

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

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

(303) 866-6681 (voice)
(303) 866-6918 (fax)

KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness
May 2021

Little Things

By Tanni L. Anthony

Growing up, we had a family minister who said, “It is not the boulders in your way, it is the gravel in your shoes that makes life challenging.” It is often the collection of little things that cause us to slow down, sit down, and stop trying. The opposite is also true, little things can bring us a flash of joy, a moment of deep contentment, and elevate our spirits high when there are those boulders and gravel to navigate. Little things can make someone’s day and add up to a wonderful year. Let me example just a few that have happened over the past many months.

- ◆ Photos sent of braille / materials left for students on their front porches that confirmed the good work of TVIs and O&M Specialists supporting kids and families during the early and then long days and months of remote learning. Not rain, not sleet, not snow, and not virus slowed down the work of our Colorado BVI work force dedicated to children and families!
- ◆ An email from Mardee Zwiebohmer who took the time after a DB Webinar Series topic where she shared how she had put engagement principles in place for a student and was appreciative of the presenter’s knowledge, videos, and lessons
- ◆ Random emails from Donna Keale who likes to share a cute story about a child she is working with because she knows I will share in the joy of a “kid tale.”
- ◆ Tuning into the BVI Office Hours to see the steady regulars and also new faces.
- ◆ A note wishing me a happy day with a packet of Deaf-Blind Child Count Forms.
- ◆ Getting up at 4:30 a.m. Kauai time to host the CDE O&M Seminar and watching as one-by-one the beautiful faces of 65 Colorado O&M colleagues came to life on my screen. After a long hiatus of in-person learning, my heart soared and my eyes glistened, as I saw each and every one of you who were there.

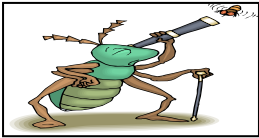
There are countless more of those little things that have happened during this past school year. My guess is that you can think back to some pretty wonderful little things that happened in your life too. And, as we know, when we think back on those little things, we realize they are indeed big things of confirming the instant joy of a shared smile, a child’s laughter and pride of accomplishment, and the bond of colleagues and this great field that glues us together.

Thanks for a great year of service. Enjoy the summer break ahead!! Enjoy the happy little things coming your way!

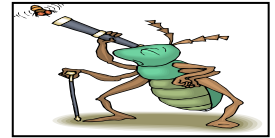


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LOW VISION EVALUATION



Low Vision Regional Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2021-2022

Region	Dates	Site Coordinator(s)
Western	TBD for SY 2021-22	Angela Sims
Southern	TBD for SY 2021-22	Debbie Haberkorn
Northern	TBD for SY 2021-22	Liz Wieder
Metro	TBD for SY 2021-22	Morgan Fitzpatrick and Karin Hensel

We Are Working on an In-Person Game Plan for School Year 2021-22

Stay Calm and Use Magnification!

State Vision Screening and Standards for License to Drive

Information about Colorado State driving requirements from a vision perspective can be found at;

[https://lowvision.preventblindness.org/2003/06/06/state-vision-screening-and-standards-for-license-to-drive/#:~:text=A%20person%20must%20have%20a,\(drive%20with%20corrective%20lenses](https://lowvision.preventblindness.org/2003/06/06/state-vision-screening-and-standards-for-license-to-drive/#:~:text=A%20person%20must%20have%20a,(drive%20with%20corrective%20lenses)

Hadley School for the Blind Adjusting to Vision Loss: Support and Resources

Example workshops and tips for adjusting to vision loss.

- ◆ Degree of Vision Loss
- ◆ Making Your Home Low Vision Friendly
- ◆ Common Questions about Glaucoma

Check out these workshops or podcasts at: https://hadley.edu/vision-resources/adjusting-vision-loss-support-and-resources?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIranBmtbK8AIvTDizAB10tQjSEAAAYASAAEgJ2QfD_BwE





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

Congratulations to the **CAER Board of Directors** for their virtual Breakfast Meeting and Awards Ceremony hosted on May 7th. The event was well attended and a true celebration of all of the great things CAER has offers its Colorado members. It is exciting to see the board of diversity across the VA, DVR, and school districts. A big thank you to **Stephanie Crosen**, who completed her term on the board. Congratulations to **Chloann Wooley** on starting her new term. Congrats to **Jim Olson** for winning a free AER Membership!



CAER Annual Awards Results

These awards are given annually to professionals working with people who are blind or visually impaired. Nominations are from the field and from the CAER President—peers nominating peers and colleagues recognizing others. Thanks to Heather Solberg for sending these narratives.

President's Award: Evalyn Christensen: When talking about Evalyn, It is difficult to pick just one reason why I awarded her the President's award, so I am going to tell you a few reasons this professional deserves this award. First and foremost, Evalyn is the kindest and most caring person I know. She really listens when you talk with her about a problem or concern. She is so supportive of her Veterans and goes above and beyond to make sure they are taken care of. Evalyn also has an abundance of patience. The time I have worked with her, she has tackled some very tough cases. Most of which, she has been able to resolve the issue. She always provides the best care possible. Evalyn is a supportive co-worker. Not only is she there to listen to her Veterans, but she is also there to listen to her co-workers. She is a great resource to bounce ideas off of and gives good advice on many subjects. Overall, the Veterans and her co-workers are very lucky to have Evalyn on the team and fighting for the Veterans benefits and rights. For all these reasons, Evalyn Christensen, deserves the 2021 CAER President's Award given by CAER President Heather Solberg.

Gary Schmidt Award: Michelle Robinson: Michelle, a blind rehabilitation outpatient specialist at the Jewell VA Clinic, represents the visual impairment program when going to a Veteran's home and providing training in daily living, orientation, mobility, technology and much more. The year 2020 was difficult but Robinson remained committed to the program. When she couldn't go into homes, she did what she could from the office to support Veterans over VVC and phone, as well as help other visual impairment team therapists in wellness checks. Once she could go back into the homes, she was right there on the frontlines providing a much-needed service while following safety policies. Robinson is exceptional at her job, but also goes out of her way "just to check in" with Veterans. With a big heart, she is often adjusting her busy schedule and working outside regular hours to make calls that ensure. Veterans are doing well. A dedicated, caring therapist, members of the visual impairment team say it's an honor to call her a coworker.



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

Connections Award: Colorado Talking Book Library: As we know this past year has been challenging. The Colorado Talking Book Library had to adapt and modify their program just like all other businesses and companies. We know staff transitioned to working at home and reviewing voice messages and making return calls to their patrons. Other staff were required to go into the library to receive mail, record books on digital cartridges, mail out large print books and movies to keep patrons entertained. Applications were processed and the allotments of the number of books allowed were increased as a result of the problems with the mail system.

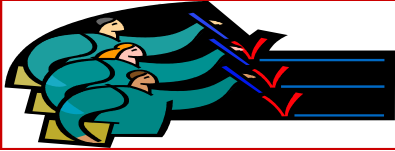
Due to long standing relationships, library staff were willing to give out their direct number to fellow professionals that ultimately gave faster and better services to their patrons. It is the staff of the library that made this year so much better for so many. As a collective group we acknowledge their work and willingness to make adjustments to serve their patrons and stakeholders.

Ken Neve Award: Megann Karch: Megann is a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist who works as a Field O&M/Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, in the Blind and Low Vision Services unit, at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). She has shown great enthusiasm for betterment of the field of visual impairment. She goes above and beyond to assist others who are working on becoming COMS. I had the privilege of working with her and have firsthand experience of her collaborative efforts and abilities to be a team player. To be successful in the field of visual impairment, one must be passionate. I believe Megann has this passion. I have witnessed her demonstrate compassion as an O&M Specialist as well as a Co-Worker to further the field.

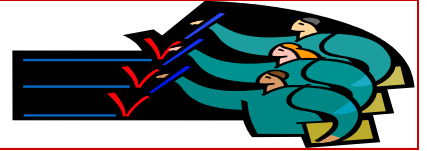
When I had the pleasure of working with Megann, I began serving clients that she had been serving previously. Each and every client expressed gratitude not only for what she taught them but how she treated them as individuals. Megann also went out of her way to make me feel welcome as a co-worker. Even after I left the agency, she would reach out to me to inform me of professional development opportunities. Or when a shared client passed away she ensured I was aware. I honestly could go on and on about how Megann has proven to be a dedicated O&M Specialist, but for the sake of time I will conclude by stating that Megann is very deserving of the Ken Neve award. She will continue to flourish in her career due to her innate desire to better the field of visual impairment. Megann, thank you for your service.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AWARD WINNERS—WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR YOUR SERVICE!



CHECK IT OUT!



Tactile Act Club

This group is going strong thanks to the organizational efforts by Rishika Kartik. Check out her [blogpost of our December TAC meeting](#) as well as her [2020 Year in Review blog](#) with her favorite highlights of 2020 and how current events have shifted her perspective about accessibility, tactile art, and inclusivity.

The Tactile Art Club meetings for 2021 will continue on the **3rd Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. MST**. Please mark the dates on your calendar and stay tuned for more details about the remaining TAC meetings on June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November and 16, December 21, 2021.

For more information, please reach out to Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com.

FASD Awareness Film



The FASD Project has released a 15 minute awareness film. To view the short awareness film by the FASD Project, please go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seUE1Liikjo>.

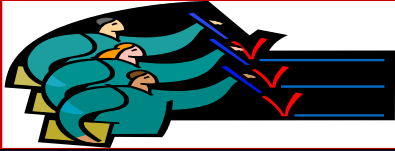
This awareness film is designed for the average person who does not know what FASD is, and after 15 minutes, elevate their awareness to a level of being able to tell someone what FASD is.

Future Depends on Teachers

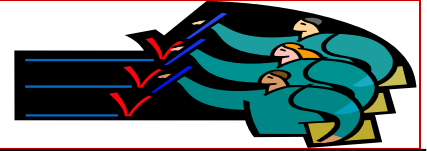
TEACH Colorado just announced a new public awareness campaign. "[The Future Depends on Teachers](#)" celebrates the role teachers play in shaping our future and invites people to explore teaching at a time when they are needed more than ever.

Please check it out when you have a moment.





CHECK IT OUT!



Conference for Assistive Technology and Education 2021

June 7, 2021—June 8, 2021

9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m. MST

Contact: [Registration Website](#)

OVERVIEW

Conference for Assistive Technology and Education - A Virtual Event!

The Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering (CIDE) and the Colorado Department of Education are proud to announce open registration for the Conference for Assistive Technology and Education. This 2-day conference features virtual short courses and breakout sessions with nationally renowned trainers addressing a wide variety of topics related to the academic support needs of students with disabilities. For more information visit www.swaac.org.

Intended Audience: Assistive Technology Specialists, Special Educators, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, Reading Resource Teachers, Instructional Technology Teachers, UDL/RtI Coordinators, Administrators, Education Para-Professionals, Parents, and Caregivers.

FEATURED SHORT COURSES

Access to Math will Help Solve the Problem

- o Presented by Tiffany Zaugg

Assistive Technology to Support Workplace Performance and Independence

- o Presented by Jim Sandstrum, MA

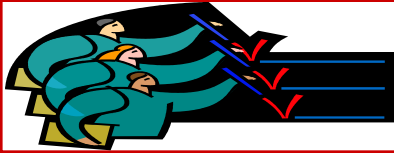
Assistive Technology Tools for Infants and Toddlers: Why, What, and When to Introduce

- o Presented by Debbie Drennan, MSW

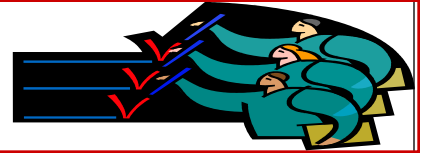
Executive Functioning in Today's Classroom

- o Presented by Cassie Frost, M.Ed





CHECK IT OUT!



Book Lovers: Enter the 2021 Typhlo & Tactus Contest

Do you have a story you've written that can be turned into a tactile illustrated book? Have you read a story or have a favorite children's book that can be adapted for a child between the ages of 3 and 12 who would enjoy tactile illustrations? Then don't miss your chance to submit your tactile book in the Typhlo & Tactus Competition.

This popular international contest encourages creators to make a tactile book prototype for young children with visual impairments. Tactile books provide a child's first, fun introduction to tactile illustrations and provides their first pleasant experiences refining their tactile skills, fine motor abilities, and exploratory skills. Children learn symbolic representations from tactile books and become acquainted with the basic conventions of tactile displays, which they will use in textbooks and other accessible, tactile resources later in life. And they learn all these things from fun books that anyone can enjoy!

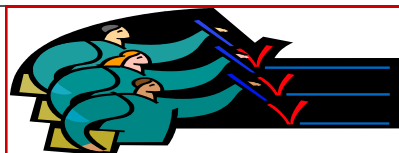
Everyone is invited to enter the contest. Book prototypes must include large type, bright and contrasting color design, and engaging tactile elements that would make your book come alive for exploring fingers. The inclusion of braille is strongly recommended, and we can help you do that. We especially invite scrapbookers, illustrators, authors, all who love the book arts, and all creatives who care for young readers with blindness/visual impairment.

As the sponsor of the contest in the United States, the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) will award \$300 for First Place, \$200 for Second Place, and \$100 for Third Place. The entries will be selected by a local panel of judges. The winners of the U.S. competition will go on to the international competition.

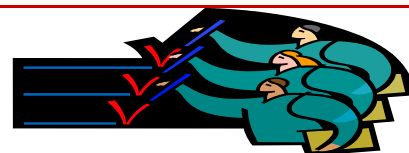
Entries are due on August 10, 2021.

For more information, contact Rob Guillen rguillen@aph.org or 1-800-223-1839, extension 242. We look forward to all the wonderful entries.





CHECK IT OUT!



APH Virtual ExCEL Academy

The American Printing House for the Blind will continue to provide the APH Virtual ExCEL Academy for students in the new year. They will be offering FREE engaging lessons for students with a variety of abilities and hope to model ways that online learning may be used to supplement services. The staff of APH understands that children's needs are unique and that lessons may not apply to all kids, but they are dedicated to working out a plan to provide as much as they can. Beginning January 12, 2021, the APH Virtual ExCEL Academy will be held at 3:00 p.m. eastern time (1:00 p.m. mountain standard time) on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The days will be grouped by age; therefore, APH will work hard to provide classes as follows:

Tuesday: Focus from birth to 6th grade.

Wednesday: Focus from 7th to 12th grade.

Thursday: Focus on students with multiple impairments.

Once a student is registered, the link remains active from **October 13, 2020 until May 27, 2021**. Because APH knows students are not always able to attend during the scheduled hour, they will be recording these sessions so all have the opportunity to learn. Many educational professionals as well as college students preparing to enter the field will be participating in the webinars to watch teachers at work. Remember, professionals are able to observe but please stay in the background just as if you were in a physical classroom. APH will not be able to provide you with ACVREP credit for this type of activity.

[APH Virtual ExCEL Academy Registration](#)

Virtual ExCEL Academy Archives

Missed a chance to attend one of the American Printing House for the Blind webinars or just looking for more resources? Check out their ExCEL Academy and ExCEL Camp webinars on the APH YouTube Channel. It has been suggested that these webinars may be a good way to spend an administrative unit inservice day, as approved by your administrator. The content is relevant to personnel working with students who are blind/visually impaired. [Check out the many archived webinars.](#)

APH Access Academy

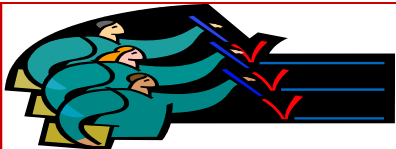
Access Academy (formerly [#AtHomeWithAPH](#)) is a one-stop resource for the meaningful education and training webinars you need to get the most out of APH products and services. From tutorials on new products and hacks on how to get the most from your technology, to information on resources, services, and programs: the goal is to give the information needed for home, the classroom, and the workplace.

The majority of Access Academy webinars also provide [Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals](#) (ACVREP) credit. Credit is only available for the live presentation at this time. To collect ACVREP credit, please listen for the opening and closing codes during the live session and submit these on the ACVREP Certificate Request form linked from our [Education Training](#) page. Following submission, a certificate will be emailed to you within a week.

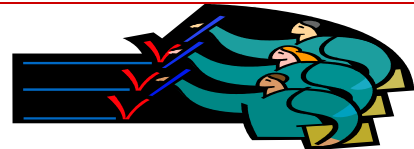
[Check out the upcoming Access Academy upcoming and archived offerings.](#)



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CHECK IT OUT!



APH ExCEL Camp 2021!



APH is preparing for summer! So much has happened and the Virtual ExCEL Academy held 84 Expanded Core Curriculum lessons during the school year to help supplement our students across the United States as well as to provide vision professionals ideas and give pre-service teachers an opportunity to see instruction in action. The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is now preparing to offer the Virtual ExCEL Camp from mid-June through mid-August.

The Virtual ExCEL Camp will include a live hour at 2:00 ET, Monday through Friday, and is free to all registrants. Our target audience will continue to be students with vision loss. Also included are five at-home extension activities for the camp theme and with the camp supplies that will be sent to the student. The Virtual ExCEL Camp will be separated by age groups. We will continue to record these sessions so all have the opportunity to learn.



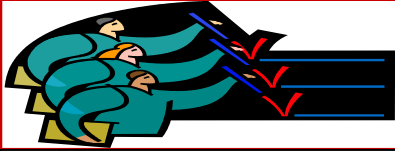
Please register your students with their needs and levels in mind. A grant from the Hearst Foundation is providing students from the United States of America an APH product that will be used during camp so we need registrations completed early! For students to receive items in time for camp, they must have registered for their session at least four weeks prior to the camp's start date. Those that register after that date are still welcome to attend; we would suggest working with your teacher of students with visual impairments to procure the product for use during camp as all items are available through Federal Quota.

Parents, please register your student for one camp that matches their needs. As parents, you know if they would be more appropriately placed with the age level identified. If you are unsure, we suggest reaching out to your teacher of students with visual impairments. And remember, each student must be registered separately and must meet the definition of blindness in your state.

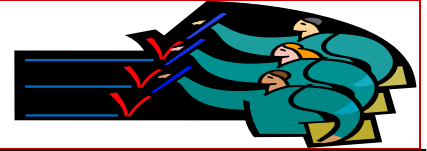
Week of June 21-25:	Art Camp (4-6 years old)
Week of June 29-July 2:	Mystery Camp (7-10 years old)
Week of July 12-16:	STEM Camp (11-13 years old)
Week of July 19-23:	Career Camp (12-22 years old)
Week of July 26-30:	Space Sensory Camp (pre-symbolic learners)
Week of August 3-6:	STEM Spanish Camp

APH knows that many educational professionals as well as college students preparing to enter the field have been participating in the webinars to observe teachers and students at work. You may register for the camps you wish to observe. Remember, you are able to watch and listen, but please stay in the background just as if you were in a physical classroom.

Please visit the Virtual ExCEL Camp page for information as they build up to the camp days. We hope to see many familiar names in the chat room during our Virtual ExCEL Camp. See you soon!



CHECK IT OUT!



A Shared Vision

Partners in Pediatric Blindness and Visual Impairment

A Shared Vision Update

By Steve Lindauer

A Shared Vision continues to be the leading provider of early intervention vision services in Colorado. Check out our numbers in our new 2020 Annual Report! (<https://www.asharedvision.org/annual-report-2020.html>) In 2020, a record 211 families received 2,141 educational service visits from our licensed Early Intervention Teachers of the Visually Impaired. The number of children served increased 6% despite the numerous challenges presented by the pandemic. We are especially pleased that the number of children we supported and the services provided in rural communities increased, 36% and 20% respectively.

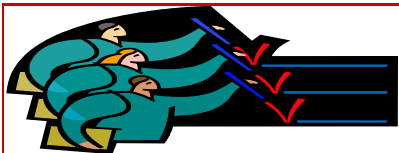
We also expanded our Education program. In collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education, Paula Landry contributed to the update and electronic format design of the CDE *Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire for Children Ages Birth through Five* and developed an accompanying virtual training program. More than 800 professionals have been trained since April 2020, over half of which are qualified to use the updated tool. We also conducted briefings for the American Association of Pediatrics – Colorado Chapter and the Colorado Optometric Association on vision screening best practices and how to incorporate vision screening into well-child visits.

Because of the increasing demand for vision services, A Shared Vision is hiring! Do you love working with babies and toddlers? Are you interested in supporting little ones with blindness or visual impairments, and collaborating with other TVIs? We are looking for collaborative, sensitive, licensed teachers of the visually impaired who are interested in a flexible schedule. We will support the training and mentoring you will need to succeed in early intervention – it is different providing services to caregivers, rather than students! If interested, please send an email to HR@asharedvision.org. Include a short paragraph of why you are interested in supporting families with children, ages birth to age three. Please attach your resume, as well.

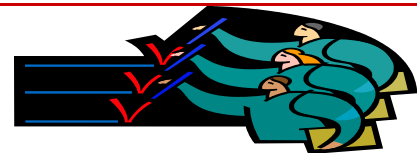
COLORADO LOVES TEACHERS



Thank you for all that you do!



CHECK IT OUT!



Survey Says! Check Out These Surveys!

APH Impact Survey: APH is studying the physical, psychological, and psychosocial impact of eye pressing on those who are blind or visually impaired and their families, to determine the need for technology solutions to help intervene and modify the habit. Consistent eye rubbing and/or eye pressing has been proven to cause physical damage to the eyes, including retinal detachment, scratching of the cornea, and globe movement. Parents and educators of those who are blind and visually impaired, and adults who are blind and visually impaired are encouraged to click here and respond to a brief survey by Monday, May 31, 2021. *Note* this survey is a needs-assessment survey only. You are welcome to provide your first and/or last name, but it is not required. All responses are confidential, and are for internal APH purposes only.



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CVI Survey for TVIs: Please participate in a 15-minute survey about your work. The purpose of this study is to examine how TVIs view their roles and responsibilities with this student population. Upon completion of the survey, you may enter a drawing for one of five \$50 Amazon Gift Cards.

Follow this link to the survey.

[CVI Professional Practice Survey](#)

This research is being conducted by Dr. Mindy Ely, Assistant Professor, and Amy Lund, a doctoral student, both in the Low Vision and Blindness Programs, Department of Special Education at Illinois State University. If you have any questions about the research, contact Mindy Ely, msely@ilstu.edu or 217-899-1193. Withdrawal from the study can be accomplished at any time by exiting the survey. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant contact the Illinois State University Research Ethics & Compliance Office at (309) 438-5527 or IRB@ilstu.edu.

Student Writing Survey: Personnel from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln are working on a project on how writing is used and taught to students with visual impairments. They have put together a survey that should take 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey asks questions about the kinds of writing activities you use with your students generally. We know that many of you have large caseloads that include students with a wide span of developmental levels and our questions try to be sensitive to that. Everyone completing the survey will receive a \$5 Amazon e-gift card for their time. If you agree to help, click on the following link to participate in the survey:

https://unlcba.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9nlzu82gT1zjKsZ

If you have any questions, you can contact Mackenzie Savaiano at msavaiano2@unl.edu or Michael Hebert at michael.hebert@unl.edu.



Texas School for the Blind Outreach Coffee Hour Webinars

5/20/2021 Thursday 12:00 PM Central Time

CVI Q&A—Host: Christine Roman

Open forum Q&A. Ask any questions or initiate a short discussion about topics related to CVI and literacy, O&M, CVI Range procedures, current research projects or....whatever has been on your mind regarding Cortical Visual Impairment.

[Enroll now](#). (Enrollment ends 30 minutes before the beginning of the session.)

5/24/2021 Monday 3:00 PM Central Time

OT Review of Sensory Processing—Host: Lisa Ricketts

Join Lisa as she reviews the terms Sensory Processing, Sensory Efficiency Skills, and Sensory Integration. She will discuss the what and where of the vision system, sense of smell, limbic system, touch sensation, vestibular function and proprioception.

[Enroll now](#). (Enrollment ends 30 minutes before the beginning of the session.)

Literacy Considerations for Individuals with CVI is based on the work of Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzy and will focus on what needs to be considered when planning literacy experiences and customizing existing literacy programs for individuals in Phase II and Phase III (Roman-Lantzy, 2018), and are ready for instruction with print symbols. Judy Endicott, educator and grandparent of a 12 year old with CVI, shares her experiences and some important research-based best practices for developing literacy.

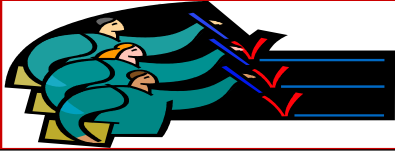
[Enroll now](#). (Enrollment ends 30 minutes before the beginning of the session.)

5/27/2021 12:00 PM Thursday Central Time

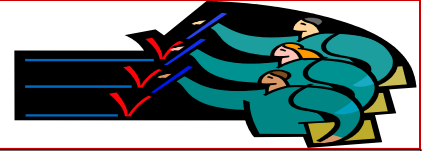
Literacy Considerations for Individuals with CVI—Host: Judy Endicott

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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](#) has a wealth of information to support educators outcomes for children with disabilities.



** 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

[Book share](#) 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.



Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Child Find Count

We are close to a final count of our December 1 Child Count of Colorado children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss. Thank you to everyone who was on time with these data. It is so important that we have information on each and every child birth through 21 years with deaf-blindness. Children on the Child Count are eligible for free technical assistance from the project. As you identify new learners with deaf-blindness, please reach out to Tanni Anthony (Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or Gina Herrera (Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us) to complete the Child Count Form at any time of the calendar year. We count on you!



Deaf-Blind Project Technical Assistance Specialists Needed

The Colorado Deaf-Blind Project is interested in hiring technical assistance specialists. If you have a strong background in children with deaf-blindness, an interest to learn more, and have weekday time available for contract work. Please reach out to Tanni at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us We would love to have you join the team!

New Article on Deaf-Blindness

The [National Center on Deaf-Blindness](#) published an article called [The Importance of Connection in Deaf-Blindness](#) in the December 2020 issue of Exceptional Parent Magazine. It features many of OSEP's partners—the state deaf-blind projects, the National Family Association for Deaf-Blind, the Helen Keller National Center, the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation, the Global Foundation for Peroxisomal Disorders, and the Usher Syndrome Coalition.



National Center on Deaf-Blindness

New Resource: New Podcast Series on Deaf-Blindness from the Idaho Deaf-Blind Project

An exciting new podcast series on deaf-blindness has launched, which provides training and consultation to service providers and families of children and young adults who have a combined vision and hearing loss. In the series, produced by the Idaho Project for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness, you'll hear from some of the world's experts in the field of deaf-blindness, including Maurice Belote, Tanni Anthony, Phil Schweigert, and Robbie Blaha.

The first episode, now posted, features David Brown, deaf-blind educational specialist, esteemed author, and highly sought after conference speaker. The series is hosted by Dr. Robin Greenfield, associate director of the Center on Disabilities and Human Development at the University of Idaho and director of the Idaho Project for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness.

[Listen to the Podcast](https://idahocdhd.org/cydb/resources/podcast-series)—<https://idahocdhd.org/cydb/resources/podcast-series>

Accessibility tip: to turn on captioning for this podcast [Enable the Captioning Feature in Google Chrome](#)

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Annual Performance Report

We just finished writing our Annual Performance Report for the Office of Special Education Programs. It has been exciting to note the project's accomplishments during the reporting period of March 1, 2020 – February 28, 2021. This is almost our exact period covering the COVID-19 pandemic. The project completed 71 milestones or key project activities / events. This is noteworthy, as we reported 35 such activities in the prior reporting period. Three of the biggest changes because of the pandemic have been CDE Office Hours, which have included specific Office Hours for BVI, DHH, and SSN. In addition the project has offered / will offer seven webinars across this school year as a means of training and support. This pivot has been key in staying attention and continuing efforts to build a statewide community of practice. And, most very exciting, has been the intervener initiatives which has involved in-depth training and support of five new interveners in Colorado school districts. Four are graduating from the SFSU program this May!



Colorado Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee

A big thank you to the members of our Colorado Deaf-Blind Advisory Committee: Tanni Anthony, Martin Becerra, Laura Benge, Megan Bowser, Sandy Bowen, Roberto Cabrera, Shannon Cannizzaro, Cindy Cowell, Roberta Curtis, Elsa D'Andrea, Kathy Emter, Gina Herrera, Joanne Hirsch, Cassandra Kooyers, Steven Lindauer, Jessica Meisel, Shauna Moden, Pam Parker, Wendy Stoltman, Silvia Correa Torres, Kelly Welsh, Lynn Wismann, and Kiera Zink. These members represent A Shared Vision, Anchor the Center for Blind Children, Colorado Center for the Blind, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, CSDB's Colorado Home Intervention Program, Colorado Deaf-Blind Project, the Commission for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind, Helen Keller National Center, school districts TVIs, school district Teachers of the Deaf, the University of Northern Colorado, interveners, and parents of children with deaf-blindness.

Project Technical Assistance Via Books and Materials to AU / Agency Libraries



The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project) was approved by our federal Project Officer to provide materials to TVIs and O&M Specialists to expand their knowledge and skill set. The following materials were shipped to Colorado administrative units and agencies serving children with blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness.

In the boxes and packages were the following items:

- ◆ *Access Technology for Blind and Low Vision Technology*
- ◆ *Advanced Principles of Cortical Visual Impairment*
- ◆ *Alternate Routes: Adapting O&M Techniques (DVD)*
- ◆ *Finding Wheels: Strategies to Build Independent Travel Skills for Those with Visual Impairments*

We will be collecting data on how these materials are used to benefit children with blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness. Please send this information to Tanni at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

Resources and Materials

Adapted Physical Education for Students with Blindness/Visual Impairment

Thanks to Sara Noel for sharing this important information. Here is a recent webinar with Dr. Lieberman regarding adaptive PE for the students with blindness/visual impairment. It can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKZ5-sZy5MA>

Roadmap to Reopening

The U.S. Department of Education states, “For most schools, returning to the status quo will not address the full impact of COVID-19 on students’ social, emotional, physical, mental health, and academic needs or the impact on educator and staff well-being” (*Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students’ Needs*, p. 1). The Department of Education’s *Roadmap* has been described as a treasure trove of guidance for schools and communities. Examples abound of approaches used to tackle challenges such as providing schools meals, providing technological access to families who don’t have it, transporting students, or locating and reengaging students who are chronically absent. Check out the clever ways that others have gathered data from community members about their range of needs, and how they’ve engaged families in providing continuous input. Accordingly, the [federal resources](#) available to help states and localities have been carefully multi-faceted to address many deeper realities of recovery. Please take time to read the Roadmap document and check out the federal resources.

Relationship Building: A Strategy Guide for Educators

Check out an easy-to-read 24-page guide full of strategies and considerations to help educators build strong, authentic, and trusting relationships with students and families, right from the start of the school year. It can be found at: <https://s28742.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Beginning-of-the-Year-Relationship-Building-Toolkit-Flamboyan-Foundation.pdf>

Webinar and Podcast | Developing Data-Driven Equity Practices and Partnerships

Using data to determine the needs of economically disadvantaged students and make good decisions about them can help provide more equitable outcomes, meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and increase opportunities for high school graduates to succeed in college and their careers. Find out how one school district put its data to use to determine what interventions were needed and by whom, the structure of the corresponding multi-level system of support, and clear levels of support for academic, attendance, and discipline issues.

The tool can be found at: [Developing Data-Driven Equity Practices and Partnerships - edWeb](#)

Resources and Materials

Videos for Parents of Children with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Two OSEP funded centers, [TIES Center](#) and the [National Center on Educational Outcomes \(NCEO\)](#), recently published four videos for parents of children with significant cognitive disabilities on supporting the learning of reading and math at home:

[Helping Your Child with the Foundations of Math While at Home](#)

[Helping Your Child with Math While at Home](#)

[Helping Your Child with the Foundations of Reading at Home](#)

[Helping Your Child with Reading at Home](#)

Educators and other audiences will also find the videos useful as they work with parents and families. These videos help families learn ways to support the learning of their children with significant cognitive disabilities at home and have conversations with teachers to link home-schools supports.



New Resources from the National Center on Improving Literacy

The National Center on Improving Literacy released two new resources this month. The first is a video, [Avoid a Lemon: Looking Under the Hood](#). It provides information that parents and schools can use to spot questionable or ineffective practices. The second, [Student Language and Literacy Profile](#), was co-developed by NCIL and PEATC. The profile can be used by parents to introduce their child to teachers, related services providers, administrators and others.

Becoming You – Apple TV

Jeannie Lei said shared information at the CDE O&M Seminar about a video of a young Japanese boy who completed “his first errand” as a five-year-old. Check it out at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgNhoV3KfVQ>





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Letter to America's Teachers

I never could predict what might happen in Mr. O'Neil's art classes; I just knew I couldn't wait for the next assignment. Back then I didn't realize all the ways this dynamic educator, a rare man of color leading our diverse classroom of second graders, was serving as a pioneer and role model for me and my peers in John Barry Elementary School. But I'll never forget how his teaching made me feel. As a second grader, I remember looking up — watching him encourage, challenge and guide us — and thinking: "I want to be like him." In the years since embracing that calling and starting my career as a classroom teacher, I've kept that sense of purpose and wonder. And my goal in all the administrative roles I've held is to facilitate great teaching and learning: to support and expand the transformative impact that skilled, caring classroom teachers have for students, schools, and communities. Every day America's teachers change lives, and every day those lives change the world.

Now, this truth can seem to recede as you rush to keep up with the day's intense pace, and your students' needs and opportunities. Yet, from the first bell on the first day of the school year, you build a relationship with each of them. You learn their strengths and struggles, laugh with them, cry with them, worry over them, cheer for them — and at the end of the school year, help them transition to their next grade level adventure. You know all those experiences — both the academic and life lessons — have changed both you and them for the better. You empower them to grow in skill and character — expand their understanding of the world and how to shape it — explore their interests and decide where to make their mark.

Teaching is not a job anyone just falls into. It is mastery of a craft: in fact, the craft that enables all the others. In my experience, great teachers are also quintessential lifelong learners. You use your command of learning science, your insights into your students' unique needs and aptitudes, as well as the lessons of the past, the realities of the present and the inspiration, innovation and ingenuity of the future to help each new generation become leaders for today and tomorrow. Throughout the year you support your fellow educators, add to your tools through professional development, provide feedback on assignments, sponsor sports, service learning, clubs and other extracurricular activities, collaborate with parents — in addition to everything you pour into your students during class.

Even in this unprecedented year, you rallied, finding new ways to engage with students. In the face of tragedy, you learned new technologies and built virtual classroom communities, all while caring for yourselves and your own families. As we heal, recover, and rebuild, this pandemic presents a chance to forge opportunity from crisis and reimagine education on every level. We will use this time to address inequities in our education system, and your contributions will be invaluable. The work won't be easy, but the impact of your success will be profound, for students and communities. I urge state, local, and elected officials to make sure classroom teachers have a voice in your plans and efforts to reimagine education; second to parents, they know our students best.

I look forward to learning and listening from you in the days ahead. And, from all of us at the Department of Education: Happy Teacher Appreciation Week. There's a reason teacher like Mr. O'Neil — and all of you — are memorable. There's a reason student in America's classrooms watch you share your curiosity, energy and passion for ideas and think, "I want to be like them."

You are embodiments of possibility, champions of your students' potential and stewards of their success.

Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, U.S. Secretary of Education. Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, U.S. Secretary of Education.



CDE Happenings

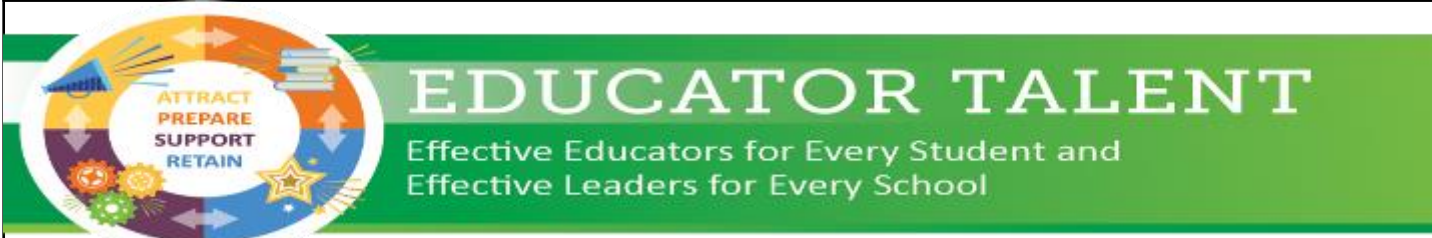
Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

For information about the endorsement requirements for the Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

<p>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must hold a Master’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution in special education visual impairment or its equivalent, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education. ✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for Special Education Specialists: Visually Impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements.
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For information about the endorsement requirements for the School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

<p>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution. ✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists. ✓ Completion of practicum or internship, which must be in a school setting and equivalent to a minimum of 320 hours, full-time, under the supervision of an Academy of Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) licensed orientation and mobility specialist. ✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam. ✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP orientation and mobility certificate.
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Educator Talent Website

Check out the Educator Talent website! Their mission is to develop, deploy and support talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools so that the most effective educators are in every school and classroom and all students are prepared for college, career, and life.

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



Educator Licensing

CDE is launching a new eLicensing system - Colorado Online Licensing, or COOL - that will streamline processes for educators applying for and renewing their Colorado educator credentials, reduce processing time and include more automated notifications for users. The new system will offer each educator a streamlined application experience and process. It will also include increased options for district human resources personnel and improved features for Colorado's educator preparation programs. Visit the [New Licensing System Launch webpage](#) for details, including tutorial videos and resources for district/BOCES users.

Growing Readers Together

The CDE State Library staff implement the [Growing Readers Together](#) program. [This article](#) shared how the program is supporting school readiness in Bayfield, CO. This is such an exciting partnership between public libraries and caregivers to support early literacy.

State IEP System News

The Frontline contract officially extended for one year. Colorado's switch to a new online Individualized Education Program (IEP) system has a slight reprieve as the system the state has used for more than a decade will be available to schools for another year thanks to a contract extension with the previous vendor.

In March 2020 the Colorado Department of Education awarded a contract for a new IEP system to AnLar, LLC, following an extensive request for proposal process required under Colorado's Procurement Code (C.R.S. § 24-101-101) and Colorado's Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) Rules (R-24-101-101). The previous contract with the Excent Corp. (later acquired by Frontline) had been in effect since September 2010. That contract was due to expire on June 30, 2021. However, because of the unprecedented challenges schools were facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CDE determined it would be a bad time to switch to a new system for many of our administrative units.

Based on feedback from the field, CDE submitted a Request for Special Circumstances Procurement to DPA's State Purchasing and Procurement Office in October 2020, requesting that CDE be allowed to enter an one-year extension with Frontline for continuity of services. DPA approved the request and CDE and Frontline began working to develop a one-year extension. Thanks to Frontline's commitment to serving the students and schools of Colorado, an agreement extending Frontline's contract with the CDE was finalized and the one-year extension is official.



Remote Learning Option Guidance

Thanks to the hard work of CDE's School Finance, Auditing, and Office of Online and Blended Learning teams, CDE has released [remote learning options guidance for 2021-22](#) help districts prepare for the 2021-22 school year. The guidance explains flexibilities regarding remote learning and addresses instructional hours requirements and funding requirements for the 2021-22 school year.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Resources



As school and district leaders work to address the learning impacts that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, broader and newfound equity gaps will undoubtedly emerge. With this in mind, a CDE-wide, cross unit team collaborated to curate internal and external resources to assist educators in addressing these challenges. The web resource provides tools and resources to help educators bring an equity lens to their systems, policies and everyday work.

Considerations:

Apply principles of [improvement science](#) when seeking to address an inequity:

1. Make the work problem-specific and user-centered.
2. Variation in performance is the core problem to address.
3. See the system that produces the current outcomes.
4. Embed measures of key outcomes and processes to track if change is an improvement.
5. Engage rapid cycles of Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) to learn fast, fail fast, and improve quickly.
6. Embrace the wisdom of crowds. We can accomplish more together than even the best of us can accomplish alone.
7. Repeat.

Apply the following [equity lens questions](#) prior to making a policy or practice change:

- Are the people most impacted meaningfully included in discussions and decisions?
- What policies or practices contribute to the exclusion?
- What are you already doing to promote inclusion?
- Who is accountable for making changes that ensure inclusion?

How does our organization hold accountability to change practices

Check out posted resources on the CDE website:

[Equity Resources for Districts and BOCES | CDE \(state.co.us\)](#)



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

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.

New State IEP Vendor

The CDE is in process with a new state IEP vendor. Please take a moment to visit the new [Ascend Colorado website: https://co.ascendsuites.com/](https://co.ascendsuites.com/).

This webpage will have the most up-to-date information regarding the development of Ascend Colorado. If you would like, you can sign up for the newsletter to keep up with progress on the development of Ascend at <https://co.ascendsuites.com/announcements/>.



Introduction

The Commissioner's Teacher Cabinet (CTC) is a group of practicing teachers from around the state that meets on a regular basis with the Colorado Commissioner of Education. Commissioner Katy Anthes and the Colorado Department of Education are accepting applications for eight to 10 alternating seats on the Commissioner's Teacher Cabinet.

The goal of the CTC is threefold:

- To provide a formal opportunity for practicing teachers to ensure policy makers and legislators understand the implications of education policy;
- To provide suggestions and recommendations for the effective implementation of education policy; and
- To make policy decisions transparent to teachers. The overarching goal is to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

In addition:

- The CTC provides feedback and suggestions to the Commissioner of Education and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) on education policy and its implementation. This partnership gives the Commissioner and policy makers a teacher's insight to the classroom impact of education policies.
- The CTC members are practicing teachers who interact with students on a daily basis and are impacted by state education policy. They are recognized by their peers and districts as exemplary teachers who have shown strong leadership qualities in the communities
- CTC members are responsible for gathering feedback from their school communities to share, and to provide clarity of, policy initiatives to their local communities.
- As long as the cabinet exists, the term for members is two years with alternating two-year terms to ensure there are experienced members each year. Members represent diverse geographic areas, grades levels and content areas as well as diverse communities.
- The CTC is looking to have a diverse representation across the state and will make selections that enhance geographic representation.
- The CTC meets at least four times per year – in person and virtual options to meet are available.
- While no compensation or substitute reimbursement is available to members, as budget allows, CDE makes every effort to reimburse for travel and food costs associated with the in-person Cabinet meetings.
- Cabinet members receive professional development credit and a certificate and award for being selected to serve on the Commissioner's Teachers Cabinet.
- Cabinet members are often offered other opportunities across the state to serve in feedback and advisory roles.

To be considered for a cabinet position, candidates must complete an [online application by Friday, Aug. 13](#). Please note that you will also need to email your résumé, narrative, signatures and letters of recommendation to teachercabinet@cde.state.co.us.

[Learn more about the CTC and the process for applying and submitting your application.](#)

WHAT ABOUT BEE BUSINESS?

Learning Box 5

NFBCO Project Literacy
Colorado Center for the Blind
American Action Fund

Invitation for you to join us!

When: May 23, 2021 (2:00 to 3:00) p.m.

Have you ever wondered how bees make honey?

This learning box will share information and provide materials for school-age students who are blind or low vision to explore.

The cost of the Learning Box is \$25. However, there are scholarships available. Just mark the box if you need financial assistance. We look forward to having your students join us!

Please register by May 16, 2021 at: <https://cocenter.org/learning-box/>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Amira Lucas
coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com

Martin Becerra-Miranda
mbecerra@cocenter.org

Sincerely,

Michelle Chacon
Committee Chair





Mountain Mobility: Summer Camp for Visually Impaired Youth

Sunday, July 25th – Friday, July 30th

Dear Camper,

The Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte will be running a six-day summer camp specifically designed for youth who are blind or visually impaired. The camp will bring youth together for a trip of water sports, hiking, backpacking and other fun activities in the Rocky Mountains. This camp will focus on building confidence and making connections with others who share similar experiences. Connecting to the outdoors will be a large aspect of the camp, yet campers will also focus on a variety of invaluable life skills throughout the weekend. Campers will shop for groceries, prepare their own meals and interact in a team setting. Additionally, campers will advance their orientation and mobility skills as they learn to travel through the bustling town of Crested Butte, Colorado.

Writing and journaling will be a priority during the trip. Each evening campers will be writing as they recall and relive the most exciting and perhaps the most challenging moments from their day. At the end of the trip, campers will have a narrative to bring home and share with their family and friends.

You will need the following items to help you organize:

- A packing list (below)
- An itinerary for the trip (below)
- A registration packet and waiver (attached to email)
- Permission to Transport (below)

Please note: All applications must be received by **Friday, May 28th, 2021** and will be accepted in the order they are received. Students who are accepted to the camp will be notified at the beginning of June or sooner. There is a \$50 camper fee and payment can be made through check or credit card. Checks must be made out to Adaptive Sports Center. Credit card payment can be made through Square, please call Hannah Lang at 970-349-2296 x 102 or email at Hannah@adaptivesports.org if this would be your preference.

Shuttle vans will be organized for transportation to Crested Butte on Sunday, July 25th from central locations once the camp roster is set. Students will also be transported back to these central locations from Crested Butte after the camp on Friday, July 30th.

Please mail registration, waivers, permission to transport and payment to:

Adaptive Sports Center
Attn. Hannah Lang
P.O. Box 1639
Crested Butte, CO 81224

*If it is preferred to email, please email these items to Hannah@adaptivesports.org

We are thrilled for you to be a part of the Mountain Mobility camp this summer!

-Adaptive Sports Center




Calendar of Events

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

May 19	BVI Office Hours —Topic: Expanded Core Curriculum Brainstorm Registration: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/7fe265f3864a434b8cf075d1862a98fa
May 19	CSDB Parent Workshop —Recreation and Leisure—11:30 a.m. Contact: Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org
May 20	CSDB Parent Workshop —Recreation and Leisure—5:30 p.m. Contact: Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org
May 20	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
May 21	Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
May 23	NFBCO Project Literacy —2:00—3:00 pm Register: https://cocenter.org/learning-box/
May 26	Colorado Center for the Blind Fun Activities and Skills Training - 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Contact: Martin Becerra- Miranda at mbecerra@cocenter.org
May 27	Putting Your Best Foot Forward — Registration for Virtual Training for Students Contact: Michelle Reed at michele.reed@state.co.us
June 2	CSDB Parent Workshop —Orientation and Mobility—11:30 a.m. Contact: Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org
June 3	CSDB Parent Workshop —Orientation and Mobility—5:30 p.m. Contact: Jamie Lugo at jlugo@csdb.org
June 3	WRIEC —Unilateral Hearing Loss in Children: What Do We Know and Where Do We Go? Registration: https://www.tsbvi.edu/coffeehour —a month out of training
June 3	Free Time, Me Time: Adaptive Recreation & Leisure Activities (DVR) - 10 am—12 pm Registration— https://forms.gle/Afrbw61fxdzf46p99
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@csdb.org
June 7-8	Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE) Contact: Chelene at chelene.garcia-herrada@ucdenver.edu Registration: https://swaaac.squarespace.com/swaaac-conference




Calendar of Events

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

June 7 - 17	Colorado Center for the Blind Summer Program – World of Work <u>Contact:</u> Martin Becerra- Miranda at mbecerra@cocenter.org
June 7-18	Bell Academy—Session 1 <u>Contact:</u> nfb.org/programs-services/nfb-bell-academy
June 10	CAER Chapter Meetings—5:45 to 7:15 p.m. – Google Meet - meet.google.com/mnx-zkdz-juu <u>Contact:</u> Nancy Cozart – ncozart@lps.k12.co.us
June 10	DVR Colorado Brownie Bake off—10 a.m.—12 p.m. Registration— https://forms.gle/PZc5xUr3vYsum77Y8
June 15	Tactile Art Club—5:00 p.m. - Guest Artist Elizabeth Sheeler <u>Contact:</u> Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com
June 17	American Printing House for the Blind: Career Connect—10 a.m.—12 p.m. <u>Registration:</u> https://forms.gle/rz8M1RgTxkLoZC9S6
June 20-24	Tales and Trails Camp—Steamboat Springs (free camp for students) <u>Contact:</u> Andrea at andrea@steamboatstars.com
June 21- July 1	Colorado Center for the Blind Summer Program – Cracking the College Code <u>Contact:</u> Martin Becerra- Miranda at mbecerra@cocenter.org
June 24	Unmute Yourself! Self-Advocacy Skills—10 a.m.—12 p.m. <u>Registration:</u> https://forms.gle/WwJRWsjtrStcDCa8
June 21- July 1	Colorado Center for the Blind Summer Program – No Limits to Learning <u>Contact:</u> Martin Becerra- Miranda at mbecerra@cocenter.org
June 21-25	APH ExCEL Camp: Art Camp (4-6 years old) <u>Registration:</u> https://aph.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Jy-GWp92SAyFt9xvLmOtDw
June 29-July 2	APH ExCEL Camp: Mystery Camp (7-10 years old) <u>Registration:</u> https://aph.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Z1KMmrpESZas5f6omNnyvQ
June 30	CIMC book returns due— more info on returning materials at https://csdb.colorado.gov/cimc <u>Contact:</u> Jim Olson at jolson@CSDB.ORG
July 1	S.O.S: Strong Organizational Skills—10 a.m.—12 p.m. <u>Registration:</u> https://forms.gle/gMdkbxuEjse7FHro7




Calendar of Events

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

July 8	The Guide Dog Lifestyle —10 a.m.—12 p.m. Registration— https://forms.gle/uS4GqfpyLbkTomcf6
July 12-16, 19-23	Putting Your Best Foot Forward —10 a.m.—12 p.m., 1 p.m.—3 p.m. Registration— https://forms.gle/6D6yx1ESHgMLhVKN7
July 12-16	APH ExCEL Camp: STEM Camp (11-13 years old) Registration— https://aph.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_l1OIL4egQ-2EHmZXOxwfuw
July 19-23	APH ExCEL Camp: Career Camp (12-22 years old) Registration— https://aph.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MbRIIOIkQ3WjGp-4Yzp83A
July 19-30	Bell Academy—Session 2 Contact: nfb.org/bell
July 20	Tactile Art Club —5:00 p.m. Contact: Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com
July 26-30	APH ExCEL Camp: Space Sensory Camp (pre-symbolic learners) Registration— https://aph.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4NRCnu5RT86qY3mXbHpuSw
July 29	Amazing Race—USA Edition —10 a.m.—12 p.m. Registration— https://forms.gle/ZE9SatqScHunYjWv5
August 3-6	APH ExCEL Camp: STEM Spanish Camp - check the APH website for more information
August 9-20	Bell Academy—Session 3 Contact: nfb.org/bell
August 10	2021 Typhlo & Tactus Contest DUE Contact: Rob Guillen rguillen@aph.org Registration: https://www.tsbvi.edu/coffeehour
August 17	Tactile Art Club —5:00 p.m. Contact: Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com
August 19	WRIEC —Assessment, Intervention and Outcomes of Young Children with Unilateral Hearing Loss: A Multi-State Perspective Registration: https://www.tsbvi.edu/coffeehour
August 19	WRIEC —Academic Outcomes and Predictors of Performance in School-Age Children with Unilateral Hearing Loss Registration: https://www.tsbvi.edu/coffeehour




Calendar of Events

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

- September 17 **WRIEC — Closing Keynote (more information to come)**
Registration: <https://www.tsbvi.edu/coffeehour>

- September 21 **Tactile Art Club—5:00 p.m.**
Contact: Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com

- September 22 **Vision Coalition**
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

- October 19 **Tactile Art Club—5:00 p.m.**
Contact: Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com

- November 16 **Tactile Art Club—5:00 p.m.**
Contact: Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com

- December 1-4 **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference—in person St/ Pete Beach, FL**
For more information: <http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/>

- December 21 **Tactile Art Club—5:00 p.m.**
Contact: Rishika at rishikakartik@gmail.com

2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022 2022

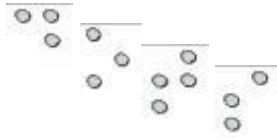
- January 26-28 **Orientation and Mobility Online Symposium**
For more information: <https://orientationandmobilitysymposium.com/>

- January 31 **End Date of READ Act Teacher Training Requirement**
For training options, go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/teacher-training>

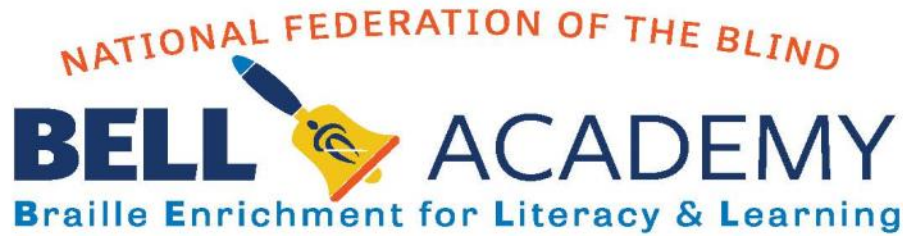
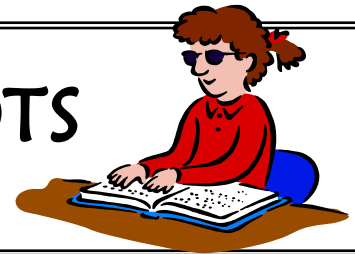


Wishing you a wonderful summer!

**Enjoy the sunshine, flowers,
slower pace, mountain hikes,
and time to rejuvenate!**



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Attend 2021 NFB BELL® Academy In-Home Edition *Enhance your Braille and nonvisual skills with us!*

The National Federation of the Blind is offering three virtual programs of the NFB BELL Academy this summer to prepare blind and low-vision children to grow into confident and independent blind people by enhancing their education. Options are available for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students.



Receive Braille and other fun materials for lessons



Connect with experienced teachers



Build relationships with other blind students and mentors.

Take advantage of this opportunity for your child to connect with blind role models and more by applying for one of the following sessions:

- Session 1 - June 7-18, 2021
- Session 2 - July 19-30, 2021
- Session 3 - August 9-20, 2021

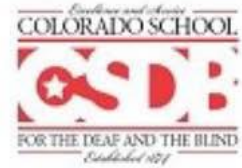
Limited space available. Learn more and apply now at nfb.org/bell





Tails and Trails

Summer Adventure Camp



For students across Colorado, who are Blind or Low Vision, ages 8-18



June 20-24, 2021 Steamboat, CO

Join STARS for a 'wheelie' fun week of cycling, fishing, and playing with horses in beautiful Steamboat Springs, Colorado! This 5-day/4-night camp will introduce participants to the world of cycling on dirt roads/trails, and teach them the joys of fishing and horsemanship right here in the Yampa Valley. Cycling will take place in the morning while the weather is still cool, and afternoons will be filled with fishing fundamentals and an introduction to the basics of horsemanship.

INCLUSIONS & COST

Students: NO COST

Includes: lodging, breakfast, lunch, dinner, light snacks, activities, use of any equipment, guides and transportation

Adults: \$449/pp

Includes: lodging, breakfast, lunch, dinner, light snacks, activities, use of any equipment (as available after participants), guides and transportation

**does not include licenses or instruction for adults

There are 3 caregiver scholarships available. Please email Andrea Mahaffey for consideration

SCHEDULE:

Day 1 – Arrival -
Welcome Dinner &
Orientation

Day 2 – Day of Learning-
Fundamentals of bicycling and
horsemanship

Day 3 – Building Skills –
Biking outing & skills and
horsemanship

Day 4 – Fishing & Games –
Morning fishing outing and
biking expedition

Day 5 – Departure Day

To Register: Click the link

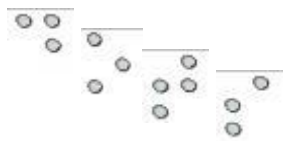
<http://bit.ly/STARSTrailsandTails>

Space is limited to 9 participants with 2 family members each

All participants under 18 MUST have an adult

For questions: Contact Andrea Mahaffey

andrea@steamboatstars.com



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Colorado Braille Competency Committee

Please keep this information handy if you are in the process of earning your initial Colorado Braille Competency Certificate or working on your renewal modules. The CDE Braille Competency Committee members serve as part-time employees of the Colorado Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services Unit for their important role in: (a) developing, refining, and reviewing braille competency testing and support materials, (b) proctoring test sessions for initial braille competency and renewal modules, (c) providing approved mentoring to test candidates, and (d) other duties as needed to support our UEB competency process across the state.

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

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

As far as regional representation for initial testing and renewal modules, Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor/mentor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor/mentor. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for renewal modules. Tanni Anthony is the proctor for initial braille competency testing for the greater metro area.

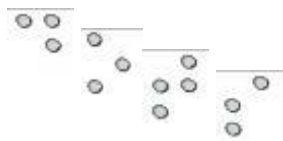
The Practice Test items have been posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs.

For summer assistance, please be in touch with Tanni first to secure an available proctor / mentor.

Braillewriter Repair

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





CONNECTING THE DOTS



Project INSPIRE's Nemeth in a Box A Student Activity and Research Project at the University of South Carolina Upstate

Come meet with students around the country to play games and sharpen your Nemeth skills at the same time! Spend your summer days socializing and strategizing your way out of the mysteries that lie ahead in the Nemeth Mystery Box!

The purpose of the related study is to examine the effectiveness of the extra-curriculum programming in helping YOU advance your Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts skills.



All materials will be delivered to you for FREE in the Nemeth mystery box that will allow you to join in the fun! What will you find? You have to join us to find out!

All events will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays in June and will last 90 minutes. The first session will be held on Monday, June 14th and continue until our celebration event on Wednesday, June 30th.

All events will take place on Zoom and a link will be sent upon receiving your registration. If you have questions, contact Dr. Tina Herzberg at therzberg@uscupstate.edu or 864-503-5572.

In order to participate in the study, students must:

- 1) read at the fourth grade level or above
- 2) be in grades 6-8, and
- 3) be familiar with Nemeth Code or currently learning the code.

To join us in our weekly adventure, complete a registration form at https://uofsc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxyBAZDSiUq98RU



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

2021 Summer Programs for Colorado Youth Who are Blind/Visually Impaired

World of Work: The Colorado Center for the Blind is offering a two week-long virtual program to students ages 13 - 21 from across the country. Before the first day of the program, students will receive a materials box that will include a slate, stylus, Braille instructional book, long white cane, sleep shades, tactile graphics, and more. Students will receive instruction in our four core subject areas of braille, technology, home management, and cane travel. In addition to this, we will hold workshops and activities that focus on career exploration and developing strong employment skills. These workshops include an employer panel, career interest assessment, mock interviews, and one-on-one informational interviews with professionals in your field of interest. The program will be held Monday through Thursday June 7 - June 17, 2021; we will meet on the Zoom Meeting platform from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. and from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time. The cost of the program is \$1,500 and includes tuition and the materials that will be shipped to students.

Cracking the College Code: This two week-long virtual program is being offered to students ages 13 - 21 from across the country. Before the first day of the program, students will receive a materials box that will include a slate, stylus, braille instructional book, long white cane, sleep shades, tactile graphics, and much more. Students will receive instruction in our four core subject areas of braille, technology, home management, & cane travel. In addition to this, we will hold workshops that focus on preparing for college, student life, and participating in hands-on STEM activities. These workshops include a college student panel, hands-on chemistry project, ADA workshop, conversation with a Disability Resource Office counselor, introductory robotics lesson, and more! The program will be held Monday through Thursday June 21 - July 1, 2021; we will meet on the Zoom Meeting platform from 9:00 to 11:00 AM and from 1:30 to 3:30 PM Mountain Standard Time. The cost of the program is \$1,500 and includes tuition and the materials that will be shipped to students.

No Limits to Learning: The Colorado Center for the Blind is offering a two week-long day program to students in the Denver Metro Area between ages 13 - 21. Space is limited to 12 students and we will take applicants on a first-come first-serve basis. In this program, students will receive instruction in our four core subject areas of Braille, Technology, Home Management, & Cane Travel in a maximum of 3-to-1 student/staff ratio. On the first day of classes, students will receive a slate, stylus, Braille instructional book, long white cane, and a pair of sleep shades. We know that using non-visual skills is the most effective and efficient way for a blind person to live a successful and independent life. This is why our blind staff fully implement the Structured Discovery teaching method, which allows our students to learn through their own experiences and problem-solving techniques. In addition to the classes mentioned above, we will hold a daily philosophy class in which staff and students will discuss a variety of topics that focus on developing a positive attitude on blindness. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in challenge recreation activities that will establish and grow their self-confidence. Local health department guidelines permitting, the program will be held Monday through Friday July 19 - July 30, 2021 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time. The cost of this program is \$2,000 and includes tuition, materials, local bus fare, and participation in all program activities.

For information on any of these Programs, please contact Martin Becerra-Miranda by emailing mbecerra@cocenter.org or by calling (303) 778-1130 Extension 253.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!



COLORADO
Department of
Labor and Employment

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Blind and Low Vision Services
Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS)
2021 Summer Program and Webinars**

**FREE TIME, ME TIME: ADAPTIVE RECREATION & LEISURE
ACTIVITIES**

June 3, 2021 10am-12pm

This webinar will explore opportunities in the state of Colorado to participate in sports, recreation, and leisure activities. This webinar will look at methods to adapt activities for individuals who are blind and low vision to fully and meaningfully participate.

To register, please click link: <https://forms.gle/Afrbw61fxdzf46p99>

DVR COLORADO BROWNIE BAKE OFF

June 10, 2021 10am-12pm

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

To register, click on this link: <https://forms.gle/PZc5xUr3vYsum77Y8>

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND: CAREER CONNECT

June 17, 2021 10am-12pm

Richard Rueda will present for the APH ConnectCenter on CareerConnect, a thriving web resource for Transition age youth and job seekers who are blind.

Richard will discuss the advantages of APH CareerConnect including blogs, student voices, the Transition toolkit, resources for job seekers and employers and much more. We will end the session with a few short motivational videos.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Richard is an experienced Transition Program Counselor. For over 20 years Richard has worked in the field of Rehabilitation Counseling in blindness and low vision. Richard has worked as a Rehabilitation Transition planner for the State of California organizing paid summer and seasonal work experiences for BVI teens and young adults. When Richard is not working, he enjoys traveling with Odif, his 9 year old Seeing Eye Dog and exploring the outdoors including hiking and swimming.

To register, click on this link: <https://forms.gle/rz8M1RgTxkLoZC9S6>

UNMUTE YOURSELF! SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS

June 24, 2021 10am-12pm

This webinar will focus on the skills to be a self-advocate in school, in the home, the community and the workplace. During this webinar we will look at goal setting, decision making, rights and responsibilities, and positive self-talk to develop effective self-advocacy skills.

To register, click on this link: <https://forms.gle/WwJRWSjttrStcDCa8>

S.O.S: STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

July 1, 2021 10am-12pm

This webinar will include discussion, activities, and a brainstorming "Label Challenge" that will enable participants to explore low, medium and high tech strategies to improve their organization. Way Around will join us for a demonstration of the labeling tag application. Whether at home, school, or work, students will be more successful if they have strong organizational skills.

To register, click on this link: <https://forms.gle/gMdkbxuEjse7FHro7>

THE GUIDE DOG LIFESTYLE

July 8, 2021 10am-12pm

Many factors need to be considered when making the personal decision to use a cane or a guide dog for one's primary mobility aid. Choosing the Guide Dog lifestyle comes not only with enhanced mobility and self-confidence, companionship, increased and changed social interactions, but also comes added time and responsibility of daily care for your guide dog, a



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

two-week commitment away from home for training and do not forget about all of that dog hair!

Join Jane Flower Youth Outreach Specialist from Guide Dogs for the Blind for a discussion about what it is like living and working with a guide dog, how to know if you are ready for guide dog mobility, and the variety of youth programs available to help you prepare for the guide dog lifestyle.

To register, click on this link: <https://forms.gle/uS4GqfpyLbkTomcf6>

PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD:

Job Search Skills Training for Youth with Visual Impairments

July 12-16 and July 19-23, 2021

Monday-Thursday 10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm

Fridays are reserved for individual sessions to complete job seeking activities.

Join DVR's Blind and Low Vision Services Unit for a two-week training for the development job seeker skills for youths with visual impairments ages 15-21. The Putting Your Best Foot Forward program promotes through discussion and activities (both group and individual) the employment process from job-seeking to starting a new job.

Effective job-seeking is based on the identification of strengths, skills, and interest. Finding a job requires knowing yourself, having a high-quality resume, completing good job applications, using personal networks effectively, and actively seeking information regarding job openings. It is also important to polish social skills, such as how to present yourself at an interview.

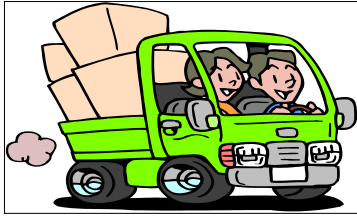
To register, click on this link: <https://forms.gle/6D6yx1ESHgMLhVKN7>

AMAZING RACE – USA Edition

July 29, 2021 10am-12pm

This workshop will include discussion, activities, and a virtual competitive experience that will enable participants to explore the various transportation services available in the country. Participants will team up to virtually race to prominent landmarks in each city. Transportation and travel skills are essential to pursue post-secondary and employment opportunities.

To register, click on this link: <https://forms.gle/ZE9SatqScHunYjVw5>



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

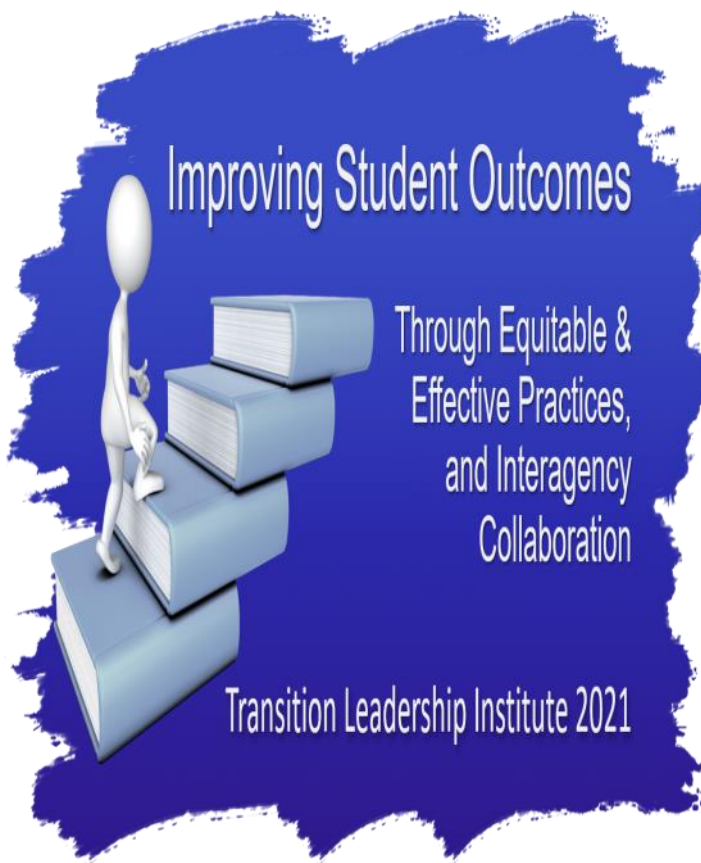
Data Release: 2018-19 National and State-Level High School Graduation Rates

National and state-level high school Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (ACGR) for the 2018-19 school year were recently released by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The national ACGR for all students was 85.8 percent, an increase of 0.5 percentage points from 2017–18.

NTACT Webinar

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT:C) provided a Webinar: Toward a Conception of Culturally Responsive Practices in Transition Planning on November 23, 2020, which was presented by Bettie Ray Butler (NTACT:C) and Edwin Achola (California State University Long Beach).

Registration open for the 2021 Virtual Transition Leadership Institute



Join us for the 14h Annual Transition Leadership Institute (TLI)! The Exceptional Student Services Secondary Transition Team is hosting a virtual Transition Leadership Institute June 9-11, 2021! The theme for the upcoming institute is **“Improving Student Outcomes Through Equitable & Effective Practices, and Interagency Collaboration”**

The institute provides AU teams and their key partners access to content-rich learning sessions to build knowledge of effective secondary transition practices. There will be two content sessions each morning and a team planning session each afternoon. Content sessions are open to all registrants. Team planning sessions are open to team members only. Teams will be provided collaborative team planning opportunities to strategically plan for the implementation of effective practices that lead to successful post-school outcomes for student with disabilities.

When & Where

June 9-11, 2021 The TLI will be held virtually.

More information and registration: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/tli2021>

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). [Check out the NFADB website](#)

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.



Center for Parent Information and Resource Library

Find webinars, articles, stand-alone pages, publications. **Share** with families, professional support providers, staff. **Focus** searches with multiple filters on the results pages.

[Search the Parent Resource library for important resources.](#)



CSDB is offering Parent ECC Workshops

Hello Parents of Children/Students Who are Blind / Visually Impaired,

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) is offering Parent Expanded Core Curriculum Workshops beginning in February and continuing through June. We would love to see you on Zoom! [Please click to sign up for one or more of the workshops.](#) **A Zoom link will be emailed to you the week of the workshop!**

Remaining Workshops:

- Orientation and Mobility—Wednesday, June 2nd 11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. and Thursday, June 3rd 5:30 p.m.—6:30 p.m.

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

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

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

Their status is as a division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), an important organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. NFB provides its members information about the societal, legislative, and technological issues that affect blind people. One of their most exciting activities is 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.



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

- ◆ 1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist—Cherry Creek School District. Any interested parties should contact: Dr. Mary Page at mpage@cherrycreekschools.org or 720-554-4228 work number. The position is posted on the Cherry Creek Schools website at cherrycreekschools.org

North Central —Jobs for SY 2021-22

- **Part Time (3.5 days a week) TVI / O&M Specialist**—position requires working with multiple administrative units including East Central BOCES, Ft. Morgan, Santa Fe Trails BOCES, South East BOCES , North East BOCES and Sterling. Option to work 1 day a week for East Central BOCES only if preferred. To apply please complete a Certified Application, downloadable on our website at ecboces.org under “Jobs” at the bottom of the page. Once completed, application can be sent Tracy at tracyg@ecboces.org Questions contact Tracy at (719) 775-2342, ext. 101
- **.5 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist**—Weld RE-2 School District in Windsor. Contact Jon Paul Burden at jonpaul.burden@weldre4.org

Southern Region—Jobs for SY 2021-22

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist** - Academy 20 School District. Please contact Belinda Lujan-Lindsey at Belinda.lujan@asd20.org or (719) 234-1328
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI** - El Paso 11 School District. Please contact Nancy Maresh Melo at Nancy.Mareshmelo@d11.org for more information.
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI and O&M Specialist** — Falcon 49 School District. Please contact Jean Rice at jrice@d49.org

Virtual Schools for SY 2021-22

- ◆ **Contract Hours for a TVI and O&M Specialist**—Goal Academy for SY 21-22. Please contact Jen Bruner at ja.bruner@goalac.org

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. If you are interested in working with A Shared Vision on a part time basis, please reach out to Steve Lindauer at slindauer@asharedvision.org You can work at your pace and needs! Magic!



With Gratitude, We Say Farewell



Loel Decker is retiring after many years and countless (well, he has done some calculations below!) miles! Loel earned his master's degree in 1997. He has worked for East Central BOCES as the teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI) and Orientation and Mobility Specialist. East Central BOCES currently contracts Loel out to Southeastern BOCES, Santa Fe Trails BOCES, Northeast BOCES, RE-1 Valley School District (Sterling), Ft. Morgan school District. He was contracted out to Centennial BOCES and Elizabeth School District for several years. Needless to say he has traveled many miles over during this employment history. He shares he has averaged around 250 to 300 miles a day, so around 1,250 to 1,500 miles a week, 4,800 to 6,000 miles a month, so around 50,000 miles a year times 24 years for a total of around 1,200,000 miles so far and a lot of vehicles and he is still going strong!

Loel, shares further, "All the many Special Education Directors over the years have been very supportive as well as "most" of the special education teachers. Tanni Anthony and many fellow TVIs and those working at CIMC have been encouraging through the years. My wife, Wanda, has been the most supportive and my sounding board when needed (even driving 150 miles to rescue me when my vehicle broke down). There have been many triumphs: getting my Orientation and Mobility endorsement and the braille re-certification. Joys have included getting the opportunity for Wanda and me to go to Oregon School for the Blind with four students in 1999 for a week, seeing students succeed over the years, one of the best is having a former student being a lawyer now. Frustrations have included not being able to motivate students to achieve their full potential and being willing to use provided devices and/or materials provided for them, not getting some parents and teachers to follow through with suggestions/ideas that would have helped their students. Sorrows have include having students I have worked with pass away. My future plans are driving less and spending a lot of time with Wanda spoiling our six grand children. As Frank Sinatra said, "Regrets, I've had a few, but too few to mention."

A few words from Tanni: *Loel has been a companion colleague for so many years. It will just not be the same knowing that Loel is not taking on the eastern half of the state from top to bottom. He leaves big shoes to fill.*

Loel has been a faithful attendee of CDE trainings and always sat in the front row. He was the inspiration the ONLY time I ordered roast beef or some kind of red meat at a state conference! That was back in the days we had food at our trainings. He calmly asked me one time when we were going to have steak! Loel, you have been a kind, compassionate, committed TVI and O&M Specialists for so many years. I consider you a friend and a colleague and I am going to really miss you. Tell Wanda that she has shared you for long enough. And look me up when you two come into Denver and we will go out for a steak dinner, my treat!

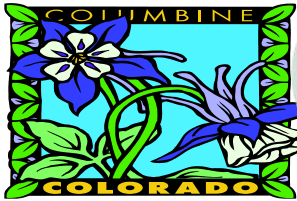
With Gratitude, We Say Farewell

- √ **Marie Islom** is moving on from her time in Aurora Public School District as a brailist. She has been with them for two years. She is looking forward to a new adventure where she can pursue more freelance writing opportunities and hopefully some sort of ministry. Wishing you the best, Marie!
- √ **Shelley Moats** is fully retiring at the end of this school year. shares, “My husband retired in December and we've decided to serve a mission for our church, which lasts for a year. It is something that we've always wanted to do. We're looking at leaving in the fall or early next year depending on the pandemic. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work for CDE for the last few years. It has been a great experience being able to mentor new TVIs and work with some of the teams that serve the students with deaf-blindness in the State of Colorado. I have learned so much from this experience. I also want to thank both Tanni and Gina for all you do for the TVIs in Colorado. You are amazing!! Before moving to Colorado I worked in a couple of other states, and never felt the comradery with other teachers in those states as I have in Colorado. You do a wonderful job in bringing everyone together. From the day I walked into Ruth Craig's office at Brigham Young University in the summer of 1975, and decided to pursue the field of visual impairment, I have never had any regrets. It's been an amazing journey! I have met so many students, families, and colleagues that will always have a place in my heart. Thank you again for giving me this opportunity and I know our paths will cross again. Hopefully, on our mission I will be able to use the skills I've learned and have the chance to work with students who are visually impaired.” This is Shelley's second Colorado retirement and we are so grateful to have had “a little more time” with her many contributions. Colorado has always been a better place with Shelley offering her expertise and compassion to kids, families, and providers. Gina and I will miss her work with the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project and I will also miss her TVI Mentor / Coach work. All the best to you, Shelley! Our deepest gratitude!
- √ **Karen Pachecho** is leaving her TVI position with San Juan BOCES. Karen shares, “I learned of San Juan BOCES in 2014 when I was trying to accumulate internship hours for my vision program in New Mexico. The TVI at that time offered to "show me the ropes" in Colorado so when she decided to retire. I was asked if I was interested in coming to Colorado. I have worked for San Juan BOCES since August 2017. It was an awesome opportunity that seemed to fall in my lap at just the right time (divine intervention for sure!). Oh, there was SO much to learn in a short amount of time, as I only worked for two days a week in Colorado and had to cover many miles in that time. I am forever grateful for the San Juan BOCES team (family) and the ladies from the Western Slope for giving me the opportunity to continue learning, as well as the CIMC staff for all their patience with the paperwork that I usually submitted on the due date after 5 pm! Thank you all for your support!!!” We wish Karen all the very best in her continued work in New Mexico!
- √ We say goodbye to **Valerie (Val) Smith**, who has been a brailist in Aurora Public School District for nine years, since December 2021. Val shares, “I have enjoyed working as a brailist. I got a bit of a late start on a career that was truly rewarding to me (I learned braille in my early 50s). I worked in the Cherry Creek School District for 12 years before that as a Special Education Paraprofessional. I am planning on a fun-filled retirement enjoying more yoga, hiking, reading, water aerobics, camping (glamping) and traveling the U. S. in our new Travel Trailer.” We will miss you, Val, and thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your many years of contribution and service. Enjoy the retirement days ahead!

With Gratitude, We Say Farewell

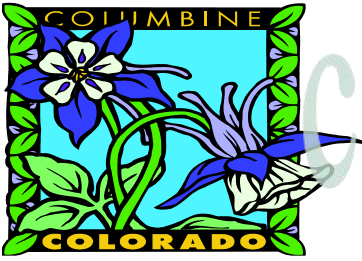
- √ **Carol Tippelt** is retiring from her work as an O&M Specialist with San Juan BOCES. Wishing her all the very best in the retirement days ahead!
- √ We are sad to see **Erin Warden** leave her position in Falcon 49 School District. Erin shares, "I had an amazing, supportive TVI experience here in Colorado and I will make sure to take everything I learned and apply it in Florida. Due to family commitments to include having my daughter closer, my son and I will move to Wesley Chapel, FL, north of Tampa. My family is from eastern Canada and Florida is very appealing to them in the winter months when they need a break from the cold. I can foresee having a lot of visitors and I'll embrace that after being away from family and friends for so long, too long. I have been offered a position for this upcoming school year as a TVI in Pasco County, FL, with the expectation of O&M certification by January, and dual work. I got a very warm feeling from my zoom interview and the current TVIs and sensory support director there. Completing my TVI practicum and having a caseload of students while selling my home and then buying a home in Florida is what I'm "in" right now. I want to make sure my transition is smooth and questions are answered. I thank you and the state of Colorado's TVI network to include Lori Mattick, Sara Noel, my director Dr. Rice, CIMC, DVR, Dr. Theune, and the Southern Colorado region for this incredible experience. Everything has been positive and I wouldn't be afforded the opportunities I have been without my Colorado "family." We wish Erin all the best ahead!!





colorado connections

- Congratulations to **Stephanie** and **Derek Crosen** on the birth of their son! Dutton Owen Crosen was born April 13 at 6:59 p.m. weighing 8 pounds, 1 ounce, 21 inches long. They are doing great and are in love!
- A shout out to **Amira Lucas** and **Michelle Chacon** for their work in offering parent conversations. The April 11th virtual discussion was specific to Least Restrictive Environment. TVIs in attendance included **Tanni Anthony, Michelle Chacon, Anahit LaBarre,** and **Jamie Lugo.**
- A big change for **Mike Plansker!** He shares, “After 25 years living on the front range, a couple of those years working in Jeffco School District as a vision para and 15 years working with a wonderful team, students and families in Adams 12, I am heading to the hills and mesa. Starting in August 2021, I will be working for San Juan BOCES as the TVI and COMS for that region of the state and covering territory from Pagosa Springs out to the Utah border. Hoping to find a house soon and get down there in June. If anyone heads that way, give me a ring. Although I've heard the scenery is just okay!!!” We send our congratulations to Mike on this new work opportunity.
- We are thrilled that **Beth Meyer** will be returning to her TVI / O&M Specialist work in Delta School District. Meghan Crosby was serving Delta students for the past year or two and will continue to serve Montrose School District and UnBOCES.
- Hats off to all of the CO TVIs and O&M Specialists who have been taking advantage of so many national and state level virtual trainings this school year. So appreciate your dedication to staying informed!
- A huge shout out to so many Colorado Orientation and Mobility Specialists who attended the May 6-7 CDE O&M Seminar. It was a joy to be with everyone and to see the involvement of so many of you in the questions and chat commentary. A big thank you to our wonderful presenter, **Dr. Penny Rosenblum,** who shared both her personal and professional expertise as person with low vision and a nondriver.
- When I think of excellence in braille, I think of our CDE Braille Competency Team: **Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier,** and **Julie Wetzstein.** Even in the wild days of the pandemic with social distances, these individuals have kept the process going. Thanks to their efforts, we have seen TVIs and braillists complete renewal hours and participate in testing sessions. **Jo Pinto,** our braille proofreader, did a marvelous job of providing detailed analysis of results of braille testing. Since last July, there have been 10 individuals who have demonstrated braille competency and 9 who have completed renewal modules.
- Congratulations to **Ellen Wallis, Chris Kinney** and **Erin Warden** who just graduated from UNC with their MA in special education / visual impairment.
- Hats off to now **Dr. Amber Rundle Kahn** who gave a presentation at the Georgia Vision Education Statewide Team (GVEST) on the topic of *Educational Research and Optic Nerve Hypoplasia* on April 9th. Amber will provide this presentation for us at a Fall 2021 BVI Office Hours.
- **Tanni Anthony** had the fun of presenting virtually on May 8th at the Arizona AER Conference on the topic of *Vision Screening for Children Ages Birth through Five.*



colorado connections



BVI Office Hours

What started out as a time to brainstorm, reflect, and share during the initial months of virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, has become a bi-monthly opportunity to learn from one another this past school year. We usually average up to 20 participants and have been as high as over 40 attendees. Know the BVI Office Hours conflicts with other work and personal commitments, but I am so grateful to all who found a way to attend.

There are many people to thank for the 2021-21 BVI Office Hours!

- Thanks to **Kyle Berns** and **Jerred Sonneborn** for spending time with us on the topic of math instruction at the April 7th BVI Office Hours. Thank you both!
- Another big thanks to **Jamie Lugo** and **Marty Rahn** for their topic of Independent Living Skills at the April 21 BVI Office Hours. The handouts were so helpful and now everyone has an ILS Checklist to use with their kids and families. Most appreciated!
- More thanks **Julie Swegle**, **Tina Broderick**, and **Amy Gunning** for their time with us on the topic of CSDB reading instruction at the May 12th BVI Office Hours. Thank you!
- So grateful for all of our BVI Office Hours presenters this past school year: **Melinda Carter**, **Kyle Berns**, **Tina Broderick**, **Amy Gunning**, **Cara Johnson**, **Jamie Lugo**, **Tammy Johnson**, **Gina Herrera**, **Jim Olson**, **Marty Rahn**, **Jerred Sonneborn**, **Wendy Stoltman**, **Julie Swegle**, and **Tom Theune**. You all are rock stars! Jim was involved with four of them – he is our Super Rock Star!
- Thanks to all of you who were able to take the time to join one or more of the BVI Office Hours during this school year! You know who you are! The game plan is to build out a slate of 2021-22 BVI Office Hours for this next school year. If you have a day / time preference and/or a topic you would like presented or would like to present, please let Tanni know.

Vision Coalition

- A huge thank you again to our members of the Vision Coalition for this school year: **Deb Andrews**, **Tanni Anthony**, **Martin Beccera**, **Melinda Carter**, **Nancy Cozart**, **Jayme Cusimano**, **Melissa French**, **Julie Hutchinson**, **Julie King**, **Paula Landry**, **Jamie Lugo**, **Jim Olson**, and **Michele Reed**. Thanks to regular guest **Lori Mattick**. We met virtually all year and it is always a pleasure to hear what is happening across our state and specifically with many of our four TVI / O&M Specialists regions, A Shared Vision, Anchor Center for Blind Children, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Instructional Material Center, CSDB's School for the Blind, CSDB's BVI Outreach Program, Colorado Center for the Blind, Colorado Chapter of AER, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. A privilege to work with each of you!

MAIL TO:

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Katy Anthes
Commissioner of Education



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Department of Education

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
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