursement to CAER at [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com). To apply, you must provide proof of AER membership.

**Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Braille Competency Certification:** Funds have been reserved for five braille proctors (Nancy Cozart, Christine Maynard, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier, and Julie Wetzstein) to provide opportunities to TVIs / Braillists to take the Colorado Braille Competency Test and/or the 15+ clock-hours of CDE established renewal modules. Care must be taken to spread out the completion of the modules over the five-year-renewal period so that competency can be truly demonstrated across a period of five years. For information about braille competency testing and renewal requirements, please go to [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs). For more information, please contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE Braillist Listserv:** This listserv is exclusively for school braillists working in Colorado administrative units. It is a venue for braillists to share information, ask questions, and gather information. Persons wishing to be added to the braillist listserv should contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE Braille Mentors:** Our amazing CDE Braille Committee personnel (Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier, and Julie Wetzstein) are available to provide mentoring to TVIs who need support in preparing for a minimum of a second round of the Colorado Braille Competency Test. Please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681 for more information.

**CDE Keeping in Touch (KIT) Newsletter:** This newsletter started 25-plus years ago when personnel across the state talked about a lack of communication continuity. It has mostly been a labor of love internal to CDE, but there are some great folks who actively contribute to each edition or from time-to-time. Please consider being one of them – there is always room to boast about the accomplishments of a colleague, post an announcement, or to share an article. The newsletter is sent out to CO parents of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired, TVIs, COMS, braillists, and VI paraeducators. It is also posted on the CDE Blindness/ Low Vision website for others to download. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the newsletter will not likely be mailed out during school year 2020-21.

The following editions are planned for this school year: August / September 2020, October 2020, November / December 2020, January / February 2021, March / April 2021, and May 2021. For more information, please contact Tanni at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681. Back copies of recent newsletters can be found on the [CDE Visual Impairment: Statewide Activities](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_activities), or visit the webpage at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_activities](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_activities)

**CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:** This is the 23rd anniversary of the inception of the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics! The Low Vision Evaluation Team is once again funded for five regional clinics. The regional clinics are a collaborative partnership with CSDB. The clinic team consists of an optometrist specializing in low vision services (Dr. Tom Theune), a certified low vision therapists / TVI (Jim Olson and Wendy Stoltman), and a Clinic Coordinator (Debbie Haberkorn).

The dates of the 2020-21 clinics have been postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a possibility that the clinics may be scheduled late fall, early winter or even early spring based on health and safety guidance. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE O&M Seminar:** This training is co-sponsored by CDE. The topics and dates for this training are under discussion. It is most likely that the training will be offered in a virtual format during the 2020-21 school year. The contact person is Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment:** This training is co-sponsored by CDE. The topics and dates for this training are under discussion. It is probable that a series of trainings will be offered in a virtual format during the 2020-21 school year. This will be an area of discussion with the Vision Coalition. If anyone has a training idea, please be in touch with Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

**CDE TVI COMS listserv:** This listserv is exclusively for Colorado TVIs and COMSs working in Colorado administrative units. It is a venue for professionals to share information, ask questions, and gather information. Persons wishing to be added to the listserv should contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE TVI / COMS Mentor Project:** The goal is to provide mentoring assistance to students enrolled in the UNC Visual Impairment Program, as well as TVIs and/or COMSs in Colorado administrative units. The goal is to provide technical assistance to school-based TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists who want support on any topic of need. We are thrilled to offer the support services of veteran TVIs/ O&M Specialists with incredible teaching experience. Check out the bios of Wendy Stoltman and Shelley Moats in this first newsletter. For more information or to ask for mentor assistance, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE United English Braille (UEB) Listserv:** This listserv is exclusively for Colorado TVIs and school braillists working in Colorado administrative units. It is a venue for professionals to share information, ask questions, and gather information about the Unified English Braille Code. Persons wishing to be added to the listserv should contact Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE Web Pages Specific to Visual Impairment and Deaf-Blindness:**

Deaf-Blindness – <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db>

NIMAS / NIMC - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/nimas>

Orientation and Mobility - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/rs-om>

Visual Impairment, Including Blindness - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>

**Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) Youth Program:** Throughout the school year and over the summer, the CCB offers a wealth of learning and recreation programs to students who are blind/visually impaired. For more information, please contact Martin Becerra at [mbecerra@cocenter.org](mailto:mbecerra@cocenter.org) or (303) 778-1130.

**Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC):** Housed on the campus of CSDB, the role of the CIMC is to provide braille and large print textbooks and serve as a repository for APH educational materials for all Colorado students ages birth through twelfth grade who are blind/visually impaired. The CIMC also houses a lending library of professional materials for access by TVIs. The CIMC hosts an email distribution list for all braillists in Colorado, contact Debbie Haberkorn at [dhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org), to be added to the group. For CIMC questions or assistance, contact CIMC staff at (719) 579-2196 or Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org). CIMC webpage: [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org); click on “Programs and Services,” “Outreach”, then “CIMC.”

**Colorado Instructional Materials Center Brailist Scholarships:** The CIMC has a scholarship fund to assist braillists from Colorado with their registration fees to attend the annual National Braille Association (NBA) Professional Development Conference. Scholarship recipients are asked to share the conference information with other Colorado braillists. Conference information is posted at [www.nationalbraille.org](http://www.nationalbraille.org). For more information, contact Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org) or (719) 578-2195.

**Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB):** The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind is a state funded school within the Colorado Department of Education. The school was established for the purpose of providing comprehensive educational services for children, birth to age 21, who are blind/visually impaired and/or deaf/hard of hearing. Services are provided directly to students enrolled at the school, and outreach programs service students, staff, and families in communities throughout Colorado. There is no tuition charge for students to attend CSDB, which is located in Colorado Springs. CSDB is required to follow all state-education laws that apply to other public-school programs. Parents may choose to enroll their child with blindness/visual impairment after conversation about placement with their school district Special Education Director or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. For more information about CSDB, contact Kathy Emter, CSDB Special Education Director at (719) 578-2177 or [kemter@csdb.org](mailto:kemter@csdb.org)

**CSDB iAdvocate Program:** Each summer a program is offered middle and high school students who are blind/visually impaired across the state. The program focuses on Braille/O&M/ independent living, social relationships, and recreational activities and other Expanded Core Curriculum areas. For more information, contact Donna Keale at [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org) or (719) 578-2251.

**CSDB Internship Placements:** CSDB offers an educational setting with a diverse student population for university students completing their graduate training in vision to obtain internship or student teaching credits. Contact: Tera Wilkins, CSDB Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Coordinator, at [twilkins@csdb.org](mailto:twilkins@csdb.org) or (719) 694-2003 video phone.

**CSDB Lending Library:** The library provides materials and information in a variety of formats for students who are Deaf/hard of hearing and/or blind/visually impaired, as well as their parents and service providers. Most items may be borrowed through the use of the library’s community use form. The libraries are open Monday—Friday during the school year from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Please email the media specialist before coming in person to either library. For more information, please refer to the CSDB website at [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org)

**CSDB Psychological Assessments and Consultation:** Psychological assessments (cognitive and social emotional) provided to school districts, BOCES and charter schools to assist school staff in developing appropriate educational services and supports for students with vision losses. There is a fee for this service. Contact Dr. Richard Jeffries, Director of Outreach Programs at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) at [rjeffries@csdb.org](mailto:rjeffries@csdb.org) or (719) 425-8646 for more information.

**CSDB Role Model Videos:** The CSDB Role Model Videos are designed to provide students who are blind or visually impaired, their parents and teachers the opportunity to understand life experiences of successful adult role models who are blind and visually impaired. The role models speak to their vision conditions, use of adaptive devices, independence as an adult, thoughts for parents, interpersonal skills, and why they feel they are successful adults. <http://tinyurl.com/yamlqmag>

**Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (also called the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project):** As of October 15, 2018, the project began its new five-year grant cycle. There are currently 154 learners, birth through age 21, who have combined vision and hearing loss (deafblindness) in Colorado.

Key activities include:

- Annual Child Count of Colorado children and youth with deaf-blindness
- Free technical assistance is provided the families and service providers of children and youth with deaf-blindness
- Fiscal support to early intervention providers
- Tuition support for interveners, as well as on-the-job coaching and support.
- Annual Family Conference just for parents and key caregivers.
- Annual Summer Institute with a focus on evidence-based practices
- Website with over 100 fact sheets (in English and Spanish) on information specific to deaf-blindness.
- Lending library is open to parents and professionals and is stocked with great resources, including about 100 items specific to blindness/visual impairment. The library's inventory is listed on the website, where there also is a downloadable book-loan order form.

For more information about the CO Deaf-Blind Project's free technical assistance services, contact Project Co-Directors Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681 or Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6605. Also check out the project's continually updated webpage: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>

**Colorado Talking Book Library:** For people who cannot read standard print CTBL provides free audio, Braille and large print books keeping you connected to reading, stories and adventure. Books and magazines go through the mail postage paid. Audio and braille books are available for download through the BARD mobile app for either iOS or Android. For more information, contact the library via email at [ctbl.info@cde.state.co.us](mailto:ctbl.info@cde.state.co.us) or by phone toll free at 1-800-685-2136. The library is sending and receiving applications and library materials during this time of COVID.

**Eligibility – Deaf-Blindness:** The determination of whether a school-age (ages three to 21 years) child meets the eligibility criteria as a “child with deaf-blindness” is the responsibility of the local administrative unit's Individual Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the child's parents, and is based on state approved eligibility criteria. For children who are entering the public-school district from an early intervention program or a private early childhood program, eligibility for school-based special education services and supports is not determined by personnel associated with these early-years programs. It is critical that parents are given accurate information about the eligibility process with school district staff. It is the IEP team who will further determine the need for an intervener. If there are questions about the school-age special education eligibility process, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

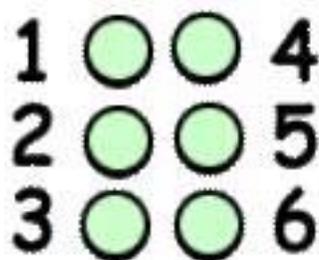
**Eligibility – Visual Impairment, Including Blindness:** The determination of whether a school-ages (three to 21 years) child meets the eligibility criteria as a “child with visual impairment, including blindness” is the responsibility of the local administrative unit's Individual Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the child's parents, and is based on state approved eligibility criteria. For children who are entering the public-school district from an early intervention program or a private early childhood program, eligibility for school-based special education services and supports is not determined by personnel associated with these programs. It is critical that parents are given accurate information about the eligibility process with school district staff. If there are questions about the school-age special education eligibility process, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**Foresight Ski Guides:** Foresight Ski Guides is dedicated to providing goal-oriented challenge recreation opportunities for students with visual disabilities. Foresight uses skiing and snowboarding as a platform to promote self-confidence, independence, and personal growth. Foresight operates at Vail Ski Resort. During the 2019-2020 ski season Foresight served roughly 46 students from five Colorado school districts plus Colorado School for the Blind despite having to shut down early due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students traveled to Vail with their TVIs and some parents even joined in the experience. Returning students who have mastered basic skiing skills are paired with a Foresight guide and shadow to reinforce their skills



while exploring Vail’s varied terrain. Students new to the sport receive professional ski or snowboard instruction from Vail’s Adaptive Ski School. The students experience the joy and freedom of skiing blind! Foresight provides the students with lift tickets, ski or snowboard equipment, professional instruction (if needed), two-days of lunch and lodging for a requested \$50 donation. However, Foresight will not turn any student away if they cannot pay the suggested donation. Foresight Ski Guides partners with TVIs, school districts and parents to address several important areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum for the Blind, as well as Colorado State Standards for Physical Education for your students. Bring your students to Vail for an opportunity to learn important life skills that they can use throughout their lives all while learning a sport they can safely enjoy with friends and family.

Coming summer 2021! Foresight plans to launch a summer program offering additional transformative experiences. The summer program, which builds on the winter program, will offer rock climbing, hiking, kayaking, paddle boarding, team building and leadership development. Please contact Christine Holmberg, Foresight Executive Director, at (303) 506-3859 or email at [christine@foresightskiguide.org](mailto:christine@foresightskiguide.org) for more information and to get on the calendar for the upcoming ski season. You can also follow Foresight Ski Guides on Facebook and Instagram and visit their website at [www.foresightskiguide.org](http://www.foresightskiguide.org)



**National Braille Challenge:** The Colorado regional contest will again be held at CSDB and CCB during the 2020-2021 school year. Students may also compete individually in their home school with their TVI administering the tests. Students compete in various categories such as spelling, reading comprehension, speed and accuracy, proofreading, and charts and graphs. Stay tuned for dates of the Braille Challenge held on the campus of CSDB and at the Colorado Center for the Blind. Please visit [www.brailleinstitute.org](http://www.brailleinstitute.org) for additional information about the National Braille Challenge.

**See the Future Fund:** In 1997, Tom Theune, OD had an idea to create significant, merit-based scholarships to inspire and support the pursuit of higher education for visually impaired and blind students in Colorado. The mission is to provide financial assistance to visually impaired and blind students who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is used to encourage and support the pursuit of higher education, which will enhance both career and personal success. \_

Since the inception of the See the Future Fund, over \$665,000 has been awarded to 128 recipients embarking on numerous careers including accounting, business, teaching, computer engineering, massage therapy and many more. The application for this year’s scholarships are due by March 1, 2021. For more information, go to: <https://www.seethefuture.org/home.html>

**Tactile Art Club:** The Tactile Art Club (TAC) is a great way for people who are blind/visually impaired to be creative, express yourself and meet others. The goal is to provide students who are blind and visually impaired an outlet to learn, create accessible art, express themselves, form emotional connections, and showcase their creativity. It is participant led, community oriented, and open to all interested.

The TAC meets on the third Tuesday of each month between 5 -6:30 p.m. MT. Virtual meeting dates ahead are October 20, November 17, and December 15, 2020.

Check out the blogs on all the fun art projects they have worked on this year  
<https://www.rishikastudio.com/blog>  
<https://www.rishikastudio.com/tac>

To RSVP, get on the club email list, and/or for additional information, contact Rishika Kartik at [rishikakartik@gmail.com](mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com)

**Tools for Life:** The mission of this project is to provide financial assistance to the families of students who are blind/visually impaired (PreK – transition) who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is to help purchase necessary adaptive equipment, which students may own and utilize in their home, school, and community. These tools will help support literacy and the pursuit of high education. Since 2007, \$260,000 has been awarded to over 140 families. The application deadline is October 15, 2020. Please go to: <https://www.seethefuture.org/learn-more-tools-for-life.html>

**University of Northern Colorado VI Program:** The University of Northern Colorado offers an Online Master of Arts Degree Program / Visual Impairment. This program provides teacher candidates with the skills and knowledge to help students with visual impairments meet their potential in academic and social areas of their lives and prepares teachers-in-training to work with students from birth to age 21 with a special emphasis on the needs of early childhood and elementary-aged students. This program has been a bedrock for filling Colorado TVI positions. Dr. Paula Conroy is the Program Coordinator. For more information, please go to: <https://extended.unco.edu/programs/special-education-visual-impairment-masters/>

**UNC Non-degree Licensure Orientation and Mobility Program:** The program provides an endorsement in orientation and mobility. Approved by the national accreditation body, the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (AVREP), the Orientation and Mobility endorsement program is for students who have a master's degree in visual impairment or who are in the process of obtaining a Master of Arts in visual impairment. The program has one on-campus requirement of four weeks during one summer. Dr. Paula Conroy is the Program Coordinator. For more information, contact: <https://extended.unco.edu/current/graduate/sped-om-end-ol-gre/>

**United States Association of Blind Athletes:** USABA is a Colorado-based 501(c) (3) organization that provides life-enriching sports opportunities for every individual with a visual impairment. A member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, USABA provides athletic opportunities in various sports including, but not limited to track and field, Nordic and alpine skiing, biathlon, judo, wrestling, swimming, tandem cycling, powerlifting and goalball (a team sport for the blind and visually impaired). For activities specific to Colorado outreach activities, please contact Kevin Brousard at [kbrousard@usaba.org](mailto:kbrousard@usaba.org) or by phone at (719) 866-3019.

**Vision of the Artist's Soul:** This program is the recipient of Arts In Society 2020 grant for an after-school Tactile Art program for students who are Blind and visually impaired (BVI) across Colorado. This program will be rolled out in 3 phases: Phase 1: Tactile Art Workshops will integrate educational concepts to strengthen the overall arts curriculum. Phase 2: Share and celebrate the student's work with the public audience by exhibiting their work. Phase 3: A summary of our findings and effectiveness of our program will be delivered to various school districts and presented to the National Federation of the Blind. If you are interested to be part of this program, or if you need additional information, contact Rishika Kartik at [rishikakartik@gmail.com](mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com)

**Vision Coalition:** The Vision Coalition is a statewide advisory committee on the educational activities for students who are blind/visually impaired, support activities for their parents, and professional development activities specific to their service providers. Members include: Deb Andrews (Southern Region), Tanni Anthony (CDE ESSU), Martin Becerra (Colorado Center for the Blind), Melinda Carter (Anchor Center for Blind Children), Nancy Cozart (Metro region and CAER), Jayme Cusimano (CSDB BVI Outreach), Julia Hutchinson (Northern region), Julie King (Western region), Paula Landry, (A Shared Vision), Jamie Lugo (School for the Blind– CSDB), Michele Reed (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), Jim Olson (CIMC). The VC meets three times a school year. For more information, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.



**White Cane Day:** October 15th of each year marks White Cane Day across the country. There may well be celebrations across the state in a variety of school districts. As celebrations are planned, we will work to disseminate information. CAER has a wonderful tee shirt to celebrate the day! Time to raise a little or a big cane!



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

### 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](#).

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### Update News:

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

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### CAER White Cane Safety Day 2020

CAER is hosting a fundraising event to raise money for our chapters "Mini-Grants Program." The Mini-Grants Program is open to current CAER members to support professional growth, student/client driven needs. We are host this year's fundraiser by selling apparel in order to celebrate White Cane Safety Day.

White Cane Safety Day is a national observance in the United States, celebrated on October 15 of each year since 1964. The date is set aside to celebrate the achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired and the important symbol of blindness and tool of independence, the white cane.

Please consider being a supporter. Can't make a purchase or contribute a donation? Please share this fundraiser. Sharing is one of the best ways to help raise funds for (CAER) Colorado Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Thank you! Colorado CAER Board & Members

Please visit the [CAER White Cane Safety Day fundraiser webpage](#) for details.

[https://www.customink.com/fundraising/caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020?utm\\_campaign=desktop-campaign-page-share-v3&utm\\_content=caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020&utm\\_medium=messaging&utm\\_source=email](https://www.customink.com/fundraising/caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020?utm_campaign=desktop-campaign-page-share-v3&utm_content=caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020&utm_medium=messaging&utm_source=email)



## Colorado Association of Education and Rehabilitation Building Bridges Together



### CAER Offers Financial Assistance to Colorado Clients, Students, Families, and Professionals Through Mini-Grants.

#### Mini-Grant funds are available to defray the costs of:

- Conference Attendance
- Student Activities
- Programming Needs
- Professional development projects
- Other ideas are welcome

#### Mini-grant Rules:

1. Applicant must be a current CAER member or be sponsored by an CAER member.
2. The maximum amount of funds available will vary; the allotted amount per grant will not exceed \$300.
3. Recipients are only eligible to receive a mini-grant once every **two** years.
4. Recipients need to provide CAER with a presentation of how the mini-grant money was used **within 30 days** of use of funds. This will be shared with members at the annual CAER banquet.
5. Board members applying for a mini-grant will recuse themselves from voting in that mini-grant cycle.
6. Mini-grant applications are accepted throughout the year, but due by November 1<sup>st</sup>. The grants are awarded once per year in November.
7. If funds are not used for the intended purpose, the mini-grant funds need to be returned to the CAER board by the recipient.

Funding decisions are made by your elected CAER Board of Directors and must be approved by a 2/3rds of voting members.

### Mini-Grant Application Form

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Work:

Email:

AER membership #:

Recommending AER Member name:

1. For what purpose are you applying for a mini-grant? (Attach page, as necessary)
2. How much financial assistance are you requesting? (Max \$300)
3. List/itemize your expenses:
4. Have you contacted other sources for assistance? If so, please list the name(s) of the organizations, the amount requested, and the amount pledged.
5. If awarded a Mini Grant, you are required to submit a presentation (in some form) to the CAER board within 30 days of using the funds.

If funds are not used for the intended purpose or presentation isn't submitted in a timely fashion, I agree to refund the funds to CAER

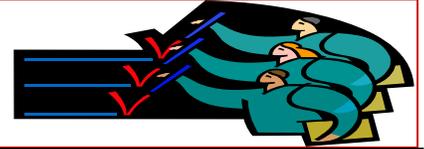
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Signature of Applicant

Email completed application form to: [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com)



# 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.

## COVID-19 Guidelines from Children's Hospital



Children's Hospital Colorado Releases Updated Guidelines for Parents and School Officials to Manage COVID-19 and In-School Learning.

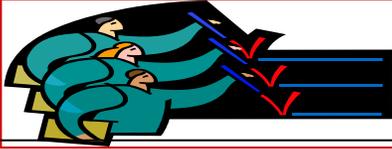
The guide provides information on how to manage students or staff with COVID-19 symptoms or who have been exposed to the virus. To review the guidance, visit the [Colorado Children's Hospital Parent Resources page](https://www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/parenting/parenting-articles/back-to-school-coronavirus-FAQ/?utm_source=media&utm_medium=vanity&utm_campaign=covid_news&utm_content=coronavirusschoolguidelines) (https://www.childrenscolorado.org/conditions-and-advice/parenting/parenting-articles/back-to-school-coronavirus-FAQ/?utm\_source=media&utm\_medium=vanity&utm\_campaign=covid\_news&utm\_content=coronavirusschoolguidelines)

## COVID-19 Resources

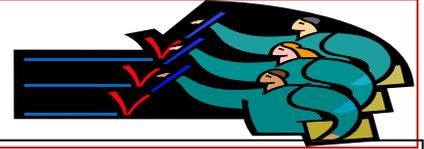
The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has released guidance for detecting, reporting and responding to cases and outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools and child care settings. The new guidance includes information for child care and pre-K settings. It also includes tools that can help parents, students, teachers, staff and schools determine who needs to stay home from school. These tools are now also available in Spanish.

[View the Tools to determine who needs to be home from school.](#)

This [case and outbreak guidance](#), in addition to [school opening guidance](#), CDE's toolkit for the 2020-21 school year, and guidance from local public health agencies will provide districts with the information they need to start the school year to help makes sense for local communities.



## CHECK IT OUT!



### AFB Update—Haben Girma

In case you missed our talk with Haben Girma or want to revisit the conversation, the [archived recording](#) is now available!

AFB president and CEO, Dr. Kirk Adams, recently chatted with Haben Girma about her memoir *Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*. The conversation also revolved around the upcoming 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the intersection of racism and ableism, and the importance of accessible online spaces during the pandemic.

An advocate for equal opportunities for people with disabilities, Haben Girma was the first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School. President Obama named her a White House Champion of Change. She received the 2018 Helen Keller Achievement Award, and a spot on the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list.

After canceling the 2020 AFB Leadership Conference due to the coronavirus pandemic, AFB made key portions of the conference available, free of charge, through a series of accessible online seminars. The presentations focused on timely information such as providing remote instruction to students who are blind or low vision, supporting inclusive remote work environments, mitigating unconscious bias, and AFB's collaborative research on the impact of COVID-19 on adults who are blind or visually impaired. The audio described, captioned, and transcribed webinars are available at [www.afb.org/VirtualAFBLC](http://www.afb.org/VirtualAFBLC).

**AFB** American Foundation<sup>®</sup>  
for the Blind

Expanding possibilities for people with vision loss

### Hold the Dates – Colorado NFB Convention

The Colorado State convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado will not be an in-person convention this fall. It will be offered virtually beginning Thursday morning through Saturday evening, October 29-31. Our hosts are in the beginning stages of planning. There will be an open ceremony on Wednesday evening and the virtual banquet Saturday evening. Of course, the banquet will feature a keynote from one of our knowledgeable and highly respected national leaders. As registration information and an agenda is available, this information will be disseminated.

### Tactile Art Club Gets a TV Story

Art is a sensory experience, but too often we think of it as a sight-only experience. One club lead by a Colorado high school student is showing the world that you don't need sight to create dynamic works of art.

CBS4 News Denver joined the Tactile Art Club August meeting and covered the club. Check out the coverage at CBS4 News, [Tactile Art Club helps people who are blind experience Art](#)

We are so proud of Rishika Kartik for her vision on this project and all the lives it has already touched!

## Meet the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project Team



The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant) is in the third year of its federally funded five-year grant cycle. We started the new grant award on October 15, 2018 and it will be completed on October 14, 2023. The grant project has been housed within the Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services Unit for over 30 years. The purpose of the project, awarded to every state and US territory, is to identify children and youth with deaf-blindness and provide free technical assistance (TA) to the identified children, their families, and service providers.

Key activities of the project are to maintain an annual Child Count process, host professional learning events, and provide universal and customized technical assistance. The current project has three broad goals: (1) identification, (2) family networking, training, and TA support, and (3) professional training and TA support. Key events have been the annual Summer Institute and Parent Workshop. New projects include a formal intervener training and coaching

model and an inventory of online early childhood training modules. The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. We have five CDE employees (project staff) and two specialized contractors.

### PROJECT STAFF

**Tanni Anthony** has been the CO DB Project Director since 1995. She was the Project Coordinator (1992-1995). She also serves as the Director of the Access, Learning, and Literacy Team and the CDE State Consultant on Blindness / Visual Impairment. Key role with the CO DB Project include project operations, fiscal management, annual reports, the Child Count, and professional learning events. Tanni received her Ph.D. from the University of Denver in the area of Child and Family Studies. She earned her Ed.S. degree from the UNC in area of blindness/visual impairments with programmatic emphasis on severe disabilities, including deaf-blindness, and additional certification as an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist. Tanni has worked as a TVI / O&M in Minnesota, Colorado, and Alaska. She has considerable training opportunities in the fields of blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness. Many of these training can be tied to the 27 annual summer institutes that the CO DB Project has planned and hosted! Tanni is a specialist on sensory assessment, play assessment / strategies, developmental orientation and mobility, and communication and emergent literacy assessment / strategies. She has taught courses on or related to deaf-blindness for the University of Alaska, University of Denver East Carolina University, Florida State University, and the University of Northern Colorado. She has presented and published on deaf-blind related topics over the course of her career.

**Gina Herrera** has been Project Co-Director since 2018. Ms. Herrera has extensive past experience as the Project Coordinator from the years 2000 -2018. Gina is also the CDE State Consultant on Significant Support Needs and is a Supervisor with the Access, Learning, and Literacy Team. Key project roles include coordination of early intervention services and statewide TA, development and oversight of intervener training support, the Child Count, and annual report writing. Gina has a BA in the education of learners with intellectual disabilities from the University of North Florida and a M.Ed. degree in Educational Leadership from Regis University. Prior to 2000, Gina worked as a teacher of students with multiple disabilities /deaf-blindness. Her work with Spanish-speaking students and families brings important insight into the Hispanic culture. Gina has considerable training, over her 30 years of service, in the specific fields of severe disabilities and deaf-blindness. Gina has benefited from 20 years of project training and has received extensive training on topics specific to communication, assessment and strategies, emergent literacy and numeracy strategies, interveners, secondary transition and coaching. She is one of the authors of Colorado's *Quality Indicators for Assessing Individualized Services for Students (K-12) with Significant Support Needs*. She is a leader on alternate assessments and secondary transition for students with significant supports needs for the CDE. Gina was an adjunct instructor at the University of Colorado – Denver in the *Instructional Strategies for Students with Significant Support Needs and Interventions and the Exceptional Learner* courses.

**Roberta Curtis** is a program support with ESSU's Access, Learning and Literacy (ALL) team and for the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. In this latter role, she takes a lead role in the Child Count database and associated mailings, organizes registrations and training logistics for the Summer Institute and other trainings, and prepares the needed paperwork for meetings and events. Roberta has a degree in organizational development from Colorado Christian University and is certified as a project management professional. Roberta's work comes with notable achievements managing multiple projects, developing, and maintaining continuing education training and has served six years as a board member for the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee. As a parent with a daughter receiving Special Education Services, Roberta is passionate about inclusion, stewardship, and advocacy.

**Shannon Cannizzaro** has been working with the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project for 21 years. She is a Family Specialist and her role is to gather resources, disseminate information, and provide free technical assistance support to families. Shannon is involved with parent mailings / email communications, hosting parent coffees and activities, and planning and hosting the Parent Retreats. She has been married to her husband Todd for 27 years and they have five wonderful children, one of whom is 22 and deaf-blind. Shannon shares that one of her greatest passions is to network with other families and share in the journey of parenting our unique children. Shannon has been involved in many organizations here in Colorado regarding Special Needs and loves passing on the information she has collected along the way. Shannon highlights that she is looking forward to connecting with both new and veteran families.

**Wendy Stoltman** serves as a Technical Assistance Specialist with the project. In this role she provides a range of targeted to intensive technical assistance to the families and services of children who are deaf-blind. This includes child observation, team consultation, inservice training, and sharing of resources. This is a free service to families and personnel of children ages 3-21 with deaf-blindness. Wendy has a master's degree in the field of educating children with blindness/visual impairments, including deaf-blindness and is has certification as an O&M Specialist and a Low Vision Specialist. She is a retired teacher of students with visual impairment (TVI) and an O&M Specialist. She also has teaching experience with children with emotional and behavioral challenges. Wendy worked in Colorado schools for over 27 years. She is a CDE part-time consultant in several roles: (a) a DB TA Specialist, (b) a Low Vision Therapist, and (c) a TVI / COMS Instructional Coach. She was hired in school year 2012-13 by the CO Deaf-Blind Project as a TA Specialist and brings substantial expertise to the project TA activities. Wendy has been present at every one of the 27 annual summer institutes, as well as many annual CDE trainings on strategies for learners with (a) blindness/visual impairment and (b) significant support needs.

**Shelley Moats** serves as a Technical Assistance Specialist with the project. In this role she provides a range of targeted to intensive technical assistance to the families and services of children who are deaf-blind. This includes child observation, team consultation, inservice training, and sharing of resources. Shelley is a retired TVI and O&M Specialist. Shelley graduated from Brigham Young University with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education/Special Education with an emphasis in Visual Impairment. She has a master's degree from UNC in Special Education/Severe Needs/Vision and also certified in Orientation & Mobility. Shelley has worked teaching children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind for over 25 years, and has specialized in a variety of areas within the field. Shelley spent most of her teaching career (22 years) with Douglas County School District and was the team lead for seven of those years. Shelley also serves as a CDE instructional coach for TVIs and O&M Specialists.

#### **PROJECT CONTRACT CONSULTANTS**

**Dinah Beams** is working with project staff to build ten online learning modules on pediatric deafness. This information will be housed on the project website for families and professionals to learn more about the types / degrees / developmental impact / key strategies specific to early onset Deafness/hearing loss. Dinah has a M.A. from the University of Colorado and a B.S. from Southern Methodist University and more than 40 years of experience working with children who are deaf and hard of hearing. She served in leadership positions for more than 20 years with the Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, first as the Lead Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinator and then as the Program Coordinator. Dinah served until 2020 as a member of the state Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) team. Dinah has authored and presented extensively on topics of pediatric deafness. Dinah's work has been impacted not only by professional experiences, but by personal ones as she is the older sister of a Deaf brother. She also serves on the Board of Colorado Families for Hands and Voices and volunteers frequently with that organization.

**Jessica Meisel** has recently come on board as a contractor to assist with training and coaching support for interveners working in Colorado school districts. She is an Early Childhood Special Educator and Deaf-Blind Specialist. Jessica is now in her third year working for Anchor Center for Blind Children and has teaching experience in metro Colorado districts and with the Helen Keller Learning Center. Jessica completed her Bachelor’s degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Queens College in Flushing, New York in 2010. It was during this time that she became a nanny for a child with deafblindness. She then pursued a specialized degree that would allow her to educate and work with more children with deaf-blindness. Jessica graduated from Hunter College in 2014 with an Early Childhood Special Education master’s degree, with an annotation on Multiple and Severe Disabilities and Deaf-Blindness. We are thrilled that she then returned to Colorado where she worked as a Preschool Teacher in a small school district in the Denver Metro area and provided home visits to children with multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness who were too medically fragile to physically attend school. In 2017, Jessica was given the opportunity to work with school-aged children (ages kindergarten to fifth grade) as a Significant Support Needs Teacher in the same district, where she worked to obtain her Special Education Generalist License. She worked hard to have her students included in their general education classrooms through a co-teaching model and provided consultation and coaching to staff to create a more inclusive environment. Jessica currently works at the Anchor Center for Blind Children in a lead role with children who are deaf-blind.



For more information about the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project activities, to refer a student, and/or to request free technical assistance, please reach out directly to:

Tanni Anthony	303 866-6681	<a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
Gina Herrera	303 866-6605	<a href="mailto:herrera_g@cde.state.co.us">herrera_g@cde.state.co.us</a>



### Save the Dates

#### Winter Mountain Mobility with the Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte, CO.

**Winter Dates: February 11-15, 2021**

The Adaptive Sports Center (ASC) in Crested Butte will be running winter and summer adventure sports camps specifically designed for youth who are blind or visually impaired. The winter camp will bring youth together for a weekend of skiing, snowboarding and other fun activities in the Rocky Mountains. The camp will focus on building confidence and making connections with others who share similar experiences. There will be a summer camp as well so stay tuned for those dates later. 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 by late November.

For more information and questions contact Mike Plansker at [pla011923@adams12.org](mailto:pla011923@adams12.org)



# CHECK IT OUT!



## California School for the Blind Mindfulness Curriculum

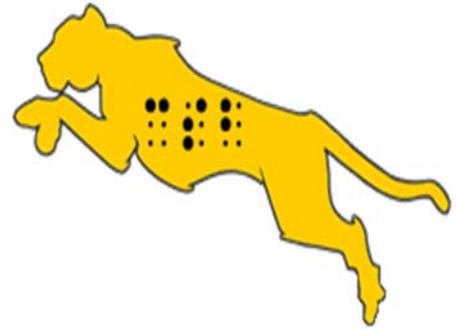
Their new Mindfulness Curriculum is online. Please take advantage of this curriculum complete with guided interactions and step-by-step lessons to explore mindfulness with your students who are blind and have low vision. This curriculum focuses on the sensory experiences of students. It can be implemented with a small group of five to six students or smaller or bigger group depending on your circumstances.

### [Lessons and Curricula](https://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/resources/lessons/index.aspx)

(<https://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/resources/lessons/index.aspx>)

### [Direct link to Mindfulness Curriculum](https://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/resources/lessons/documents/mindfulnesscurriculum.pdf)

(<https://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/resources/lessons/documents/mindfulnesscurriculum.pdf>)



Here is a quick snippet of part of a lesson of *Engaging the Senses Intentionally*:

- “That’s what our group is all about: Paying attention to what is happening right now. Sometimes, we’re so busy and distracted that we’re thinking about something that happened before, or something that will happen next. Mindfulness helps us notice what is happening right now. Let’s try some more things to help us pay attention to what we’re feeling now.
- Distribute essential oils to rub on wrists (present two options and allow students to smell both and choose which they’d like to use. Encourage them to rub their wrists together to activate the smell. Can the student’s describe the smell or what it reminds them of? Do they feel their skin getting warmer when they rub them together? Does the smell get stronger?
- Listening to singing bowls. If you do not have a singing bowl available, search YouTube for a recording of singing bowls in 1 minute increments. Ask the students to raise their hands when they stop hearing the sound. Do this three times total.
- Distribute flavored water. Ask the students to describe the sensations, for example, the flavor, the temperature, the moistness.

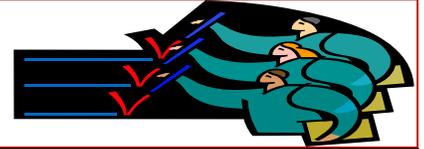
If students express feelings/judgments about sensations, validate simply but try to end conversation (e.g., student says, I don’t like the way the water tastes, you say, I understand that you don’t like how the water tastes. That’s okay. You don’t need to drink any more.)

The curriculum includes guided meditations, creating a calming space, and learning about mindfulness. Feel free to adapt to make it work best for you and your students. If you come up with extra elements that are fantastic please share back so we can update our own practices.

For more information, go to Adrian Amandi, Director of the Education Resource Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired California School for the Blind at [aamandi@csb-cde.ca.gov](mailto:aamandi@csb-cde.ca.gov)



# CHECK IT OUT!



## OSEP-Funded TA Centers

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.

### \*\* 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.



## Meet Your Instructional BVI Mentor / Coaches!

We can all agree that the work of a school-based TVI and/or Orientation and Mobility Specialist is intense. Caseloads span preschool across 12th grade and often into Transition-age Programs, across a multitude of subject areas, and with students who are highly unique in their needs for specially designed instruction that include the nuances of the general education and Expanded Core Curriculums. Now our trained personnel are involved in virtual, hybrid, and in-person instruction across the grade span Sound complex? Yes, that is the intricate, demanding, and rewarding work of personnel trained in blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness. With that said, many of our TVIs and O&M Specialists have fewer than five years of experience into the field and even the best trained and experienced professional can benefit from the wisdom of another seasoned colleague. Now in our third year, we are offering opportunities for school-based TVI and O&M Specialists to work with an instructional mentor / coach. This statewide service is open to new and veteran professionals. The mentor / coach will be available to discuss, guide, mentor, and coach on key topics for the requesting professional. Topics include a gamut of how to provide itinerant services, complete Functional Vision / CVI Range / Learning Media Assessments, work with students with additional disabilities, provide braille instruction, teach the Expanded Core Curriculum, address a student's technology needs, etc.

We are thrilled to have Shelley Moats and Wendy Stoltman back on board to provide technical assistance to TVIs and O&M Specialists working in Colorado administrative units. The bios below will introduce you to our two coaches and provide a sense of their expertise. If you would like to work with an instructional coach over the course of this school year, please be in touch with Tanni with an email request of your needs. Mentor / coaching can be set up virtually or in-person. It can be a simple talk-through-a question or involve more time to address a key issue, that could include (with permission) observation of a child and later dialogue about general recommendations about a need area (e. g., designing materials for visual engagement, building a calendar for a child with blindness/visual impairment and additional disabilities, navigating a new piece of technology).

- **Shelley Moats** graduated from Brigham Young University with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education / Special Education with an emphasis in Vision. She has a Master's Degree from UNC in Special Education/Severe Needs/Vision and also certified in Orientation & Mobility. Shelley has worked teaching children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind for over 25 years, and has specialized in a variety of areas within the field. Along with being certified in O&M, she has also received her Colorado UEB braille certification. She has extensive knowledge of the IEP. She is an expert in functional vision assessments, working with students with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) and teaching technology to students with visual impairments. Shelley has spent most of her teaching career (22 years) with Douglas County School District and was the team lead for 7 of those years. She enjoys working with teachers of students with blindness/visual impairment and collaborating with classroom teachers and school personnel to provide the best instruction for students. Shelley is also a TA Specialist for the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. Shelley and her husband Bill have five children and soon to be 12 grandchildren. She loves the outdoors, biking, running, and most of all spending time with her family and friends.
- **Wendy Stoltman** may be retired on paper, but is a continuously learning and growing teacher for children who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind. She is a TVI, a COMS, and a Certified Low Vision Specialist. She was a TVI / O&M Specialist in Brighton School District for many years. Prior to teaching children with visual impairment / blindness, and deaf-blindness, Wendy taught students with emotional/behavior disabilities. She is a member of the CDE Low Vision Evaluation Team and a TA Specialist with the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. Her passion is for kids with multiple disabilities. Including deaf-blindness, and the creativity it takes to enable them to participate fully in their schools and communities. Wendy also has strengths in assessing functional vision, communicating the results to team members, and planning and implementing teaching strategies and accommodations in the classroom. She has skills in training on the care and use of low vision devices. Wendy is originally from Madison, Wisconsin and is a true Badger and Green Bay Packer fan inside and out. In her spare time, Wendy enjoys gardening, hiking, biking and working out.

# 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. For more information, go to [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

## 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



Early Childhood  
Technical Assistance Center

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. 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/professionalllearning>.

Contact Laura Bengé at [laura.benge@hknc.org](mailto:laura.benge@hknc.org) or my assistant at [taryn.hill@hknc.org](mailto:taryn.hill@hknc.org). They will give you a coupon code to that course.

## Braille Paper Resources

This is a friendly reminder that the CIMC stopped providing braille paper a few years ago. At that time, we removed the braille paper order form from our website. Two vendors who sell braille paper are:

- [American Printing House for the Blind](https://www.aph.org/) (APH), <https://www.aph.org/>
- [American Thermoform](http://www.americanthermoform.com/), <http://www.americanthermoform.com/>

## CDE Training and Professional Development

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

## Video Series on a Child with Deaf-Blindness

The Hawai'i & Pacific Deaf-Blind Project (HPDBP) is pleased to share a video resource for teaching in person or virtually with youth who are deaf-blind. We have been using them internally and now would like to share. These short videos were made in collaboration with a Deaf WorldTeach Teacher who lived in the Marshall Islands where she was a teacher for a few years at the Majuro Deaf Education Center.

This video series, *The Blossoming Journey of a Deaf-Blind Girl: Kristiann Kalles*, has six parts: 1/6 The Story of Kristiann Kalles; 2/6 Making Your Classroom Accessible; 3/6 Expressive Prompts; 4/6 Inspiring Friendship; 5/6 ASL 1-5 Number



Message from KK's Mom. Check out [KK's video series](#).



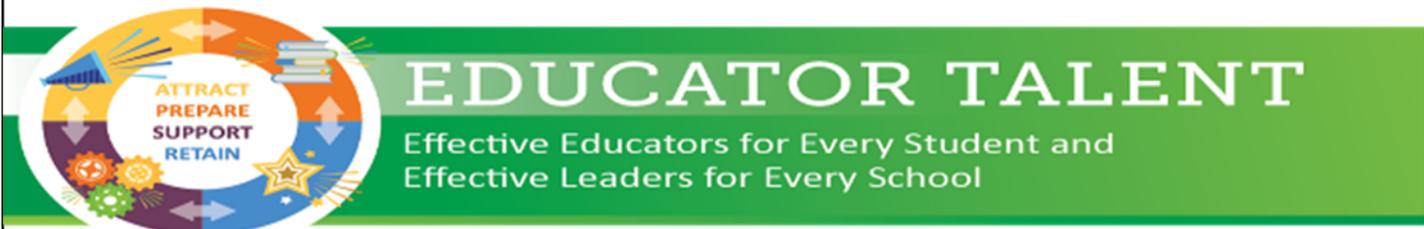
## Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Visual Impairment

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><b>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired</b> <b>Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 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.</li> <li>✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for Special Education Specialists: Visually Impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements.</li> </ul>
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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><b>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist</b> <b>Ages 0-21: (11.03)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution.</li> <li>✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists.</li> <li>✓ 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.</li> <li>✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam.</li> <li>✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP orientation and mobility certificate.</li> </ul>
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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 Orientation and Mobility Specialists 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](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](mailto: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.



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

### 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.

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. 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.**

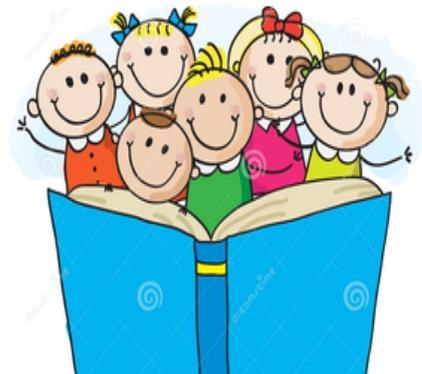
Districts or BOCES may submit proposals to CDE to develop or provide training to meet this requirement.

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

## READ Act Fall Guidance—2020-21 School Year

CDE staff have collected and answered frequently asked questions related to the 2020-21 opening of school and READ Act requirements, including the required K-3 Teacher Training, READ Act assessment administration, identification of a Significant Reading Deficiency, and READ Plans.

For more information visit the [Preschool through Third Grade Opening of School 2020-21 webpage](https://www.cde.state.co.us/early/opening2020-21#Kindergarten%20through%203rd%20Grade%20Literacy) to find an updated FAQ and resource list. (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/early/opening2020-21#Kindergarten%20through%203rd%20Grade%20Literacy>)





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](mailto: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.



## Fall 2020 CDE Communication Resources

### More Resources Available in Spanish

CDE has added to its list of resources to support schools and districts with their communications to parents and teachers about health and safety measures for the 2020-21 school year due to COVID-19. Resources are available for all schools and districts to use and tailor to meet their local reopening plans. View the [Fall 2020 Communications Resources](#) on our website.

This bank of resources includes posters, links to webpages, and ideas for communication and drop-in messages for parents that can be modified to send out about various topics, including health screenings and what happens when there are COVID-19 cases at the school. Messages for parents have been translated into Spanish and are now available. Messaging about the 2020 Census has also been added to the toolkit.

For questions or ideas for resources, contact the CDE Communications Office at [CDE Communications Office@cde.state.co.us](mailto:CDE_Communications_Office@cde.state.co.us).

### Hybrid Learning Guide

The *2020 Hybrid Learning Guide* is a resource for districts and schools that are planning to offer any type of remote learning for the 2020-21 school year as a response to public health and safety measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information about the guide, go to: [visit the Hybrid Learning Guide homepage](#).

### ASD Guidelines for Educational Evaluation

[The guidelines for the Educational Evaluation of Autism Spectrum Disorder](#) contain information that may be used to guide the process of identifying students with ASD and developing appropriate programming, supports and services.

The ASD Guidelines guidance document has been developed to assist school district personnel and families in becoming familiar with the wide range of characteristics and abilities of their students with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and in applying Colorado's category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to identify students eligible for special education services.



For more information, please visit the:

[Colorado Department of Education-Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\) webpage](#)



# Orientation & Mobility

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## 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).

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## [Going to the Playground iOS App](#) and [Overlays](#)

The free [Going to the Playground iOS App](#) introduces children ages 3-5 to the layout of a virtual playground. This self-voicing app includes bright colors and teaches orientation directions such as left and right, in and out, and up and down as they explore the playground. APH also offers tactile braille overlays to be used with the app. These five overlays, held in place by a yellow frame, work with a 9.7 inch iPad and feature the three items on the playground: the sandbox, merry-go-round, and monkey bars.

The App is available at the [Apple App Store](#). This app can be used with APH's [Going to the Playground Overlays](#) (1-08148-00), clear overlays that introduce children to braille and tactile maps



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## 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](mailto:joanne.hirsch@state.co.us). Or go to the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind's (CCDHHDB) web site at <https://ccdhhdb.com/>



# Calendar of Events



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

- September 16**      **BVI Office Hours** —Topic: Self-Care and Family Engagement with Bill Brown  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) (Tanni will send registration link)
- September 17**      **Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting - 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.**—Cherry Creek Schools, CO  
 Contact: Jeannie Lei at [jlei@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org)
- September 18**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.**  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- September 19**      **Colorado Parents of Blind Children**—Zoom meeting at 1:00 p.m.  
[Zoom Meeting Link](#) Meeting ID: 885 0922 5463 Passcode: 150567  
 Contact Email: [coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com](mailto:coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com) or (970)-222-0400
- September 23**      **BVI Office Hours** —Topic: CIMC New Products Update  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) (Tanni will send registration link)
- October 2**            **CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)** - Zoom  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- October 7**            **BVI Office Hours** —Topic: TBD  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) (Tanni will send registration link)
- October 8-9**          **APH Virtual Annual Meeting**— Louisville, KY  
 Contact: [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)
- October 8**            **Due date for Tools for Life Application**  
 Visit [See the Future](https://www.seethefuture.org/learn-more-tools-for-life.html) (https://www.seethefuture.org/learn-more-tools-for-life.html)
- October 8**            **CAER Chapter Meetings**—5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - [meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu](https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu)  
 Contact: Nancy Cozart – [ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us)
- October 16**          **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.**  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- October 20**          **Tactile Art Club (TAC)** —virtual  
 Contact: Rishika Kartik at [rishikakartik@gmail.com](mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com)
- October 20**          **CO State NFB Convention** - virtual  
 Contact: TBD
- October 21**          **BVI Office Hours** —Topic: TBD  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) (Tanni will send registration link)




# Calendar of Events

2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
November 1	<b>CAER Mini Grants Due!</b> Contact: Heather Solberg at <a href="mailto:heather.solberg@va.gov">heather.solberg@va.gov</a>											
November 4	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> —Topic: TBD Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a> (Tanni will send registration link)											
November 5	<b>Vision Coalition (8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)</b> - Zoom Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>											
November 6	<b>CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)</b> - Zoom Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>											
November 12	<b>CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.</b> – Google Meet - <a href="https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu">meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu</a> Contact: Nancy Cozart – <a href="mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us">ncozart@lps.k12.co.us</a>											
November 12	<b>Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting - 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.</b> —hosted by Denver Public Schools Contact: Jeannie Lei at <a href="mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org">jlei@cherrycreekschools.org</a>											
November 13	<b>Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.</b> Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>											
November 17	<b>Tactile Art Club (TAC)</b> —virtual Contact: Rishika Kartik at <a href="mailto:ishikakartik@gmail.com">ishikakartik@gmail.com</a>											
November 18	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> —Topic: TBD Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a> (Tanni will send registration link)											
December 2	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> —Topic: TBD Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a> (Tanni will send registration link)											
December 4	<b>CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)</b> - Zoom Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>											
December 10	<b>CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.</b> – Google Meet - <a href="https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu">meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu</a> Contact: Nancy Cozart – <a href="mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us">ncozart@lps.k12.co.us</a>											
December 18	<b>Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.</b> Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>											
December 20	<b>Tactile Art Club (TAC)</b> —virtual Contact: Rishika Kartik at <a href="mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com">rishikakartik@gmail.com</a>											




# Calendar of Events

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

January 8	<b>CIMC Second Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m.)</b> - Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
January 14	<b>CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.</b> – Google Meet - <a href="https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu">meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu</a> <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart – <a href="mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us">ncozart@lps.k12.co.us</a>
January 15	<b>Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.</b> <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
February 5	<b>CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)</b> - Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
February 11	<b>Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting - 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.</b> —hosted by Littleton Public Schools <u>Contact:</u> Jeannie Lei at <a href="mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org">jlei@cherrycreekschools.org</a>
February 11	<b>CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.</b> – Google Meet - <a href="https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu">meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu</a> <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart – <a href="mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us">ncozart@lps.k12.co.us</a>
February 11-15	<b>Winter Mountain Mobility—Adaptive Sports Center—Crested Butte, CO</b> <u>Contact:</u> Mike Plansker at <a href="mailto:pla011923@adams12.org">pla011923@adams12.org</a>
February 18	<b>Vision Coalition (8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)</b> - virtual or in-person <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
February 19	<b>Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.</b> <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
March 1	<b>Due date for See the Future Scholarship Application</b> Visit <a href="https://www.seethefuture.org/home.html">See the Future</a> ( <a href="https://www.seethefuture.org/home.html">https://www.seethefuture.org/home.html</a> )
March 5	<b>CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)</b> - Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
March 11	<b>CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.</b> – Google Meet - <a href="https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu">meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu</a> <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart – <a href="mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us">ncozart@lps.k12.co.us</a>
March 19	<b>Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.</b> <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
April 2	<b>CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)</b> - Zoom <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>



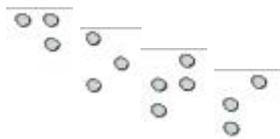
# Calendar of Events



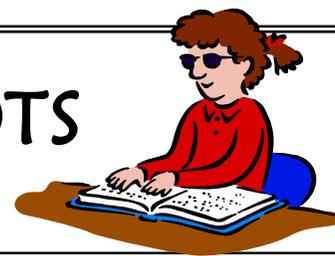
2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021

- April 8**      **CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.** – Google Meet - [meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu](https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu)  
Contact: Nancy Cozart – [ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us)
- April 16**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- April 22**      **Metro Region TVI/COMS Meeting - 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.**—Aurora Public Schools, CO  
Contact: Jeannie Lei at [jlei@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org)
- May 7**      **CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)** - Zoom  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- May 13**      **CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.** – Google Meet - [meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu](https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu)  
Contact: Nancy Cozart – [ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us)
- May 21**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.**  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- June 4**      **CIMC First Friday Training Session (9:00—10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.)** - Zoom  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- June 10**      **CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m.** – Google Meet - [meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu](https://meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu)  
Contact: Nancy Cozart – [ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us)





# 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:

<b>Tanni Anthony</b>	(303) 866-6681	<a href="mailto:Anthony_T@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_T@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Nancy Cozart</b>	(303) 905-4074	<a href="mailto:Cozart_N@cde.state.co.us">Cozart_N@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Christine Maynard</b>	(719) 229-4981	<a href="mailto:Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us">Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Brenda Shepard</b>	(303) 995-7913	<a href="mailto:Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us">Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Sarah Sonnier</b>	(970) 245-5228	<a href="mailto:Sonnier_S@cde.state.co.us">Sonnier_S@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Julie Wetzstein</b>	(303) 819-7887	<a href="mailto:Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us">Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us</a>

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.

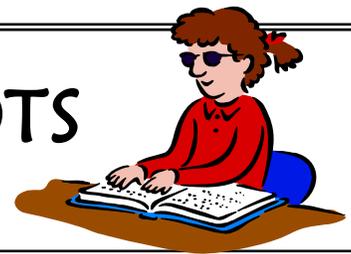
The Practice Test items have been posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs).

## Braillewriter Repair

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



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](http://www.tactilereading.org).

## Call for abstracts:

**They 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

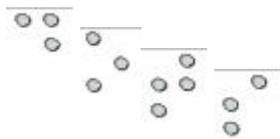
## Call for Abstracts

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



## LEGO® Braille Bricks are Now Available

They're here! The American Printing House for the Blind is excited to be an official partner of LEGO Braille Bricks, and is looking forward to distributing LEGO Braille Bricks to students in the United States. The bright colored bricks, molded with studs that correspond to numbers and letters in the braille alphabet, allow students who are blind and sighted to play and learn together. LEGO Braille Bricks were developed by the LEGO Foundation and will be distributed for free by APH to our education audience only.

For more information about ordering LEGO Braille Bricks, read the [A Fun Way to Reinforce Braille Skills blog](#).

## BrailleBuzz App

The free [BrailleBuzz App](#) for [Android](#) and [iOS](#) devices introduces electronic braille to children who are blind or visually impaired. Fun sounds and activities also teach children the skills necessary to perform basic activities for controlling the app and identifying braille letters.

This app was specifically designed for use with the American Printing House for the BrailleTrail Reader LE and Chameleon 20 refreshable braille displays, but it also works with any connected display.

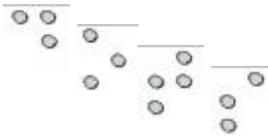
For more information, visit [American Printing House/BrailleBuzz App](#) or visit the website at: <https://www.aph.org/product/braillebuzz-app/>



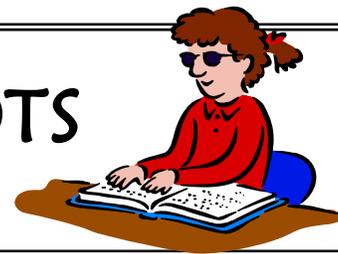
## **Project Inspire – Be Inspired to Learn more about the Nemeth Code in UEB Context**

Thanks to Paula Conroy for sharing information about Project Inspire, which is an [Introduction to Nemeth Code Symbols Used in Grades 2 to 5 and Strategies for Supporting Elementary Students in Building Math Skills](#). The focus is Grades 2 to 5 and Strategies for Supporting Elementary Student in Building Math Skills. The content was completed by an impressive team of field leaders. You can complete this free course, which includes short introductory videos to get you started. Training content includes fractions, spatial problems, Nemeth in UEB contexts, and a lot more.

**Check it out at:** [https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/search-results?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=project+inspire](https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/search-results?search_api_views_fulltext=project+inspire)



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## UEB Braille Online Resources

[UEB Online website](https://uebonline.org/) (<https://uebonline.org/>) is administered by the RIDBC Renwick Centre, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC). This website offers free, online training programs in braille literacy and mathematics using the Unified English Braille (UEB) code. The purpose of the UEB Online website is to promote equitable information access and expression in braille for persons with blindness and severe vision impairment.

For those who are familiar with the UEB Online website, you will discover that we have given the website a “facelift” to accommodate our new UEB mathematics training programs. We have created a single website by merging our previous two UEB Online websites for sighted learners and learners with vision impairment or other print disabilities.

The UEB Online training programs are suitable for anyone who wants to learn braille. This includes educators, families, allied health professionals, and education administrators and policy makers who promote the use of braille as a medium for information access and communication.

UEB Online has been created using accessible, inclusive digital technologies that enable equal information access for all.

- **Visual access mode:** For people with sufficient sight to access regular sized print-based information on the website,
- **High contrast mode:** For people with low vision who wish to adjust the font size, background colour or text colour,
- **Non-Visual access mode:** For people who wish to use a screen reader for accessing website information.

To complete the UEB Online lessons, you will need a computer and internet connection. See [System Requirements](#) for more detail.

Please note that the lessons cannot be completed using an iPad, smart phone or other hand held device.

To get started:

1. [Register](#). You are required to register and create a personal password in order to track your progress through the lessons and save your work. Registration enables you complete, save and re-open you lessons from any computer that is connected to the internet.
2. [Keyboard check](#), to ensure that your keyboard is compatible with the braille lessons.
3. [How to complete the lessons](#). This section of the website explains how to complete lessons, how automated marking works, and how to apply for a completion certificates (if required). This section also includes information about accessing the UEB Online website using the visual and non-visual access options.
4. Select your UEB training program.
  - a. [UEB Literacy](#) consists of two modules that, together, address the literacy aspects of Unified English Braille. Module 1 presents lessons 1-14, and Module 2 presents lessons 15-31.
  - b. [UEB Introductory Mathematics](#) is presented as ten lessons that address mathematics symbols and expressions that are encountered during the primary years of schooling. It is recommended that the UEB Literacy modules are completed prior to commencing UEB Introductory Mathematics.
  - c. [UEB Advanced Mathematics](#) consists of ten lessons that address mathematics symbols and expressions that are encountered during the junior years of secondary schooling. The UEB Introductory Mathematics topic **must** be completed before commencing the UEB Extension Mathematics topic.
  - d. [UEB Extension Mathematics](#) consists of ten lessons that address mathematics symbols and expressions that are encountered during the senior years of secondary schooling. Both the UEB Introductory Mathematics and UEB Advanced Mathematics topics **must** be completed before commencing the UEB Extension Mathematics topic.



## 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.

### A New Opportunity - Employment First

The Colorado Employment First Advisory Partnership (EFAP) recommended an office be formed to coordinate Employment First efforts for the state, to promote competitive integrated employment, and to be a training hub for service providers, job seekers and their families, as well as employers. An appropriation was approved in 2019 by the Joint Budget Committee of the Colorado Legislature and these funds were matched with Federal dollars by the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Employment First is an effort taken on by states to change systems and create a reality of meaningful work for all people with disabilities, including people with significant and complex disabilities. In an Employment First state, the opportunity to work for competitive wages needs to be provided as the first and primary option by taxpayer-funded program staff.

For more information visit [Colorado Office of Employment First](https://employmentfirstcolorado.org/) (https://employmentfirstcolorado.org/)

#### Calling All Youth!

Please sign up for an exciting opportunity to share your voice during the Youth Disability Employment Listening Sessions! The goal of this event is to provide Colorado’s youth and young adults with disabilities with a leadership opportunity to use their voice and provide suggestions and guidance on how the Colorado Office of Employment First can help prepare and support them in employment.



**COLORADO OFFICE OF  
EMPLOYMENT FIRST**  
— Work Elevated —

[CLICK HERE](#), to register!



## TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

### Disability Benefits 101—Leadership Kickoff Meeting Opportunity

**Employment First**—The Colorado Office of Employment First (COEF) is leading our State in an exciting new project to serve Coloradans with disabilities, their families, and networks of support. They are beginning production of a web-based benefits estimator and employment resource tool called [Disability Benefits 101 or DB101](#). ([www.db101.org](http://www.db101.org)) This project was made possible by the dedication of the Employment First Advisory Partnership (EFAP), Colorado Department of Labor (CDLE), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Colorado Association for Supporting Persons in Employment First (CO APSE) and many other advocacy organizations.

**What is DB101?** DB101 is a comprehensive website offering federal & state-focused tools and information for career exploration and planning, health coverage options, and disability benefits for Coloradans with Disabilities!

#### Why DB101?

- 24/7 access to interactive, self-directed planning tools
- Real-time support to plan for, accept, or change employment
- Resource tool for service providers, parents, support systems, and communities

Create and explore scenarios that match real life to learn how employment, earnings, marital status, and other circumstances may affect health coverage and benefits!

#### Exciting Features - Spanish Version & Colorado Medicaid Buy-In Estimator

COEF is engaging leaders that represent organizations that support inclusive, meaningful and competitive employment for all Coloradans, subject matter experts in federal, state and local benefits, and many stakeholders. A demonstration and discussion of this project has been scheduled specifically for you and we hope you can attend. Joe Barela, Executive Director of CDLE, will be providing a welcome to kick off the call.

This DB101 Leadership meeting will be **Friday, August 28, 2020 from 11am to 12pm**. You will be receiving a Google Calendar Invitation with a ZOOM link; please RSVP via the Google Calendar Invitation.

Patricia Henke is available for your questions about DB101 and Employment First Initiatives in Colorado - [patricia.henke@state.co.us](mailto:patricia.henke@state.co.us) or cell phone 303-981-1025.

### NRTC Update

The National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision has a new Facebook page. They will offer daily updates, tips, and resources related to blindness and low vision: <https://www.facebook.com/theNRTC/>

### ConnectCenter National Transition Conversation

Recently, the American Printing House for the Blind held a National Transition Conversation for professionals working in transition for children and young adults who are blind or visually impaired. Check out the recording of the [National Transition Conversation meeting](#). Visit the website directly at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbGXNymUGDI>

If you would like to be involved, please, join the discussion by emailing [nationaltransition@freelists.org](mailto:nationaltransition@freelists.org) or by visiting the [group webpage](https://www.freelists.org/list/nationaltransition) (<https://www.freelists.org/list/nationaltransition>)

# 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](https://nceo.info/About/projects/improving-instruction/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.



**Offered by:**  
The Colorado  
Department of Education  
Exceptional Student Services Unit



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## Family, School, and Community Partnering (FSCP) Online Learning Opportunities

- WHO:** **All Education Stakeholders, Including Family and Community Members**  
Team participation is encouraged. See table below for suggested registrants.
- WHAT:** **Three Online Courses, with Specific Topics and Focus Areas**  
Various Credit Options: Adams State University (for a fee) OR Continuing Education Hours (free of charge) OR Auditing (free of charge).
- WHEN:** Various 2020 Fall dates, included in the table below.
- WHERE:** Online via Moodle.

Course Description	Target Audience	Dates	Links to Register
<p><b>Family, School, and Community Partnering High Impact Strategies: Communicating and Designing Homework “Two-Way”</b></p> <p>This course provides information, resources, and skills in developing effective reciprocal communication and homework practices, which can improve student achievement. Application to site or situation is a focus.</p>	Pre-12 General and Special Educators, Counselors, Related Service Providers, Higher Education Faculty	10.5.20-10.19.20	<a href="#">Fall 2020</a>
<p><b>Multi-Tiered Family, School, and Community Partnering*</b></p> <p>This course builds upon the strong research base supporting the importance of family-school partnerships in student learning. There is integration of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships (PTA, 2008). Participants can adapt specific assignments and tools to meet their learning needs.</p>	All Stakeholders: Educators, Family and Community Members, Related Service Providers, School Board Members, Advocates, Higher Education Faculty	10.19.20 - 11.30.20	<a href="#">Fall 2020</a>
<p><b>Family-School Partnering at the Secondary Level*</b></p> <p>This course includes the essential components of the general Multi-Tiered Family, School, and Community Partnering course, but has a clear emphasis on partnering issues in middle and high school. Topics include dropout prevention, post-secondary and workforce readiness, and the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP).</p>	All Stakeholders: Secondary General and Special Educators, Family and Community Members, Counselors, Related Service Providers, Higher Education Faculty	10.19.20-11.30.20	<a href="#">Fall 2020</a>

\* Please Note: Participants must choose which of these two courses is most relevant for them; credit can only be given for one.

### Colorado Department of Education

For more information, contact Joyce Thiessen-Barrett

1560 Broadway, Denver, CO 80202 • (303) 866-6757 • Barrett\_J@cde.state.co.us

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

# just for PARENTS

## Parent Focus Group – Want to Contribute?

The American Printing House for the Blind wants to hear from parents. They are forming a focus group to determine the future direction of FamilyConnect. If you are a parent of a child who is blind or visually impaired, please consider sharing your thoughts with us. They will discuss new content on the website, outreach programs such as webinars and podcasts, what information and services are needed to meet the needs of those we serve, and more. If you are interested in becoming a part of this focus group, please contact us by calling the [APH ConnectCenter](tel:8002325463) at (800) 232-5463, or by emailing [connectcenter@aph.org](mailto:connectcenter@aph.org).

## Colorado Parents of Blind Children Division

We are excited to announce the renewal of the Colorado Parents of Blind Children (CO-POBC) organization! COPBC, a division of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado (NFBCO), was originally organized to help support parents and children of blindness and low vision with their needs related to education, social/emotional issues, and independence. Additionally, CO-POBC members can provide support to one another as they face all the joys, pleasures, and challenges of parenting their children. COPBC will be holding its first meeting September 19 at 1 p.m. via zoom. We will be sharing information and discussing potential plans for seminars and sessions related to NFBCO convention. We would be honored to have you attend and share your input, experiences, advice, and knowledge about your family's needs related to both the state convention and the future of the COPBC. The convention will be virtual this year from October 29-31. Anyone and everyone will be able to attend from across the state. Please feel free to contact Amira Lucas at [coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com](mailto:coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com) or (970) 222-0400 for more information

**Zoom meeting: September 19th at 1:00 pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88509225463?pwd=THBZUjFQaGRlUUpqemdkc3NHbFY4UT09>

Meeting ID: 885 0922 5463

Passcode: 150567

Contact us: Email: [coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com](mailto:coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com)



We have also created a survey to better understand family needs:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/summary/kiOy265hc1TnwFhj1MrSnEJ0\\_2BPhSd922R9qnC4Ro2o5u\\_2BYKloqdKsfodyBrit5S2?ut\\_source=my\\_surveys\\_list](https://www.surveymonkey.com/summary/kiOy265hc1TnwFhj1MrSnEJ0_2BPhSd922R9qnC4Ro2o5u_2BYKloqdKsfodyBrit5S2?ut_source=my_surveys_list)

Thank you and I look forward to meeting you soon! Sincerely, Amira Lucas

## 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

## 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.

A wise teacher once brought balloons to school, told her students to blow them up and write their name on one.

After the children tossed their balloons into the hall, the teacher moved through the hall mixing them all up. The kids were given five minutes to find the balloon with their name on it, but though they searched frantically, no one found their own balloon.

Then the teacher told them to take the balloon closest to them and give it to the person whose name was on it.

In less than two minutes, everyone was holding their own balloon.

The teacher said to the children, "These balloons are like happiness. We won't find it when we're only searching for our own. But if we care about someone else's happiness...it will ultimately help us find our own."

# 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 O&M Specialist = orientation and mobility specialist.

### Metro Region – Jobs

- ◆ **TVI / O&M Specialist** (1 FTE ) Jefferson County School District.  
For more information, contact Travis Durocher at [travis.durocher@jeffco.k12.co.us](mailto:travis.durocher@jeffco.k12.co.us) or (303) 982-0490.

### Southern—Jobs

- ◆ **TVI / O&M Specialist** (1 FTE ) Academy 20 School District.  
Please contact Belinda Lujan-Lindsey at [Belinda.lujan@asd20.org](mailto:Belinda.lujan@asd20.org) or (719) 234-1328

**TVIs and O&M Specialists**—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/or work at A Shared Vision. You can work at your pace and needs! Magic!

If you want to be added to CDE's contract list, please be in touch with Tanni at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)



## Meet Your 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). This group has met since even before Tanni came to CDE! Its membership has changed over time to include representative TVIs / O&M Specialists from each of our four broad state regions, our EI / EC agency providers, the Colorado Center for the Blind, and DVR. The Vision Coalition works to build a state perspective of service and supports and identify issues that benefit from discussion and next steps. Input has been offered on how best to announce and equalize CIMC practices to support students. We have offered two Parent Surveys over the years, as well as identified statewide training topics. We have discussed how best to complete Learning Media Plans, draft language for the revised eligibility criteria of visual impairment, including blindness, and build our relationships with colleagues in early intervention, rehabilitation, and consumer-based service programs.

The group meets typically three times each year. It is likely our meetings this school year will be virtual. We wanted to take a moment to introduce ourselves to you. Please work closely with your representatives to share issues of importance and to respond to their calls for regional / agency updates. Their contact information is posted in the *Who Ya Gonna Call* article of this newsletter.

- **Deb Andrews** is an itinerant teacher of students with visual impairments /orientation and mobility specialist in Colorado Springs. She is currently teaching in both Academy School District 20 and Lewis Palmer District 38. Deb represents the wonderful TVIs of the southern region of Colorado. She has her master's degree in Visual Impairment from the University of Northern Colorado and was working in Denver Public Schools before moving to Monument with her husband. Deb has been there for 11 years and loves this part of the state!
- **Tanni Anthony** shares that Vision Coalition was in place when she arrived in Colorado (from Alaska) in 1992! In my role as the CDE State Consultant on Blindness/Low Vision, She appreciates the VC as an advisory / work group for CDE technical assistance and professional learning events and policy guidance. She is a proud graduate of UND's undergraduate program in the areas of elementary and special education, the latter which included their TVI program; the UNC Ed.S. program specific to severe handicapped / visual impairment and endorsement in O&M; and finally the University of Denver for a Ph.D. in Child and Family Studies. Tanni was involved creating the first VIISA training modules, serves as Peer Reviewer of the *Journal of Visual Impairments and Blindness* and is involved on national committees, teaching university courses, and professional writing.
- **Martin Becerra-Miranda** has served as the Director of Youth Services at the Colorado Center for the Blind for two years. Prior to taking on this role, he provided Structured Discovery Cane Travel (SDCT) instruction on a full--time basis to adult students in our Independence Training Program (ITP). He received his National Orientation & Mobility Certification (NOMC) from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB) in 2017. Prior to beginning his employment with the Colorado Center for the Blind, Martin graduated from the Independence Training program (a nine month-long comprehensive program for blind adults) in May of 2014. This past Spring Semester he returned to school following a gap decade. He is in the very early stages of the process, but he is hoping to obtain his Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling. Martin looks forward to working with all of you to ensure that blind students in Colorado receive the services they deserve.
- **Melinda Carter** currently serves as the Director of Children's Programs for Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver. She graduated in 2005 from UNC with her Graduate Degree in Special Needs/Vision and in 2007 with an endorsement in O&M. She worked for several years in the metro area school districts including Cherry Creek and Jefferson County as an itinerant TVI/O&M Specialist until she came to the Anchor Center in 2017. She was first hired as a TVI and then in 2018 was promoted to her current position.

- **Nancy Cozart** is the outgoing president of the Colorado chapter of AER. She is also one of the coordinators of the Denver metro teachers for the visually impaired. She has been a TVI/COMS for 33 years. She completed both a BA (elementary education, an endorsement in visual impairment and special education) and a MA (early childhood and orientation & mobility) from Michigan State University. Go Spartans! She is a midwesterner, originally from Grand Rapids Michigan. Nancy began her career working in Milwaukee Public Schools and treasures her time there. In 1990, she moved to Colorado and began working for Littleton Public Schools. Off and on through the years, she also completed work at CDE. She is on the CDE Braille Committee as a mentor and test proctor. She loves braille dots!
- **Jayme Cusimano** will be representing the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach Programs. Within CSDB Outreach, she is an itinerant Teacher of Students with Visually Impairments and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist providing services in eight districts, primarily within El Paso County. Her mom, who is a TVI, introduced Jayme to our field. With a good understanding of the challenges and rewards that come with this position, her career began in Illinois where she attended Northern Illinois University, graduating in 2013. Following graduation, she worked as an itinerant TVI/O&M Specialist in Northern Virginia before moving to Colorado in 2017. She is excited to have relocated to Colorado to continue working in a field she loves in a beautiful state full of endless outdoor adventures. As part of CSDB Outreach, Jayme looks forward to collaborating with parents as well as educators in similar and related fields across the state.
- **Julia Hutchinson** (her students call me Ms. Julie) and she is an itinerant Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments/O&M Specialist working for St. Vrain Valley School District in Longmont, Colorado. She represents the TVIs of the northern region of our beautiful state. Julie graduated from Florida State University in 2014 with a masters degree in Visual Disabilities. Immediately upon graduation, she accepted a job offer from St. Vrain; she had interned with the district for her TVI bachelors and could not wait to get back here and back to my students. Julie has been working for the district for almost 6 years now and absolutely loves her job. Julie has recently ventured into pursuing a special education leadership license, as she is very invested in the growth and development in the field of special education and, more particularly, those professionals who work with our students. She is looking forward to connecting with you all!
- **Julie King** is our the Western Slope representative. She has worked in education for over fifteen years in a variety of roles including a general education teacher, special education teacher, teacher of students with visual impairments and blindness and orientation and mobility specialists. These opportunities have reinforced her belief in inclusion and advocacy for students to reach their full potential. In addition, she has been fortunate to collaborate and learn from so many talented and dedicated professionals. Julie is looking forward to another productive and successful year as part of the Vision Coalition.



- **Paula Landry** is an Early Intervention-Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Orientation and Mobility Specialist and certified VIISA and INSITE trainer. She has over 25 years of experience working with children and families in a variety of social service and educational settings. After teaching at Anchor Center for Blind Children for 10 years, Paula co-founded A Shared Vision in 2016 to focus on providing Early Intervention vision services to underserved families across the state. Paula received her M.A. in Special Education: Vision Impairment from the University of Northern Colorado. She is also the mother of a 19-year-old daughter, Maddie, who is blind.
- **Jamie Lugo** is the Principal of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, School for the Blind program in Colorado Springs, CO. This is her 6<sup>th</sup> year as principal. She taught at CSDB for 6 years prior to becoming principal. In 2003, Jamie graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison with an undergraduate degree in special education. I lived in Peru, teaching English and working at an orphanage from 2003-2004. In 2004, I moved to Austin, TX and was hired at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. She obtained a certification in visual impairment from Texas Tech University while working as a TVI for TSBVI from 2004-2008. She and her husband got married, moved to Colorado Springs and worked for just one year, as a special education case manager and staffing coordinator for Palmer High School. Jamie missed working with students who are blind/visually impaired, so she applied at CSDB and was hired as a classroom teacher in 2009. Jamie decided to go back to the University of Northern Colorado to obtain an official master's degree in Visual Impairment. Jamie absolutely loves working in our field. She has a strong passion for the Expanded Core Curriculum and working with families to understand the continuum of services available to their children across the State of Colorado. Jamie is really looking forward to connecting with you all this school year.
- **Jim Olson** is a teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI), Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS), and Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT). For the few years Jim has been the Coordinator of the Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC) which is part of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind's (CSDB) Outreach Programs and Services. Housed on the campus of CSDB in Colorado Springs, the CIMC provides braille and large print textbooks and novels, as well as instructional products, to TVIs licensed by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for use by students who have been identified with a "Visual Impairment, Including Blindness" in Colorado schools at less than college level. The CIMC is able to purchase braille and large print books through funds provided by CDE and the Federal Quota Program managed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in Louisville, KY.
- **Michele Reed** is an instructor with the Personal Adjustment Training unit at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She coordinates the Pre-Employment Transition Services for the Blind and Low Vision Region. Pre-Employment Transition Services include work-readiness training, career exploration counseling, post-secondary education counseling, work based experiences, and self-advocacy training for Colorado students ages 15-21. Michele started her career working with individuals with vision loss in Peace Corps Morocco at a school for the blind and returned to the states to get her masters degree at Florida State University. Michele has been in the field working with individuals with vision loss for nearly three decades.



# VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

September 10, 2020

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

**Absent:** Deb Andrews, Michelle Reed

**Guests:** Dr. Richard Jeffries, Lori Mattick

**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 2020-21 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 – no representative for school year 2020-21
- Western TVI / COMS - Julie King

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

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome Dr. Richard Jeffries for an hour of our meeting. He is the new CSDB Outreach Director. Also welcome to Lori Mattick, TVI from Widefield School District. Lori is very interested in the topic of college and career readiness of students with blindness/visual impairment.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

The metro area has three new TVIs / O&M Specialists. Aubrey McDonald is now in Cherry Creek, Michelle Chacon is back in the state and now in Denver Public School District, and Mary Kate McLaughlin is also now in DPS.

The Denver metro region will continue holding their meetings virtually. All are welcome to attend from anywhere in Colorado. We appreciate the benefits of collaboration. There will be four meetings this year. The focus will be addressing in-person, hybrid, and online services for students. Topics include technology successes and glitches, meeting IEP service hours, virtual O&M options, etc. They are open to shared topics of needs or meeting ideas.

Upcoming meeting dates:

- September 17- 3:30-5:00 hosted by Cherry Creek Schools
- November 12, 2020 hosted by Denver Public Schools
- February 11, 2021 hosted by Littleton Public Schools
- April 22, 2021 hosted by Aurora Public Schools

### Northern Region (Julie Hutchinson)

No information regarding retirements or openings for the 2020-2021 school year has been provided at this time. Our last meeting was January 31, 2020, but we are scheduling a virtual fall meeting to likely occur in October.

*Discussion Topics: Updates on Low Vision Evaluation Clinic? We know the fall dates have been postponed, but were wondering if spring was being considered? Response: Yes, all LVE Clinics are currently in a holding pattern. We will evaluate as the school year progresses about the possibility of any in-person clinics. The LVE team is also brainstorming ways they could offer their expertise. This could be a follow-up check-in with the student, family, and TVI from a prior clinic year. It was also suggested that the team meet with district staff to discuss /promote low vision practices. This could and should include general education teachers. Another thought is to take this time to develop low vision handout materials / strategies. We can use the BVI Office Hours for low vision practices. It may be good to identify summer opportunities for students to come together with a low vision focus. This could include activities for the students, as well as opportunities for parents to connect. This was done in the past on a volunteer basis.*

*Virtual Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessments recommendations? Has anyone identified strategies/apps/ tools for more successful data collection with virtual assessments? Response: Good question! This can be a topic for a BVI Office Hours. Also, the Evaluation of Blind and Low Vision Students during COVID-19: A Guidance Document was written to support assessors during distance learning The link to this document is <https://bit.ly/guidancedoc-vi-covid19>. Be aware that when you open the link it will direct you to create a copy of the link, this was done to support people who may have difficulty using Google Drive and accessing Google Docs that are "view only"*

There is an also a POSB Distance Assessment Discussion recording on this topic (you may need to copy and paste link).

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FRaQja9UK2B6--bEfG\\_SEYvmXhzvTzyC?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FRaQja9UK2B6--bEfG_SEYvmXhzvTzyC?usp=sharing)

*How are braille competency testing and renewal module sessions being handled now? Response: We are working to be as flexible as possible, Tanni is available at CDE right now and the proctors are available to meet in public settings per state and local health guidance. If someone has a need, they should be in touch with Tanni.*

### **Southern Region (Deb Andrews)**

We have new staff at the School for the Blind. There is still a vacancy in Academy 20 School District for a TVI. A new brailist has been hired in Academy 20. The southern meetings have been designed for one-hour time slots as a draw for more participation.

Southern Region TVI-DVR Meeting Dates for 2020-2021: Contact: [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

- Friday, September 18, 2020 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, October 16, 2020 7:30 am to 8:30 am
- Friday, November 13, 2020 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, December 18, 2020 7:30 am to 8:30 am
- Friday, January 15, 2021 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, February 19, 2021 7:30 am to 8:30 am
- Friday, March 19, 2021 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Friday, April 16, 2021 7:30 am to 8:30 a.m.
- Friday, May 21, 2021 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.



### **Western Region (Julie King)**

Thanks to Brooke Miller’s initiative, the western slope group has met twice virtually so far this school year! In addition, we plan to meet monthly to discuss ideas, resources, and strategies for teaching virtually. Assignment: Tanni update the Western Region TVI list / TVI O&M listserv. A big thank you to CIMC from Stephanie Crosen and Brooke Miller. They have received their orders and have distributed to their students. Other topics included virtual assessments, strategies for virtual orientation and mobility and providing virtual instruction for students. We also discussed district plans during the COVID-19 pandemic and how they vary widely.

*Discussion: What is CDE’s recommendation regarding amending IEPs for virtual instruction? Should new goals be written as if COVID does not exist? With remote learning, there are different needs (technology, functional vision for digital learning) so should not goals be amended? Response: Check out CDE ESSU guidance at: [https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/special\\_education\\_faqs](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/special_education_faqs)*

*Are there guidelines for students that physically attend school and cannot wear a mask? For some districts if the student cannot wear a mask, they cannot participate inside the general education classroom. Should LRE be changed on their IEP? Response: Again, check out guidance at: [https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/special\\_education\\_faqs](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/special_education_faqs)*

*For information about face masks, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/planning20-21>*

*This guidance is not specific to what happens if students refuses to wear a mask. This may involve district-level policy guidance. The field of Deaf Education is currently working on a “considerations document” to detail what the IEP team should discuss regarding the PPE and the student’s needs. Is this an issue for our learners with blindness/visual impairment or deaf-blindness? People have found a need to check the quality of the PPE for students. Also, trial and error strategies to support individual students due to sensory/ behavioral / low visual field issues with keeping masks on during the school day for in-person learning. Some masks may limit the person’s lower visual field and this may be more problematic. There are masks that fit tighter to the face (one mentioned was those sold in Target). It may be helpful to explore other types of masks / face shields.*

## **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 birth to age three who are blind or visually impaired. In accordance with EI Colorado, Telehealth/ Virtual visits remain the primary method of early intervention service delivery. Occasional in-person, outdoor visits are limited to a very small number of families only if a need has been determined by the IFSP team. As A Shared Vision's 15 teachers continue to provide services through telehealth, we are defining new approaches and often teaming with other EI providers. Even with the unusual challenges supporting families during the pandemic, our services from January through July are up 4% compared to the prior year.

We continue to focus on leveraging the deep knowledge and experience of our teachers to build the community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals who serve very young children with blindness or visual impairments. The staff is meeting on a regular basis to problem solve what is happening during this time of restricted in-home intervention. In-person home visits can occur in an outdoor setting (on a need basis).

This spring we assisted the Colorado Department of Education in establishing an updated statewide vision screening protocol for use during COVID-19. Then, in collaboration with Colorado Department of Human Services/ Early Intervention Colorado we developed guidance and training to help EI providers understand and feel confident in using this interim tool to gather information from families about their children's visual history and status.

Since March we have provided training to more than 400 Child Find and early intervention professionals, as well as interested representatives from other states. Through our training, more than 220 EI professionals are now qualified to use the vision screening parent questionnaire with very young children receiving services through the Community Center Boards (CCBs) to determine when referral to a pediatric eye doctor and an EI-TVI is warranted. (Note: CDE will provide and archive a vision screening training for Child Find team members and school based TVIs)

The response has been very positive. According to one provider, "A Shared Vision presented a clear, concise training on Vision Screening for Birth to age 3. I appreciated that they put together great handouts, practice examples and very clear directions on moving through the process from sending the form to the family to scoring. I feel better prepared to tackle my next evaluation, equipped with a great tool and resources." If you or your team is interested in learning more about 0-3 vision screening training for CCBs, contact Steve Lindauer at [slindauer@asharedvision.org](mailto:slindauer@asharedvision.org).

Now more than ever, supporting our families through transition from Part C to Part B services is imperative. How may our teams work together to best support this process? We welcome the opportunity to connect with receiving TVIs to ensure a smooth transition.

## **Anchor Center for Blind Children (Melinda Carter)**

This fall we were able to open our doors to in-person programming. With careful planning, safety measures and protocols put in place, we have been able to have our infants, toddlers and our preschoolers back into our building. There are also virtual options for families, that includes a Zoom circle time! Dr. King has also been able to have eye appointments since August.

Our families have been excited to come back and the children are doing well in all programs.

We hired a new ECSE for our preschool program. Margi Moldane was at Anchor in the spring of 2019 working on her practicum. Noticing what a natural Early Childhood teacher she was, we were fortunate that she accepted the position and started in August. We also have Tommi Sue Celli as our new TA and TVI practicum student.

We are prepared for remote learning should we have to shut down again. The plan will be providing families with Zoom sessions, YouTube videos and a Lending Library so that they can continue to get some programming while not being able to come into Anchor. We all hope it does not come to that, but we are ready if it does.

## Colorado Chapter of AER (Nancy Cozart)

We are formally starting with the new 2020-21 CAER board and activities in September. If you want to be a new member or your membership has lapsed, it is easy to complete online. Get involved in your professional organization! Be looking for events coming up quickly!

### 2020-21 Board Members:

- ◆ President- Heather Solberg; Treasurer & Past President- Nancy Cozart; and Secretary- Michelle Robinson
- ◆ Board Members At Large- Brent Batron, Paula Conroy, Stephanie Crosen, Barb Galgano, Rebecca Gardom, Jeannie Lei

Monthly Board Meetings: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays of each month from 5:45-7:15 p.m. All meetings are online with Google Meet until further notice.

September 10	October 8	November 12	December 10	January 14	February 11
March 11	April 8	May 13 (and/or annual meeting/banquet TBD)			

White Cane Day 2020 fundraiser information- Tee shirt orders are due by September 16, 2020. The tee-shirts ordered will be directly mailed to each person. [CAER White Cane Safety Fundraiser](https://www.customink.com/fundraising/caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020?utm_campaign=desktop-campaign-page-share-v3&utm_content=caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020&utm_medium=messaging&utm_source=email) (https://www.customink.com/fundraising/caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020?utm\_campaign=desktop-campaign-page-share-v3&utm\_content=caer-white-cane-safety-day-2020&utm\_medium=messaging&utm\_source=email)

CAER 2020 Awards presented virtually at our October board meeting. More information coming soon!

Mini-Grant applications are due November 1<sup>st</sup>! Maximum request is \$300. There is still time to make an application. You must be an AER member to apply for a mini-grant. Past grants have helped with conference registrations, local social or learning events for students, and equipment needs.

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

To get there from the national AER website: Go to <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 takes you to <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/> . We are currently working with national to restore a few links.

CAER YouTube Channel: CAER will be sending out a link to videos on our YouTube Channel for everyone to enjoy. Most of them are going to be Mini Grant Recipients or trainings that we have had. Be on the lookout for an email.

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

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

## Colorado DVR (Michele Reed)

Please note that DVR and the Blind Low Vision Services Unit are open and continuing to accept referrals, complete intakes, and provide Personal Adjustment Training. If you have a student that needs to complete a referral to DVR to participate in our Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), please contact Audrey Wille at [audrey.wille@state.co.us](mailto: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](mailto:michele.reed@state.co.us).

*DVR Staff Updates:* We have a few vacancies to announce including the Field Instructor (O&M/VRT) in Pueblo office, a Rehabilitation Counselor in the Golden office, and a Rehabilitation Counselor at the Denver Metro Office. We have hired an Assistive Technology Specialist for the Colorado Springs office and she will start in October 2020.

At this time due to the pandemic, the people we serve that were on the center wait list receive personal adjustment training in the community and at the center if needed on a one-to-one basis. We continue to discuss and examine ways to provide comprehensive services to the people we serve including: remote training, in-person training when needed, and Zoom groups (Reflections, Enrichment Hour, Women’s Group, and a Braille Group).

During the summer months, DVR Blind and Low Vision Services offered eight Zoom online workshops for Pre-Employment Transition students. These workshops included discussion, activities, and guest speakers from the Colorado community. Workshops provided were:

- Free Time, Me Time: Looking at Adaptive Recreation and Leisure Activities
- Think Big, Fill A Need: Entrepreneurism
- Seven Essential Financial Skills for Young Adults
- Stand Up, Speak Up! Self-Advocacy Skills
- Job Seeking Using Career Index Plus and Other Applications
- S.O.S: Strong Organizational Skills
- Amazing RTD Race
- Transportation Services Available to Pursue Post-Secondary and Employment Opportunities.
- DVR Denver Metro Bake Off

The challenge to provide training virtually was great, but the opportunity to provide Pre-ETS training virtually to the state of Colorado was greater!

This fall, in October, Blind and Low Vision services will offer a weekly meeting for students interested in participating in Pre-Employment Transition Services. YES! Youth Empowerment Services will provide a recorded employment readiness topic at the beginning of the week with an activity to complete. At the end of the week, a follow up live meeting will be scheduled for students to present their reflections or progress with feedback from BLVS staff. Again, due to the virtual nature of this format, we can offer these YES! Meetings to student all around the state of Colorado.

DVR/Blind and Low Vision Services will provide more information regarding topics/agenda and virtual meeting platform shortly. We are looking at how to maximize the use of Google Meets for these meetings. Also, Michele and a Personal Adjustment Training instructor from Grand Junction, Lorraine Hutcheson [lorraine.hutcheson@state.co.us](mailto:lorraine.hutcheson@state.co.us) will be participating in a two-day workshop called Putting Your Best Foot Forward hosted by Mississippi State University’s National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision. We are really excited to learn how this curriculum can form future training opportunities for our students here in Colorado.

*Discussion: How is DVR working currently with our secondary-age students? TVIs are often encouraged to use the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) and there is a need to know more about their training about the needs of learners who are blind/visually impaired. There can be time gaps with DVR getting involved with the student, specifically delays with establishing the needed connections for services. Some students are experiencing more “group support” than individual support. There are situations that are very positive. This is an identified area of need for strengthening consistent services to support our students who are blind/visually impaired. Staff turnover have contributed to some of the consistency concerns. Parents also need support in understanding the process. Jim shared that DVR in the southern region has been very proactive with attending the southern meetings. This has helped build important connections. Assignment: Ask Michelle to make this a topic of deeper discussion in the next VC meeting, perhaps with other DVR staff that she might recommend. It was also recommended to have a meeting with SWAP / DVR Counselors to equalize understanding of need / support practices to assist with the process. There may already be some process-explanation or flow chart documents that we can use to define the process. If not, maybe these types of supports could be developed. Tanni will also reach out to her CDE contact for SWAP about what might be a good next step. Continue to invite your area DVR personnel to your regional meetings – give them time on the agenda to share the referral process and how best to create a plan with a student.*

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

*Mentoring Program:* Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020/2021 in-person mentoring program with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind has been put on hold. CCB and CSDB will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to strategize about providing the Mentoring Program virtually.

*FAST Program (Fun Activities and Skills Training):* To supplement this in-person program, the Colorado Center for the Blind held FAST Zoom meetings every other Friday at 7:00 p.m. during the months of April and May. We put these meetings on hold during the months of June, July, and August to focus our attention on our virtual Summer Sessions. We are returning to our in-person FAST programming on Sunday, September 13 from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Sterne Park at 5800 South Spotswood Street in Littleton. We will be working with the Arapahoe County Sheriffs Office's Mounted Unit to learn all about horses, groom them, walk with a miniature horse, and feed them. We do not yet have all of the details for our October FAST program, but we will again have Halloween themed activities on Saturday, October 24. Time to be determined.

*2020 Summer Programs:* During the last program update, I mentioned that we were moving forward with offering a shorter in-person residential program. As you may have guessed, with everyone's health and safety in mind, we did not go through with this plan. Instead we focused our efforts and resources on providing virtual instruction in the areas of Advocacy, STEM, College Readiness, and Employment to students ages 12 – 21. In total we offered twelve 90-minute sessions via the Zoom Meeting platform. During the two-part Advocacy workshop, we heard from Anna French who covered the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and NFB of Colorado President and attorney Scott LaBarre to present on the ins and outs of self-advocacy. During the two-part STEM Workshop, we heard from Chris Downey, a blind architect who has been featured on 60 Minutes. He talked to the students about his transition from being a sighted architect to a blind architect. He answered many questions from students who felt that a career in the STEM field was not for them because of their blindness. We also had the students participate with hands-on science experiments lead by MSU Chemistry Major and recent CCB Graduate Charis Glatthar. It was amazing to see the students' reactions and knowing that there are ways for them to get involved in STEM fields and in their own science classes in school. During the four-part College Readiness workshop, we heard from Bernadine Gantert, Access Coordinator, The University of Montana; Josie Mills, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Instruction, Arapahoe Community College; Valerie Yingling, legal program coordinator at the National Federation of the Blind; Laverne Dell, Supervisor, Blind Low Vision services, Colorado DVR; and Josie Shea, BLVS Counselor. We also had two different blind student panels. The first was with students in varying stages of their post-secondary journey, we had an Undergrad student, a Ph. D. student, and a student pursuing his Law Degree. For our second panel we had students from around the country who are involved with the National Association of Blind Students to talk about their experience with the association and the importance of having a peer-to-peer support group. Lastly, during our four-part Employment workshop, we had a career spotlight during each session where we heard from blind professionals about their profession and techniques/strategies they use in their day-to-day work. The sessions also focused on dressing for success, having a professional presence, communicating effectively, networking, resumes/cover letters, and mock interviews with members from Denver Active 20/30 children's foundation. We provided instruction in these areas for over 50 students from across the country and had a student from Thailand participate in the College Readiness sessions.

*National Federation of the Blind's BELL Academy, In Home Edition:* We were originally set to have three physical BELL Academy locations in Colorado. Because of the restrictions in place, the program was moved to a virtual platform. The program serves blind students ages 4 to 12. During the 3 two-week sessions we worked with 13 Colorado students from Denver, to Colorado Springs, to Fairplay to Pueblo. The students connected via Zoom to a daily class where they worked on b skills, cane skills, tactile learning, social interaction, and much more.



*National Federation of the Blind's STEM2U:* Along with 14 other states and the NFB National Office, Colorado is participating in 2 one-day virtual STEM workshops. Students ages 8 to 18 can choose to participate in either the Saturday, October 17 workshop or the Saturday, November 14 workshop. The program will take place via the Zoom Meeting platform. Some of the lessons that have been selected include Tangrams, Snap Cubes, and Snap Circuits. Students who participate will receive a box of materials before the workshop date. More details coming in the next week or so.

*Parents of Blind Children:* There is a growing group of parents who are beginning to meet regularly. They have a meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>. This group may well be in a place to have a Vision Coalition representative. Assignment: Martin will share a flyer on this group and meeting opportunities.

For information on any of our Youth Programs, please contact Martin Becerra-Miranda by emailing [mbecerra@cocenter.org](mailto:mbecerra@cocenter.org) or by calling (303) 778-1130 Extension 223.

### **Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)**

Training Opportunities: The CIMC will be hosting monthly "First Friday" video conferencing meetings this school year (well, two of the dates are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month). To best accommodate your busy schedules, we are offering a morning session, from 9-10 a.m. and an afternoon session, from 2:30-3:30 p.m. on each date. There is no set agenda, exactly, because this is YOUR time. Please join us from the comfort of your laptop and learn about new APH products, CIMC procedures, your statewide registration, the federal quota census count, or as a Q&A session - whatever you want! Check your email inbox for a link to the video conference meeting.

- September 11, 2020 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday)
- October 02, 2020 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- November 06, 2020 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- December 04, 2020 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- January 08, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday)
- February 05, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
- March 05, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- April 02, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- May 07, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- June 04, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

### Procedural updates:

*CIMC Forms:* Since the start of this school year, we have received more than 50% of our APH request order forms filled out inaccurately or incomplete. It costs CIMC staff time to correct and re-enter requests onto the current 2020-21 school year form, possibly resulting in delays to your order. We are happy to help with any questions you have in filling out any of our forms. Please call us or join one of our "First Friday" Zoom meetings.

Here are some helpful tips for completing a request for APH materials:

- Please use the most current version of our forms! These are always available on our website. Notify us if you are having difficulty downloading the forms.
- Use the most current copy of the APH Catalogue.
- Please only request items for students who are currently federal quota eligible. Requesting items with an intention to use with non-eligible students is fraud.
- Please confirm your student's eligibility status. If you are unsure, feel free call us for clarification. By initialing that your student is quota eligible, you are confirming you have seen a current eye report and Parent Consent on file with your district. This is probably the most frequent error on our forms.

- Please complete the current, fillable APH request form from our website, save the document and send it to appropriate mailbox as an attachment. Do not take a picture of your order form and do not scan the order form and send it as a .pdf document. We need to be able to edit the “CIMC Use Only” box on the Word document.
- Please use the correct Product SKU numbers from the APH website or catalog, along with the correct item name.
- Remember, we cannot ship to student’s home addresses. Our procedures only allow us to ship to school or administration buildings. However, due to the COVID-19 situation we can ship to a TVI’s home address. State clearly on order form if shipment is to a home address.
- Finally, please fill out your form completely – we are accountable for federal funds on behalf of the Colorado Department of Education. We need evidence of how we spent our funds and we need this data to be accurate.

*Discussion: We are asking everyone to review these needs for completing paperwork. The CIMC is available for training and support. If there are challenges with paperwork, the CIMC will not complete the order until the paperwork is completed correctly on the current forms. The goal is to “teach everyone to fish” and to reduce the time currently being taken by CIMC staff to address inadequate or inaccurate information. Thanks to everyone for making our system work and truly valuing the great resource we have with the CIMC.*

**Brailers:** CIMC procedures allow you to check out one (1) braille per registered student, with the requirement that braille instruction is listed on the student’s IEP. Braille requests are not dependent on federal quota eligibility. Districts can check a braille out for a student even if they are not included on the current year’s census. However, students must be registered with the CIMC and included on both the statewide registration and library databases. The braille remains the property of the CDE/CIMC and is not the property of the school district. It is intended for school use only and should not be sent home. Due to the current COVID-19 situation, a district may choose to send the braille home with the understanding that the district remains financially responsible for the repair or replacement of the braille if it is not returned to the district in clean, working, order. If a student exits a school district, the school district is responsible for promptly returning the braille to the CIMC. It should NOT be sent with the student to the new school district. Directors of Special Education sign the order forms agreeing to be financially responsible for the Brailers. When the new school district submits a signed braille order form, we fill the new order with the student’s original braille.

**Book Orders:** Thank you to all school districts who submitted their book orders by the April 1, 2020 deadline for this 2020-2021 school year. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the closure of many of the braille vendor agencies, including several prison braille programs. This caused a production delay even for reprints of existing titles in the vendor catalogs. The CIMC is working diligently to find vendors to transcribe the book orders for those districts who did not submit their orders until after the start of this school year. Please remember, under ideal circumstances, it can take a year or longer (especially for Math and Science textbooks) for a vendor with multiple transcribers to produce an entire textbook.

**Federal Quota:** October 1<sup>st</sup> marks the start of the new fiscal year. This is the first day we have access to the funds generated by the January 6, 2020 federal quota census count day. The next FQ census count day is Monday, January 4, 2021.

**American Printing House for the Blind (APH):** - Website: [www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

- 2020 Annual Meeting: October 7-9. This year’s meeting will be held virtually. Pre-conference and several related sessions will be held Wednesday, October 7. Special events will include the InSights Art Banquet and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. The Keynote address by Tyler Merren, Three-time Paralympian (2004, 2008, 2016; two-time medalist (1 silver, 1 bronze). Breakout sessions will be held on October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Bookmark the #AtHomeWithAPH resources page. It is updated on a regular basis: <https://www.aph.org/athomewithaph-resources/> Here you will find listings for: Virtual ExCEL Camp; APH Webinars; APH Activities and Resources; Free APH Apps & Actions; and External Apps and Resources
- APH Webinars: <https://www.aph.org/athomewithaph-webinars/> . Here you will find listings for APH Webinars, as well as external webinars hosted by agencies other than APH.

- Archived webinars: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx0>
- Coming Soon: APH is finalizing a learning management system called “APH Hive” where they will host a variety of resources for teachers with professional learning development opportunities, including ACVREP continuing education credits, which will be bundled into categories such as: Assessment; Early Childhood; Core Curriculum; and Expanded Core Curriculum.
- Online orders: APH has been notifying us that online orders shipped via the USPS have been taking up to 8 weeks to be delivered.
- New digital newsletter: *The Sensorimotor Spotlight*, which is all about the Sensory Learning Kit (SLK). The newsletter is also linked on the APH site on the Educational Resources/Multiple Disabilities page.
- LEGO® Braille Bricks: From the website [www.legobraillebricks.com](http://www.legobraillebricks.com): “The LEGO Foundation and LEGO Group are behind this pioneering project that will help children with blindness or visual impairment learn braille in a playful and engaging way using moderated LEGO bricks. We have teamed up with blind associations to develop, test and launch the concept known as LEGO® Braille Bricks.” This is a one-time only production run. They are not planning on ever manufacturing them again. As such, the LEGO Foundation wants the bricks to be used for generations to come so the kits are to remain in Colorado school districts. They are not intended to be sent home. They will not be for sale in retail environments. For more information about Lego Braille Bricks, please visit the website: <https://www.LEGOFoundation.com>
- APH is the designated distributor for the United States. Teachers will order the LEGO® Braille Brick toolkits through the Ex Officio Trustee of their federal quota account. The CIMC is currently working on a plan for equitable distribution of Lego® Braille Bricks across Colorado school districts. Stay tuned for more updates. Links to the LEGO Foundation webinars hosted by APH, archived on the At Home with APH YouTube page are as follow:
- LEGO Foundation: What we Mean by Learning Through Play  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pD\\_tAth8xg&list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx0&index=44&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pD_tAth8xg&list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx0&index=44&t=0s)
- LEGO Foundation: LEGO® Braille Bricks Play-based Teaching Method  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bt6T627neo0&list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx0&index=45&t=0s>
- LEGO Foundation: Learning with LEGO® Braille Bricks – The Building Blocks of Braille  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hl2OnJM-hs&list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx0&index=45>
- LEGO Foundation: Hands-On, Minds-On, Fun-On: Play Based Activities with the LEGO® Braille Bricks:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_OjF573KM&list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx0&index=47&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_OjF573KM&list=PLUj6DcM1nN3ETBrf17n6IKIxSihSU-gx0&index=47&t=0s)

**National Braille Association (NBA):** 2020 Professional Development Conference: November 16-20, 2020. This year’s conference will be conducted virtually. There will be multiple online workshops each day of the week starting Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> through Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. Each day will begin around 11:00a.m. Eastern Time to accommodate the west coast. You will need to register, but registration will be open to everyone at no cost. Check the website at [www.nationalbraille.org](http://www.nationalbraille.org) as they unveil plans for the 2020 Professional Development Conference to take place virtually this November!

### **CSDB – School for The Blind (Jamie Lugo)**

Students and staff are embracing the school year, despite several changes and challenges. While most of our students are on-line, all have enjoyed having our preschool through second graders on campus. This school year we have a different daily structure. We have a modified block schedule with 4-block classes on Mondays and Wednesdays, a different 4 classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and then all classes (for a shorter period) on Fridays. Students are dismissed early on Fridays, allowing for focused Professional Development time for teachers. All staff are working diligently to reach out to students and families in order to problem solve issues so students can be actively involved in their classes. Assistive technology, low vision devices, braille books, and hands on manipulatives were delivered to several families. This is an ongoing process as weekly lesson plans change, and new materials are needed.

Assessments for reading, math, ILS, and assistive technology have already begun. We will continue to brainstorm creative ways to assess students who are unable to come to campus for evaluation. Elementary and Secondary literacy teachers participated in Pearson curriculum training. Teachers have begun using this curriculum and have unit plans and curriculum maps aligned. Secondary classes are taking at least one time a week for mindfulness activities. PRIDE (Positive Attitude, Respect, Independence, Determination, Excellence) expectations for online and in person learning were reviewed the first week back at school with all students. 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students are scheduled to return to CSDB on September 28<sup>th</sup>. The original plan was to wait until October 26<sup>th</sup>, the first day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, to have the 6<sup>th</sup>-Transition aged students back on campus. We are hoping to move this date up if all goes well with Preschool – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students returning.

There are lots of good things happening with getting materials to students for instruction in their home settings! Students can receive in-person related services that are located on campus. New staff include Grace Gundel and Jerred Sonneborn as TVIs. Elizabeth Arnquest, new special education teacher joined us in the fall. Kathy Bristol, administrative support assistant, has retired. Julie Vinikoor, who has since relocated out of state, was awarded the Council for Schools for the Blind TVI of the Year for 2019-20! This is a wonderful honor for Julie, CSDB, and our state!

### **CSDB Outreach Services (Jayme Cusimano)**

CSDB is happy to welcome our new Director of Outreach Programs, Dr. Richard Jeffries! Dr. Jeffries brings a wealth of information and experience from his prior role in Deaf Education at the Maryland School for the Deaf. He has also worked with the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. Dr. Jeffries can be contacted by email at [rjeffries@csdb.org](mailto:rjeffries@csdb.org) or by video phone at (719) 425-8646.

Sara Noel is a member of the planning committee for the International O&M Online Symposium, which will be held on February 3, 4, and 5, 2021. The planning committee is currently accepting applications for presenters through September 14, 2020. You can currently join the wait list and/or submit an application to present at: <https://orientationandmobilitysymposium.com>.

In-person direct services as well as in-person assessments are being offered through the outreach team. Guidelines and parent signature forms have been developed for the provision of in-person services during COVID

*Discussion: We were so pleased to have a chance to meet Richard Jeffries (RJ) at our meeting today. We welcome his interest in the Vision Coalition and look forward to our continued partnership with CSDB's Outreach Program.*

*Discussion: Will CDE be continuing to offer virtual meetings like the meetings held in the spring? Although not all meetings were able to be attended, the information sent out following the meetings was very valuable and a continuation of such meetings is requested. Response: Yes, the BVI Office Hours have been scheduled from September through December. We will meet every other week. We will have a combination of designated topics and times when we gather to check-in and problem solve.*

### **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. We are pleased to share that the project has hired Jessica Meisel as our intervener specialist and are working on a contract with a second Family Specialist.

To request FREE technical assistance, please contact Gina Herrera at (303) 866-6681 or [Herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)

*Annual Deaf-Blind Count:* The Child Count Data for December 1, 2019 was tallied for submission to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. Thank you to all who submitted their updated census forms. You are most appreciated! Here are key details:

CO DB Data as of December 1, 2019

Birth-21 years old: 157      Girls: 71      Boys: 86

Birth-2 years old: 17      3-15 years old: 113      16-21 years old: 27

Top 3 Most Common Heredity/ Chromosomal Syndromes in CO:

Down syndrome      CHARGE syndrome      Usher syndrome (all 3 types combined)

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. Get ready, the forms for the December 1, 2020 Child Count will be distributed in late October.

*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>

*Project Trainings:* We are working with two contractors now to roll out a series of webinars. Current topics include CHARGE syndrome and the *Communication Matrix*.

*Project Advisory Task Force:* Gina is working on setting up our first advisory meeting of the year. On the docket will be to review preservice and inservice needs, the intervener training and support model for SY 2020-21, and planning for the 2021 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs.

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 other Wednesday from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. The purpose is to have a dedicated time for people to share how it is going in this time of remote instruction. There will also be sessions with colleagues on key topics. Attendance is optional. All participants must register ahead of each BVI Office Hours. The sessions are open to sharing ideas of what is working and problem-solving challenge areas.

*Google Docs:* 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 is also using the CDE BVI webpage as a place for these resources for the broader field. They can be found at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>.

*Annual CDE O&M Seminar:* Stay tuned for what we can schedule this year. It may well be a virtual training unless we see more opportunities for in-person gathers of 60 plus people.

*CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:* We are on hold for in-person Low Vision Evaluation clinics for this school year. The LVE team is brainstorming ways to support the field on low vision strategies until the time when the clinics are be offered. It is possible that we can schedule in the Spring of 2021, so stay tuned.

*Recruitment and Retention:* We have very few TVI / O&M Specialist openings: 1 FTE in Academy 20 and 1 FTE in Jefferson County School District. There may also be a need for contract work up north. CDE has an active job posting for Colorado TVI / COMS jobs with AERBVI and specific to COMS jobs with ACVREP.

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

*Parent Database:* We currently have about 226 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,200 families across the state. The database is used to mail out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter and, on rare occasion, other mailings. It is important to keep it maintained with accurate names and addresses of families of children with visual impairment, including blindness who 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:* We are doing so well with addressing braille competency across Colorado! Tanni is working with 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](mailto: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
- √ CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB)
- √ Vision Coalition
- √ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- √ BVI Coach / Mentor Project
- √ CDE O&M Seminar
- √ UEB Math Training – on hold
- √ Keeping in Touch Newsletter

Plans for this year’s training:

We are hearing people are open for training, but also know there are some great other avenues for training around the country through APH, TSBVI, Humanware, etc. There is so much happening right now, and people may well have video-training fatigue. We may want to build into established structures and shorter chunks. It might work to have a list of potential archived events that could be actualized for that day. This could be formalized to be a true ‘inservice day with BVI topics.’ Assignment: Jim and Tanni will work to organize a flyer that details archived trainings that might be good choices for a TVI and/or Orientation and Mobility Specialists during staff inservice days.

Everyone should read the information in the September-October *Keeping in Touch* newsletter about the 45 clock hours of training on the science of reading.

Other topics of interest during this school year include:

- Effective virtual instruction                      Accessibility in general for virtual instruction
- O&M in virtual settings                              AT Certification – CATIS needs (we have a few in CO)

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENTS**

The Needs Assessments that were assigned to CDE and CSDB Outreach staff are currently on hold.

## **0-5 VISION SCREENING FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Vision screening is designed to determine whether there is a need for a child to receive further evaluation of his or her vision status. Further evaluation is completed by an eye care professional and will determine a need for possible medical treatment to mitigate a correctable vision concern and/or to diagnose a permanent vision loss condition. The latter finding may inform eligibility for early intervention or special education services and supports. The *Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire for Children Ages Birth through Five Years* was developed as an interim tool during the COVID-19 pandemic when in-person vision screenings could not occur. The questionnaire is still in place even with some administrative units offering hybrid virtual / in-person instruction. Until Colorado special education administrative units (AU) resume regular in-person instruction without physical distancing requirements, it may not be possible to fully complete the spectrum of vision screening activities.

The goal of the questionnaire is to provide the vision screening team with a cursory tool to gather information from caregivers who know their child best. It provides information to guide a decision as to whether there are probable vision concerns that warrant an in-person vision screening when such a process is available from their AU or school district. During the COVID-19 pandemic period, the tool can also be used to determine a need for a referral to an eye care professional. Like other vision screening data collection measures, the questionnaire must not be used as a diagnostic tool.

To support consistent interpretation of the completed parent/ caregiver questionnaires, CDE has created a follow-up guidance document for Child Find and preschool staff that can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/cfpreresources>. A one-hour webinar training will be offered on September 15 from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Tanni will review the follow-up guidance for the use and review of this tool by Child Find and preschool staff for children ages 0-5. The webinar will be recorded for people who are unable to participate in this training.

## **VIRTUAL /HYBRID ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS**

Not working

- SSN and DB population and engagement of kids and parents
- In and out of technology across hybrid models (connectivity issues)
- Families without internet or without full access of computers across family members
- Online assessments and how to best complete assessments
- Progress monitoring
- Push in services in a virtual classroom setting can be difficult
- How to teach students how to use new technology in a virtual environment.
- Online platforms may be problematic

- Virtual learning may come with a different curriculum than in-person learning. This has been a challenge with accessibility (braille).

#### Working

- Getting equipment to kids for remote learning (braille, magnification devices, illumination / lamps)
- CIMC equipment that can be used in the home
- Jamie Lugo has a letter to share with families about JAWS license on personal computer

#### COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

This will be a topic of discussion at the next Vision Coalition with a focus on CSDB's use of the *Transition Competency Checklist* and *Career Competency Checklist* that they have amended.



#### Next Meeting Dates for School Year 2020-21

Hold for 8:00—2:00 for scheduling purposes for virtual and 9:00-3:00 if meeting in person.

- ◆ November 5th, 2020 and February 18th, 2021

## What to Say to Kids Instead of "Be Careful!"

### Help Your Child Foster Awareness by Saying:

- **Notice how...** these rocks are slippery, that branch is strong.
- **Do you see...** the poison ivy, your friends nearby?
- **Try moving...** your feet carefully, quickly, strongly.
- **Try using your...** hands, feet, arms, legs.
- **Can you hear...** the rushing water, the singing birds, the wind?
- **Do you feel...** stable on that rock, the heat from the fire?
- **Are you feeling...** scared, excited, tired, safe?

### Help Your Child Problem Solve by Saying:

- **What's your plan...** if you climb that boulder, cross that log?
- **What can you use...** to get across, for your adventure?
- **Where will you...** put that rock, climb that tree, dig that hole?
- **How will you...** get down, go up, get across?
- **Who will...** be with you, go with you, help you if?



[www.backwoodsmama.com](http://www.backwoodsmama.com)



## New Faces and New Places

### NEW FACES!

- We welcome **Aubrey McDonald** to Colorado and Cherry Creek School District! She and her boyfriend moved recently to Colorado from Wisconsin. Aubrey graduated with her Elementary Education teaching license and Special Education license. While she was in school, Aubrey spent 4.5 years working with at-risk k-12th graders at the Boys and Girls Club. She also volunteered and worked for the Special Olympics during the summers as a Bocce Ball coach. She worked as an individual paraeducator for a child who was blind. Aubrey shared, "Needless to say, she completely changed my life and my career path. I worked with her for two years before I was recruited to become a TVI in western Wisconsin, which I did for a year and loved every minute of it before we moved. I have no doubt that this is what I am supposed to do with my life and I am so excited to be a part of the Cherry Creek Team."
- A big Colorado welcome to **Richard L. Jeffries, Jr., Ph.D.**, who is the new Director of the Outreach Programs at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. Richard has been in the field of education for the past twenty-five years in a variety of capacities including teacher, literacy coach, training specialist, assistant principal, and IEP Special Projects Coordinator. Richard has also been very involved with advocacy for Deaf and Deafblind individuals. We look forward to having a chance to meeting and working with Dr. Jeffries.
- Welcome aboard to **Jerred Sonneborn** who is working at CSDB. Jerred was born and raised in Spokane, WA. Following high school, he played college football at Washington State University and later transferred to the University of Arizona where he pursued a degree in Special Education working with a diverse range of students. With full intention to continue his education, Jerred found the field of visual impairment and immediately fell in love and moved across the county to attend Western Michigan University where he enrolled as a dual TVI/O&M student. In the Spring of his first year at Western, he was searching for internship placements where all of a sudden, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) fell right into his lap. He moved to Colorado where he completed his TVI internship at CSDB and, immediately thereafter, took a position as the School for the Blind as a special education teacher. He is now reassigned as a TVI following the completion of his master's program. Jerred is the oldest of 4 children. His youngest brother, who is diagnosed with Joubert Syndrome, is his pride and joy and the person who has been his motive to choose this career path. Jerred shares he is a sport-loving homebody and enjoys the beautiful landscape Colorado offers. Jerred notes that at a young age, he always wanted to live in Colorado and cannot believe his path has led him to this dream opportunity.
- Welcome **Grace Gundel** from Lancaster, PA. Grace completed her undergraduate degree at Kutztown University majoring in Elementary Education and Special Education with a concentration in vision. From there, right out of graduation, Grace began working as an itinerant teacher of the visually impaired in Baltimore County Public Schools. While working there she also completed my master's degree in Special Education. Grace got engaged this past Christmas, December 2019, and recently got married. Grace is thrilled to join her husband in Englewood, CO. As of August 2020 Grace will join the staff at the Colorado School for the Blind as the elementary literacy teacher. Graces shares, "I am very excited to begin this journey in the Rockies!"
- Welcome to **Mary Kate McLaughlin**, who is a new TVI with Denver Public Schools. Mary Kate has spent the last three years teaching in Chicago at a private therapeutic day school, The Chicago Lighthouse. She moved recently to Denver and loves to ski and hike. Mary Kate shared that she is excited to be working for Denver Public Schools, to keep growing in this amazing field, and to explore the beautiful state of Colorado.





## New Faces and New Places

### NEW PLACES

#### WE HAVE A FEW FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES!

- Welcome back to Colorado to **Michelle Chacon**! She came back to us from her recent work as an Outreach Consultant for the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired where she mentored interns in New Mexico State University's Visual Impairment Program. In her 22 years in the blindness field, Michelle has worked as an itinerant in the public schools as well as a home management instructor at different rehabilitation agencies. In these roles, she has worked with preschoolers through adults with blindness and low vision, some of whom also had additional exceptionalities.

In addition, Michelle assisted with statewide blindness awareness trainings for NMSBVI staff and some outside agencies. She just completed coursework and an internship for Educational Leadership. Michelle will be joining the Denver Public School Team of TVIs and O&M Specialists.

- While this is not NEW news – just wanted to make sure people know that **Brooke Thomas** is back working for DPS as TVI. She started her TVI time working at Perkins Early Learning Center in MA, then moved to Colorado and worked for a short time at Anchor Center for Blind Children and then covered maternity leave spots with the DPS team on and off for the past 5 years. Brooke shares that she loves working with all students but particularly loves working with younger children and students with multiple needs including visual impairments. She shares that she is eager to keep learning about all the wonderful programs and support that Colorado offers to students with blindness / visual impairments.
- **Hanna Waldman** is a brailist with Boulder Valley School District! **Brooke Angelo** is a brailist with Academy 20 School District.

### 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 O&M Specialists,** 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](mailto: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!*



# colorado connections



- Hats off to the following people who earned their initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate: **Jared Walker** of Pikes Peak BOCES, **Ayrn McNichols** of St Vrain Valley School District, **Brooke Thomas** from Denver Public Schools, and **Michael Wright** from Johnstown Milliken; Also hats off to **Stephanie Crosen** who completed CDE Renewal Braille Modules over the summer months.
- Many thanks to proctors **Brenda Shepard**, **Chris Maynard**, and **Nancy Cozart** for their work over the summer months.
- Happy forever after to **Sarah Goodfellow** and **Steve Sandersen** who were married on July 30, 2020. The wedding photos were glorious and illuminated such a happy day!! All the very best to Sarah and Steve!
- Thank you, thank you to **Megan Bowser** and **Kiera Zink**, who worked with **Gina Herrera** and **Tanni Anthony** over the summer months to cull information on training and support models for interveners in Colorado administrative units. In total, the team contacted and interviewed staff from the following state deaf-blind projects: Arizona, California, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia. This work resulted in two great forward movement activities: (a) the hiring of **Jessica Meisel** for one day a week to be a school-based intervener coach / specialist and (2) the AU's / project's fiscal support of five interveners who are enrolling in the San Francisco State University Intervener Training: Deaf-Blind Education Program. A sixth intervener is attending the Utah State University intervener program. All six will receive coaching support from Jessica over this next school year. It is exciting to see the intervener work move forward based on the IEP team's decision for a child with deaf-blindness to have an intervener.
- We are so pleased it worked out for the following Colorado TVIs to participate in the CVI Training Series offered by the Maryland and DC Deaf-Blind Project: **Anitha Muthukumaran**, **Barb Galgano**, **Breanna Moser**, **Dana McMullen**, **Danielle Burden**, **Erin Warden**, **James Olson**, **Jeannie Lei**, **Jenna Martin**, **Karen Hensel**, **Kimala Rein**, **Maggie Tutt**, **Nancy Cozart**, **Nicole Anderson**, **Patti Shannon**, **Peg Collins**, **Trina Boyd-Pratt**, and **Wendy Stoltman**. These individuals were sponsored by the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project.
- Congratulations to **Rashika Kartek** for her design being chosen as our official 2020 White Cane Day T-Shirt. She will be receiving a free T-shirt for her hard work and wonderful design. CAER sends it's thanks to all the participants who submitted and they hope you will join them again next year in the fun!
- We say goodbye to **Roberta (Berta) Wiedemeyer**, who is retiring from her work as a TVI / Orientation and Mobility Specialist from Jefferson County School District. Berta has been a great contributor over the years, giving so much to her students and colleagues. You are going to be missed! Best wishes in retirement!

**"IT'S AMAZING  
WHAT WE CAN  
ACCOMPLISH  
WHEN WE'RE IN IT  
TOGETHER."**

 *Essie*

# Who Ya Gonna Call?

## SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21

**A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment** at [www.ASharedVision.org](http://www.ASharedVision.org)

- For referrals - [referrals@ASharedVision.org](mailto:referrals@ASharedVision.org) (general mailbox)

**Anchor Center for Blind Children** at <https://anchorcenter.org/>

- For referrals or information contact (303) 337-9732

**Deb Andrews** at (719) 234-1386 or [Deborah.Andrews@ASD20.org](mailto:Deborah.Andrews@ASD20.org)

- Southern TVI/COMS Region Representative at Vision Coalition Meetings

**Tanni Anthony** at (303) 866-6681 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

- Braille Competency Testing/Braille Certification Renewal
- BVI Office Hours
- CDE web pages on Blindness/Low Vision, Deafblindness, and O&M
- CDE Initiatives specific to State Assessments, Standards, READ Act, School Readiness Act, etc.
- CDE TVI and COMS listserv
- CO Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision & Hearing Loss Project
- Eligibility of Learners with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness or Deaf-Blindness
- IEPs, Learning Media Assessments and LMA Plans, instructional accommodations
- Job Clearinghouse – TVI and O&M Specialist positions within Colorado
- *Keeping in Touch (KIT)* newsletter
- Licensure and Highly Qualified Status of TVIs and COMSs
- Listservs for TVIs/COMs, braillists, and UEB
- NIMAS and NIMAC procedures within Colorado
- Policy / Guidance documents pertaining to learners with BVI and/or deaf-blindness
- READ Act and guidance specific for learners with blind/visually impairment or deafblindness
- State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment / Annual O&M Conference
- Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs
- Vision Coalition

**Martin Becerra** at (303) 778-1130 x222 or [mbecerra@cocenter.org](mailto:mbecerra@cocenter.org)

- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Programs
- Colorado Center for the Blind Representative at Vision Coalition meetings



# Who Ya Gonna Call?

## SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21

**Nancy Benham** at (719) 578-2102 or [nbehnam@csdb.org](mailto:nbehnam@csdb.org)

- CSDB Superintendent

**Kevin Brousard** at (719) 866-3019 or [kbrousard@usaba.org](mailto:kbrousard@usaba.org)

- USABA Membership and Outreach Coordinator

**Scott Burns** at (720) 279-4986 or [sburns@learningally.org](mailto:sburns@learningally.org)

- Learning Ally – authorized CO NIMAS file user

**Melinda Carter** at (303)-377-9732 or [mcarter@anchorcenter.org](mailto:mcarter@anchorcenter.org)

- Anchor Center for Blind Children Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC)** at (719) 578-2196

- CIMC webpage: [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org): click on the “CIMC” tab
- CIMC Email Accounts:
  - ◇ [cimcregistrations@csdb.org](mailto:cimcregistrations@csdb.org): student “Registration” and “Exit” forms
  - ◇ [cimcaphorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcaphorders@csdb.org): “APH order form” submissions & questions
  - ◇ [cimcbookorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcbookorders@csdb.org): braille & large print book sourcing inquiries, questions & orders
  - ◇ [cimcBrailierTechSoftware@csdb.org](mailto:cimcBrailierTechSoftware@csdb.org): “2020-2021 CIMC Brailier, Technology, and Software Order Form” and “Brailier Repair Form” submissions & questions.
- (719) 578-2196, pilot phone number (rings all computer-based Skype for Business #s simultaneously, but you cannot leave a voicemail at this number)
- (719) 578-2197, Debbie Haberkorn, [dhhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhhaberkorn@csdb.org) (braille transcriber, textbook status)
- (719) 578-2198, Teresa Kilbury, [tkilbury@csdb.org](mailto:tkilbury@csdb.org) (shipping/receiving related ?s, APH orders)
- Address faxes to “CIMC staff” and send to CSDB Admin Office; FAX number: (719) 578-2239.
- Mailing Address: CIMC, 1015 East High Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3559

**Paula Conroy** at (970) 351-1651 or [paula.conroy@unco.edu](mailto:paula.conroy@unco.edu)

- UNC Teacher Training Program on Visual Impairment

**Nancy Cozart** at (303) 734-3090 or [nCozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:nCozart@lps.k12.co.us)

- Colorado AER Chapter President
- Colorado Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor - [Cozart\\_n@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Cozart_n@cde.state.co.us)
- Metro TVI/COMS representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- Metro TVI / COMS Regional Meetings



# Who Ya Gonna Call?

## SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21

**Jayne Cusimano** at (719) 640-4869 or [jcusimano@csdb.org](mailto:jcusimano@csdb.org)

- CSDB BVI Outreach representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Julie Deden** at (303) 778-1130 or [jdeden@cocenter.org](mailto:jdeden@cocenter.org)

- Colorado Center for the Blind

**Richard Jeffries** at (719) 425-8646 or [rjeffries@csdb.org](mailto:rjeffries@csdb.org)

- Director of CSDB Outreach (BVI / DHH) Program and Services
- Specialized Independent Education Evaluations (IEE)

**Kathy Emter** at (719) 578-2177 or [kemter@csdb.org](mailto:kemter@csdb.org)

- CSDB Director of Special Education
- CSDB and Enrollment Questions

**Debbie Haberkorn** at (719) 578-2197 or [dhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org)

- Braille Challenge – Metro Denver Contest
- Site Coordinator for Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- Statewide Low Vision Clinic Coordinator

**Christine Holmberg** at (303) 506-3859 or email at [foresightskiguides@gmail.com](mailto:foresightskiguides@gmail.com).

- Foresight Ski Guides

**Gina Herrera** at (303) 866-6605 or [herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project
- Free Technical Assistance for Learners with Deaf-Blindness, Their Families, and Service Providers
- Intervener Training and Coaching

**Julie Hutchinson** at 386-562-6594 or [hutchinson\\_julia@svvsd.org](mailto:hutchinson_julia@svvsd.org)

- Northern Region TVI/COMS Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Donna Keale** at (719) 578-2251 or [dkeale@csdb.org](mailto:dkeale@csdb.org)

- iAdvocate Summer Program

**Julie King** at 970-389-5929 or [julie.king@eagleschools.net](mailto:julie.king@eagleschools.net)

- Western Slope TVI/COMS Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Paula Landry** at (303)-335-6554 or [plandry@ASharedVision.org](mailto:plandry@ASharedVision.org)

- A Shared Vision: Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment
- A Shared Vision Representative at Vision Coalition meetings



# Who Ya Gonna Call?

## SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21

**Jeannie Lei** at (720) 810-1363 or [jlei@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org)

- Metro TVI / COMS Regional Meetings

**Jamie Lugo** at (719) 578-2108 or [jlugo@csdb.org](mailto:jlugo@csdb.org)

- Braille Challenge – CSDB Regional Contest
- CSDB School for the Blind Principal
- CSDB School for the Blind representative at Vision Coalition Meetings

**Debbie MacLeod** at (303) 727-9277 or [MacLeod\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto:MacLeod_d@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Talking Book Library

**Christine Maynard** at (719) 229-4981 or [maynard\\_c@cde.state.co.us](mailto:maynard_c@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Shelley Moats** at (720) 272-8308 or [moats\\_s@cde.state.co.us](mailto:moats_s@cde.state.co.us)

- CDE TVI / COMS Coach / Mentor
- TA Specialist for CO Services to Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project

**Jim Olson** at (719) 578-2195 or [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

- Authorized NIMAS file user for CO
- CIMC year-round registration of Colorado students who are blind/visually impaired
- CIMC braille & large print book orders and APH loan materials
- CIMC Professional Lending Library
- CIMC representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- Ex Officio Trustee for the Colorado Department of Education Federal Quota Accounts
- Federal Quota Census registration (first Monday in January annually)
- Low Vision Therapist at the Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics

**Michele Reed** at (720) 883-7154 or [michele.reed@state.co.us](mailto:michele.reed@state.co.us)

- DVR representative at Vision Coalition meetings

**Cara Reimann** at (719) 327-4079 or [creimann@csdb.org](mailto:creimann@csdb.org)

- CSDB Media Center for the Blind/Visually Impaired



# Who Ya Gonna Call?

## SCHOOL YEAR 2020-21

**Brenda Shepard** at (303) 995 7913 or [shepard\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:shepard_b@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Sarah Sonnier** at (970)-245-5228 or [sonnier\\_s@cde.state.co.us](mailto:sonnier_s@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Jacky Skinner** at (719) 578-2102 or [jkskinner@cldb.org](mailto:jkskinner@cldb.org)

- Executive Assistant to the CSDB Superintendent and the CSDB Board of Trustees

**Wendy Stoltman** at (303) 885-3030 or [Stoltman\\_w@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Stoltman_w@cde.state.co.us)

- CDE TVIs / COMS Coach/ Mentor
- Low Vision Therapist at Regional LVE Clinics
- TA Specialist for CO Services to Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project

**Kim Wardlow** at (303) 786-7777 x 101 or [ainc@aincolorao.org](mailto:ainc@aincolorao.org)

- Audio Information Network of Colorado

**Liz Wieder** at (303)-502-4308 or [wieder\\_elizabeth@svvsd.org](mailto:wieder_elizabeth@svvsd.org)

- Northern Region TVI / COMS meetings

**Julie Wetzstein** at (303) 216-6124 or [Wetzstein\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Wetzstein_j@cde.state.co.us)

- Colorado Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Tera Wilkins** at video phone number (719) 694-2003 or [twilkins@cldb.org](mailto:twilkins@cldb.org)

- Internship/Student teacher placements



# MAIL TO:

**25-43E-3401**

**Katy Anthes  
Commissioner of Education**



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