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# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

## On the Road Again!

### Welcome to School Year 2021-22

By Tanni Anthony



Over the early summer months, this old Willie Nelson song was hopeful in my heart. “On the road again, just can’t wait to be on the road again, the life I love is making music with my friends ... goin’ places that I’ve never been, seein’ things that I may never see again. And I can’t wait to get on the

road again.”

As such, plans were made for in-person Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics and our annual CDE State Conference on BVI. These items are still on the calendar ... we will need to see if we are on the road again or on Zoom again! There are also activities that were deliberately planned for a virtual format, such as our regular BVI Office Hours and the second year of the Deaf-Blind Webinar series, which feature national-level speakers and high-value topics.

Welcome to school year 2021-22! Whether we have a remote year of sharing, or find some real-time opportunities to meet in person, there is a lot happening to support our students, families, and professionals during the upcoming school year. Please take some time to check out the many activities on the next few pages. We have a lot to look forward to with brainstorming, networking, and professional learning opportunities.

No matter how we gather, the one thing that I know for sure is that “YOU are always on my mind!” to quote our friend Willie again. This year has many built-in communication vehicles, as well as touch points for learning and being together. Let’s make this a school year to remember for all the right reasons: great accessibility, participation, engagement, and learning for our students; meaningful partnerships with and learnings from our families; and strong knowledge and effective skills of our professionals.

The road ahead looks good! Wishing you safe, informed, navigable, and happy trails ahead! We are on the road again to a bright new school year!

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# Colorado Definitions, Resources, Professional Learning, and Support Activities Specific to Children and Youth Who Are Blind/Visually Impaired or Deaf-Blind, Their Families and Service Providers, for School Year 2021-22

Compiled by Tanni Anthony

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

## Legend for Acronyms:

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



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

**A Shared Vision:** Now in its fifth year, this 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is Colorado’s leading provider of early intervention vision services for children who are blind, deaf-blind, or visually impaired or have vision concerns. Their goal is that all families of children with visual impairments have access to and receive essential early intervention services from a community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals.

A Shared Vision conducts three programs. Through the Early Intervention Vision Services Program, their team of 17 EI-TVIs provides direct early intervention vision services to families and young children, birth to age three, throughout metro Denver as well as in 48 rural counties – a total of 55 counties in Colorado representing 83% of the state’s population. The services are defined by the families’ Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) developed in conjunction with A Shared Vision, CCB service coordinators, and other early intervention providers. This program supports the key principles and research-based best practices of early intervention in Colorado by providing education and empowerment to families with very young children who are blind or visually impaired in their homes and in community settings.

Through the Family Support Program, A Shared Vision provides education, community connections and support for families of children with visual impairments through group activities, the newsletter, website, and social media.

The Education Program builds the community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals who serve very young children with blindness and visual impairments. Over 900 EI professionals have been trained on how to conduct vision screenings via telehealth, and more than half of these are qualified to detect vision concerns in very young children and refer the family to a pediatric eye doctor and an EI-TVI. In 2021, A Shared Vision is expanding their training offerings for families and providers who work with children who are blind or visually impaired. For more information contact Paula Landry at [plandry@asharedvision.org](mailto:plandry@asharedvision.org).

**Anchor Center for Blind Children:** Headquartered in Denver for almost 40 years, Anchor Center for Blind Children specializes in serving children with visual impairments or combined vision and hearing loss during their most formative years of development, ages birth – five years. Staffed by a transdisciplinary team of highly trained teachers of students with visual impairments, therapists, and ophthalmologists, Anchor Center’s vision services are customized to meet each child’s unique needs and strengths. Families also receive support, guidance, practical knowledge, and connections to other important resources. Anchor Center’s primary programming includes vision assessments and pediatric ophthalmology exams; infant & caregiver programming (newborn – 18 months), toddler & caregiver programming (18 months – 3 years), and preschool (3 – 5 years); occupational, physical, and speech/language therapies; recreational, music, and horticultural therapies; summer camp and respite care; and family support, including programs for caregivers and siblings. Anchor Center charges a nominal tuition fee for toddler and preschool programs but does not charge for infant services; no child is ever denied access to services based on the family’s inability to pay. In the 2020-21 school year, Anchor Center served nearly 450 children, caregivers, and siblings in home and community-based settings, and at their state-of-the-art facility in the Stapleton neighborhood, located at: 2550 Roslyn Street, Denver, CO 80238. For more information, please visit the Anchor Center website at [www.anchorcenter.org](http://www.anchorcenter.org), or call (303) 377-9732.

**Audio Information Network of Colorado:** AINC is a non-profit (501) (c) (3), and is the only state service providing audio access to local newspapers, grocery discount ads, transit guides, nutrition tips, and health promotion materials. Audio public service announcements for local events, services, and resources link listeners to their communities. Live interviews with interesting people are popular in Spanish and English. History, science, nature, and technology programs stimulate and entertain. Audio content allows listeners to make informed civic, economic, and health decisions; connect to their communities; maintain independence; and have a higher quality of life. AINC was founded in 1990. AINC’s most popular listening method is through an Amazon Echo skill. Echo Dots are provided at no cost. Podcasts may also be accessed on smartphones, tablets, and computers. In response to input from students at the Colorado School for the Blind, AINC added a program on coping with depression and suicidal thoughts for teens. AINC welcomes suggestions for programming from students, parents, and teachers. For more information, go to [www.aincolorado.org](http://www.aincolorado.org) or call (303)786-7777 or (877) 443-2001.

**Braille and Large Print Format Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) Test Review:** TVIs have an annual opportunity to meet with the CDE Unit of Student Assessment and the CMAS publisher to review braille-format CMAS tests. There will be continued work specific to these assessments, and TVIs are always needed. If you are interested in signing up for the educator pool, please contact Tanni at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

**Colorado Administrative Units:** The term “administrative unit” (AU) means a school district, board of cooperative services, or the State Charter School Institute, that is providing educational services to exceptional children and is responsible for the local administration of the Exceptional Children’s Education Act. For purposes of the education of school age (ages 3- 21 years) children with BVI, an AU can be the family’s local school district, as well as the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. There are currently 78 administrative units in Colorado. The vast majority (over 90%) of school-age students with BVI are served in their neighborhood school district with a locally hired TVI and/or O&M Specialist. Some AUs may use contract services. For questions about main contact personnel for students with visual impairments, including blindness or deaf-blindness in each administrative unit, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CAER - Colorado Chapter of AER:** As professionals who serve the community of individuals who are blind/visually impaired, we have an active Colorado chapter of our national Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (CAER for short!) professional organization. CAER provides continuing education units (free currently online), request of items from our adaptive equipment aid program, as well as opportunities for gathering within our specialized field. The current CAER board is comprised of members from all forms of education, including child and adult. Please consider joining the board for the opportunity to receive ACVREP credit, as well as the wonderful opportunity to meet new friends in the field. For more information about scheduled meetings and activities, for member benefits, or joining the board, please contact Heather Solberg at [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com) or (303) 505-2758.

**CAER Online Presence with a Website and a Facebook Page:** Please go to the following website for updated information regarding Colorado AER: <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/>. They are continually working with national to restore links and add new content. If you are on Facebook, you might just be getting an invite to join the group. Michelle Robinson posts equipment that can be given away through our adaptive equipment aid program.

**CAER Annual Awards Banquet and Business Meeting:** This event occurs in conjunction with the annual CDE O&M Seminar. The banquet is a time to celebrate colleagues and friends and to announce the recipients of the following awards: the Gary Schmidt Award, the Connections Award, the President's Award, the Ken Neve Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award. CAER just celebrated their 2021 banquet in May ,so look for future information in emails about upcoming banquet in 2022. Nominations for the awards will be due 8 weeks prior to the event and should be submitted to [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com).

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

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

**Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program:** High-quality, welcoming, and yet challenging programs and training for youth ages 4 to college has been provided since 1990. Whether it's their year-round Fun Activities and Skills Training (FAST) program, mentoring for students attending the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB), Confidence BELL Academy, our residential summer programs for teens, or collaborating with partners such as Arapahoe Community College for our annual shark dissection, they are committed to creating opportunities that raise expectations for blind students and help them build the confidence to pursue their dreams as successful adults. In the past year, they have added year round educational workshops for students of all ages. Their virtual learning box program has incorporated lessons such as tactile learning, measuring techniques and reading braille. Their Homework Club will launch soon, and will provide weekly tutoring assistance to blind students. Please see their website at [www.cocenter.org](http://www.cocenter.org) for more information on our youth programs. Anahit LaBarre is the coordinator of the program.

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

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

**CDE Braille Mentors:** Our amazing CDE Braille Committee personnel (Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier, and Julie Wetzstein) are available to provide mentoring to TVIs who need support in preparing for a minimum of a second round of the Colorado Braille Competency Test. Mentoring is not available to other professionals or TVIs who are taking the test for the first time. Please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681 for more information.

**CDE BVI Office Hours:** The office hours will be back with a slight time change. They will be generally offered twice a month, the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. There will be a combination of designated topics and just time to get together to talk / brainstorm. If you have a topic you want to see scheduled, or if you have a topic that you would like to share, please be in touch with Tanni. Preregistration will be required through a sign-up process. Information about the fall sessions will be posted shortly with a registration link. For more information, please be in touch with Tanni at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE Keeping in Touch (KIT) Newsletter:** This newsletter started 25-plus years ago when personnel across the state talked about a lack of communication continuity. It has mostly been a labor of love internal to CDE, but there are some great folks who actively contribute to each edition or from time-to-time. Please consider being one of them – there is always room to boast about the accomplishments of a colleague, post an announcement, or to share an article. The newsletter is sent out to CO parents of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired, TVIs, COMS, braillists, and BVI paraeducators. It is also posted on the CDE Blindness/ Low Vision website for others to download.

The following editions are planned for this school year: August / September 2021, October 2021, November / December 2021, January / February 2022, March / April 2022, and May 2022. For more information, please contact Tanni at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681. Back copies of recent newsletters can be found at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_activities](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_activities).

**CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:** This is the 24th anniversary of the inception of the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics! The Low Vision Evaluation Team is once again funded for five regional clinics. The regional clinics are a collaborative partnership with CSDB. The clinic team consists of an optometrist specializing in low vision services (Dr. Tom Theune), a certified low vision therapists / TVI (Jim Olson and Wendy Stoltman), and a Clinic Coordinator (Debbie Haberkorn). Site Coordinators include: Angela Sims, Liz Wieder, Debbie Haberkorn, and Karin Hensel. The dates of the 2021-22 clinics will be posted in the newsletter and we will see how our return to in-person works for this next school year. To find the LVEC paperwork, go to: [https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_activities](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_activities). For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

**CDE O&M Seminar:** The topic(s) and dates for this training are under discussion. The goal will be an in-person April 2022 training. If in-person training is not feasible, we will offer a virtual training. The contact person is Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

**CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment:** This in-person conference will be held on January 20-21, 2021. A back-up virtual format will be offered on January 19-21 if an in person session cannot be offered. The speaker will be Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea, and the topic will be the Science of Reading for Learners with Blindness/Visual Impairment. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

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

**CDE TVI / COMS Mentor Project:** The goal is to provide mentoring assistance to students enrolled in the UNC Visual Impairment Program, as well as TVIs and/or COMSs in Colorado administrative units. The goal is to provide technical assistance to school-based TVIs and COMSs who want support on any topic of need. We are thrilled to offer the support services of veteran TVI/ COMS with incredible teaching experience. Wendy Stoltman is currently in this role, and we are open to hiring an additional person. If interested, reach out to Tanni. For more information, or to ask for mentor assistance, please contact Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6681.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CIMC First Friday Meetings:** This online meeting is hosted using the Zoom platform and occurs twice a day on the first Friday of each month. A morning session runs from 9-10:00 a.m. and an afternoon session is hosted from 2:30-3:30 p.m. There is no set agenda for this meeting, it is simply an opportunity to ask CIMC staff, and your colleagues around the state, any questions you may have in an informal setting. We try to feature information on new APH products as well.

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

**CSDB Cane Quest:** Cane Quest is a challenging orientation and mobility contest for students in grades 3-12. Scout contestants team up with a sighted adult and earn coins as they navigate a route that demonstrates mastery of basic orientation and mobility skills and proper human guide techniques, within the boundaries of a school or agency. CSDB sponsors an annual event. Stay tuned for more details on if this event will occur during the 2021-22 school year.

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

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

**CSDB Psychological Assessments and Consultation:** Psychological assessments (cognitive and social emotional) provided to school districts, BOCES and charter schools to assist school staff in developing appropriate educational services and supports for students with vision losses. There is a fee for this service. For more information, contact [csdboutreach@csdb.org](mailto:csdboutreach@csdb.org).

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

**Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (Also Called The Colorado Deaf-Blind Project):** We are currently entering our fourth year of a five-year federally-funded cycle. There are currently 154 children and youth, age birth through 21 years, who have combined vision and hearing loss (deafblindness) in Colorado. Key activities include:

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

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

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



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

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



**Foresight Ski Guides:** Foresight Ski Guides provides goal-oriented challenge recreation opportunities for students with visual disabilities. Foresight uses skiing and snowboarding as a platform to promote self-confidence, independence, and personal growth. Foresight operates at Vail Ski Resort. During the 2019-2020 ski season, Foresight served roughly 46 students from five Colorado school districts, plus Colorado School for the Blind, despite having to shut down early due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students traveled to Vail with their TVIs, and some parents even joined in the experience. Returning students who have mastered basic skiing skills are paired with a Foresight guide and shadow to reinforce their skills while exploring Vail’s varied terrain. Students new to the sport receive professional ski or snowboard instruction from Vail’s Adaptive Ski School. The students experience the joy and freedom of skiing blind! Foresight provides the students with lift tickets, ski or snowboard equipment, professional instruction (if needed), two days of lunch, and lodging, for a requested \$50 donation. However, Foresight will not turn any student away if they cannot pay the suggested donation. Foresight Ski Guides partners with TVIs, school districts, and parents to address several important areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum for the Blind, as well as Colorado State Standards for Physical Education for your students. Bring your students to Vail for an opportunity to learn important life skills that they can use throughout their lives, all while learning a sport they can safely enjoy with friends and family.

Ask about Foresight’s new Summer Camp for Blind Youth, launched in 2021. Now blind and visually impaired youth have new opportunities for transformative experiences through sports. Campers in the inaugural year participated in stand up paddle boarding, hiking, rock climbing, archery and fly fishing. Team building, goal setting and leadership development were also weaved throughout the camp. Look for more information on the Summer Camp for Blind Youth in the spring newsletter.

Please contact Christine Holmberg, Foresight Executive Director, at (303) 506-3859, or email her at [christine@foresightskiguides.org](mailto:christine@foresightskiguides.org) for more information on the summer camp, and to get on the calendar for the upcoming ski season. You can also follow Foresight Ski Guides on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and visit their website at [www.foresightskiguides.org](http://www.foresightskiguides.org).



**Metro TVI / O&M Specialists Meetings:** The meetings will be offered periodically throughout the school year and hosted at different locations in the Denver metro area. For more information, please be in touch with Jeannie Lei ([jlei@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org)) or Nancy Cozart ([ncozart@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:ncozart@lps.k12.co.us)). Stay tuned for the meetings dates / locations for this school year.

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

**Northern TVI / O&M Specialists Meetings:** The meetings will be offered periodically throughout the school year. For more information, please be in touch with Aryn McNichol at (303) 702-8354 x58354 or [mcnichol\\_aryn@svvdsd.org](mailto:mcnichol_aryn@svvdsd.org) Stay tuned for the meetings dates / locations for this school year.

**Southern Region TVI-DVR Meetings:** The first meeting of the year will be August 27, 2021; 2:30-3:30 p.m. This first meeting of the year will be hosted online using Zoom. Future meetings will be determined shortly. Contact Jim Olson ([jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)) for meeting ID and passcode.

**READ Act:** The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act), passed by the Colorado legislature in 2012, focuses on early literacy development for all students, and especially for students at risk to not read at grade level by the end of the third grade. The READ Act focuses on literacy development for kindergarteners through third-graders. Students are tested for reading skills, and those who are not reading at grade level are given individual READ plans. TVIs should work closely with general educators / literacy specialists on the READ Act screening, and if needed, diagnostic procedures to assure accessibility. This may include preparing materials in braille, utilizing commercial screening tools in braille format, assisting with magnification and other low vision needs of the visual presentation of the screening / assessment materials. The TVI may provide consultation to assist with the interpretation of results on timed screening / assessment procedures for learners using braille materials where normed testing was based on print readers.

**Tactile Art Club:** The Tactile Art Club (TAC) is a great way for people who are blind/visually impaired to be creative, express yourself and meet others. The goal is to provide students who are blind and visually impaired an outlet to learn, create accessible art, express themselves, form emotional connections, and showcase their creativity. It is participant-led, community-oriented, and open to all interested. The TAC meets on the third Tuesday of each month between 5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m. MT.

Check out the blogs on all the fun art projects they have worked on this year:

<https://www.rishikastudio.com/blog>

<https://www.rishikastudio.com/tac>

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

**Tools for Life:** The mission of this project is to provide financial assistance to the families of students who are blind/visually impaired (PreK – transition) who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is to help purchase necessary adaptive equipment, which students may own and utilize in their home, school, and community. These tools will help support literacy and the pursuit of high education. Since 2007, \$268,000 has been awarded to 143 families. The application deadline is October 15, 2021. Please go to: <https://www.seethefuture.org/learn-more-tools-for-life.html>.

**UEB Technical versus Nemeth Code:** The Braille Authority of North America has recognized both UEB Technical and the Nemeth Codes as approved braille math codes. As such, the decision of which code will be used for a child who is a beginner through an advanced braille reader is determined by the local Individual Education Program team. Textbooks can be ordered in both codes, the CMAS State Assessments are offered in both codes, and there are procedures to order College Board tests in either code.

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

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

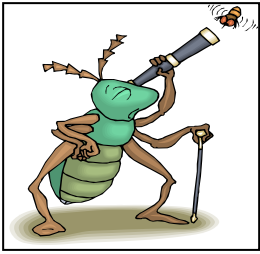
**United States Association of Blind Athletes:** USABA is a Colorado-based 501(c) (3) organization that provides life-enriching sports opportunities for every individual with a visual impairment. A member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, USABA provides athletic opportunities in various sports including,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

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

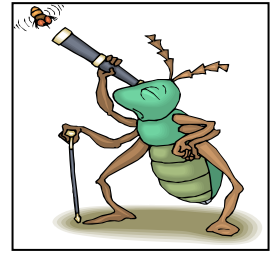
**Vision Coalition:** The Vision Coalition is a statewide advisory committee on the educational activities for students who are blind/visually impaired, support activities for their parents, and professional development activities specific to their service providers. Members include Tanni Anthony (CDE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

**Western Region TVI / COMS Meetings:** This group meets periodically, and it is often a virtual meeting. The contact person is Julie King ([julie.king@eagle.schools.net](mailto:julie.king@eagle.schools.net)). Stay tuned for the meetings dates / locations for this school year.

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



# LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



## Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics for School Year 2021-2022

Region	Dates	Paperwork Due	Site Coordinator
Western	September 24-25, 2021	September 9, 2021	Angela Sims
Northern	October 21-22, 2021	October 7, 2021	Liz Wieder
Southern	November 17, 2021	November 3, 2021	Debbie Haberkorn
Metro	February 17-19, 2022	January 31, 2022	Karin Hensel
Southern	March 10, 2022	February 24, 2022	Debbie Haberkorn

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

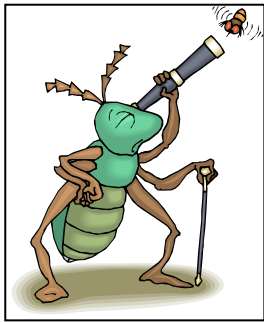
**Debbie Haberkorn—Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Coordinator:** Debbie has been with the CDE Regional Low Vision Evaluation (LVE) Clinics since 2012. In this role, she coordinates the dates and procedures of the clinics with the local site coordinators and oversees the involved paperwork. Debbie is also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

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

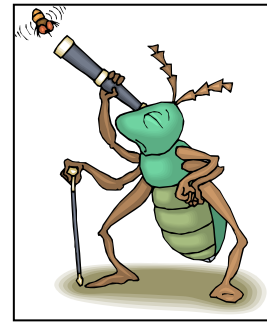
**Wendy Stoltman—Low Vision Therapist:** Wendy is a TVI, COMS, and a Certified Low Vision Therapist. Her college education was from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Northern Colorado. She has been working with students with disabilities since the early 1980s, and taught in both the Madison Metropolitan School District and in Brighton School District 27J. She is also a CDE TA Specialist with the Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant and a mentor/coach to TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists.

**Thomas Theune - Low Vision Specialist – Optometrist:** Tom shares that he has been honored to be a part of the Colorado LVE Clinic since its inception in 1998. His role is to provide insight into proper devices and strategies that can maximize vision and support literacy. After being diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa and experiencing his own vision loss, Tom chose to specialize in the field of low vision. For the past 28 years, he has provided low vision care for patients of all ages in Colorado Springs. He uses low vision devices and adaptive technology on a daily basis. This provides a unique perspective in relating to students and adults who have low vision.

**Site Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Coordinators for 2021-22. We thank our Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Site Coordinators:** Angela Sims (Western Region), Debbie Haberkorn (Southern Region), Liz Wieder (Northern Region), and Karin Hensel (Metro Region). Please work closely with your regional site coordinator to schedule students and turn in the needed paperwork.



# LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



## Who Should Have a Low Vision Evaluation?

By Wendy Stoltman

### How do you know which of your students would benefit from a low vision clinic evaluation?

- \* You order large print books for your student.
- \* You order large print tests for your student.
- \* You are enlarging every worksheet for your student.
- \* You gave the student a magnifier without a prescription.
- \* Your student has a whole drawer of unused low vision devices.
- \* Your student has devices that were prescribed by a doctor, dispensed by you, but is not using them.
- \* Your student with low vision is transitioning to a different educational program or location.
- \* You are not certain which device should be used for which activity.
- \* You want to be sure that your student has the best lighting options available.
- \* The tablet or computer used at home or at school is not accessible to your student.
- \* Your student can't see the board or street signs very well.

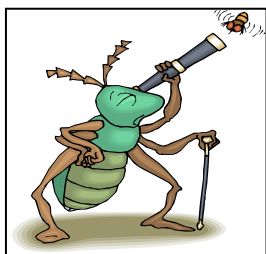


Please be aware that only Colorado public school students with a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) can participate in the Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics, which are funded with federal IDEA funds.

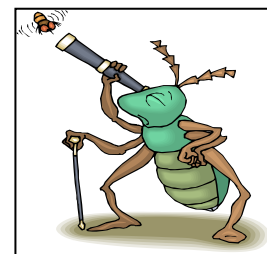
The primary goal of the Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics is to provide an examination that details whether your student / child will benefit from low vision devices that can be used in school, at home, and/or in the community. The student should be determined to have low vision ahead of the clinic based on a current eye care report. Another important consideration is that plans have been made ahead of the clinic to secure funding for prescribed devices.

First priority will be students who have not been evaluated in recent past years. With all of these considerations, we trust you are in good shape to determine if one or more of your students will be a candidate for a low vision evaluation during this school year!

If you have a question about whether a child is appropriate to participate in the clinic, please do not hesitate to talk to a member of the Regional Low Vision Evaluation Team. We want to make sure that we have a full docket of students scheduled per clinic—your help to ensure we have the students who will most benefit from a low vision evaluation at the clinic is most appreciated.



# LOW VISION EVALUATION CLINIC NEWS



## Paperwork Matters:

### Because THIS Paperwork Does Matter

By Tanni Anthony

Picture our Low Vision Regional Evaluation Coordinator, Debbie Haberkorn, getting all of the paperwork organized per child in a timely manner ahead of the clinic. She is thrilled to have each folder ready to go for the team, knowing they will put the information to good use. She is pulling together massive information across a docket of students for each of the clinics and is forever grateful that she does not have to chase information when she has so many other tasks to complete to get ready for the clinic.

Now picture Dr. Tom Theune, our optometrist specializing in low vision examinations and devices, as he reads the completed Eye Doctor Form, that was submitted on a student who has been accepted in one of the Colorado Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics that will be held during this school year. Tom nods appreciatively, as he gleans important information that will help him understand and customize his evaluation of each student. He knows that he is not replacing the regular eye care specialist of the child, so this information is critical to his knowledge and understanding of the child's diagnosis, its implications, the presence of refractive error, etc. Dr. Theune then checks the name of the TVI involved and thinks to himself, "Thank you, (insert maybe your name here!), for taking the time to provide me with this vital information."

Finally, envision our low vision therapists, Jim Olson and Wendy Stoltman, reading the submitted Parent and TVI Pre-Evaluation Form content detailing the history, abilities, and functional needs of each student. This information guides the game plan further for the upcoming low vision evaluation - what will be done specifically to learn about the student and his or her needs for magnification.

The LVE Clinic paperwork is a transfer of information from the people who know the child best to people who have a precious 90-minute session with the child. It takes a team to build a meaningful low vision evaluation. The paperwork for the clinic is the first step. Without it, the clinic appointment cannot happen for the student, and the appointment will be need to cancelled. Due dates for the clinic paperwork to be in Debbie's hands are posted in each newsletter. Without paperwork being completed in a timely and quality manner, the low vision evaluation exam will be compromised.



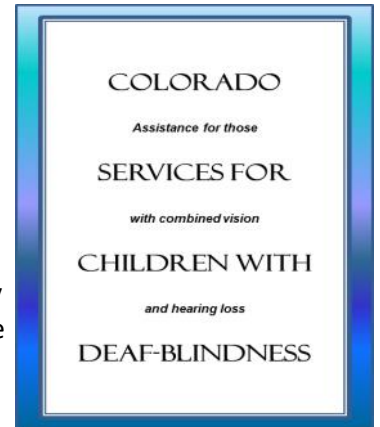
Simply put, the clinic paperwork is about needed information and a courtesy to our LVE team who are dedicated to providing a thorough and meaningful evaluation of each child. If you plan on bringing a student to one of the regional clinics, please understand this expectation. Schedule time well ahead of the clinic to secure the needed information, including content on the form that requires both TVI and parent input. Be proactive, be timely, and be thorough.

**Your efforts are expected, needed, and appreciated!**

# Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

## PROJECT PURPOSE AND STAFF

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



Key project activities are to maintain an annual Child Count process, host professional learning events, and provide universal and customized technical assistance. The current project has three broad goals: (1) identification, (2) family networking, training, and TA support, and (3) professional training and TA support. Key events have been the annual Summer Institute and Parent Workshop. New projects have recently included a formal intervener training and coaching model, an inventory of online early childhood training modules now posted on the project's website, and an annual webinar series. The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. We have five CDE employees (project staff) and two specialized contractors.

### PROJECT STAFF

**Tanni Anthony** has been Project Co-Director since 2018. Prior to that, she was the CO DB Project Director since 1995. She was the Project Coordinator (1992-1995). She also serves as the Director of the Access, Learning, and Literacy Team and the CDE State Consultant on Blindness / Visual Impairment. Key roles with the CO DB Project include project operations, fiscal management, annual reports, and professional learning events. Tanni received her Ph.D. from the University of Denver in the area of Child and Family Studies. She earned her Ed.S. degree from the UNC in area of blindness/visual impairments with programmatic emphasis on severe disabilities, including deaf-blindness, and additional certification as an Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialist. Tanni has worked as a TVI / O&M in Minnesota, Colorado, and Alaska. She is well-trained in the fields of blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness. Many such trainings can be tied to the 27 annual summer institutes that the CO DB Project has planned and hosted! Tanni is a specialist on sensory assessment, play assessment / strategies, developmental orientation and mobility, and communication and emergent literacy assessment / strategies. Tanni has taught courses on or related to deaf-blindness for the University of Alaska, University of Denver, East Carolina University, Florida State University, and the University of Northern Colorado. She has presented and published on deaf-blind related topics over the course of her career.

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



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

**Jessica Meisel** was a 2021-22 contractor to assist with training and coaching support for interveners working in Colorado school districts. We are working to bring her back for this next school year. Jessica is an Early Childhood Special Educator and Deaf-Blind Specialist. Jessica is now in her fourth year working for Anchor Center for Blind Children and has teaching experience in metro Colorado districts and with the Helen Keller Learning Center. Jessica completed her bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Queens College in Flushing, New York, in 2010. It was during this time that she became a nanny for a child with deafblindness. She then pursued a specialized degree that would allow her to educate and work with more children with deaf-blindness. Jessica graduated from Hunter College in 2014 with an Early Childhood Special Education master's degree, with an annotation on Multiple and Severe Disabilities and Deaf-Blindness. We are thrilled that she then returned to Colorado where she worked as a preschool teacher in a small school district in the Denver Metro area, and provided home visits to children with multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness who were too medically fragile to physically attend school. In 2017, Jessica was given the opportunity to work with school-aged children (ages kindergarten to fifth grade) as a Significant Support Needs Teacher in the same district, where she worked to obtain her Special Education Generalist License. She worked hard to have her students included in their general education classrooms through a co-teaching model and provided consultation and coaching to staff to create a more inclusive environment. Jessica currently works at the Anchor Center for Blind Children in a lead role with children who are deaf-blind.

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

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

Tanni Anthony  
Gina Herrera

303 866-6681  
303 866-6605

[anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)  
[herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)

ALONE, WE CAN  
DO SO LITTLE;  
TOGETHER WE  
CAN DO SO MUCH.

- HELEN KELLER

## Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

### Child Find Count of Colorado Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness

Thanks to everyone who participated in the December 2020 Count. A total of 164 children and youth were identified. There are 79 girls and 85 boys on the count. We are concerned that we only identified 7 new infants and toddlers, which is down from last year's number of 17. There are 119 children ages 3 to 15, and 38 youth from 16-21 years. We will soon we will be sending out the paperwork for the December 2021 Count! 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](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)) or Gina Herrera ([herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto: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](mailto: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

There are approximately 10,000 children and youth in the United States who have been identified as deaf-blind. Deaf-blindness is a low-incidence disability and within this population there is great variability in terms of age, race/ethnicity, cause of deaf-blindness, and severity and type of hearing and vision loss. Ninety percent have additional physical, medical, or cognitive disabilities.

As a national technical assistance center, NCDB works with state deaf-blind projects and other partners to improve educational results and quality of life for children who are deaf-blind and their families.

NCDB has a wealth of resources to support children and youth with deaf-blindness, parents, and service providers. Check out their initiatives, free publications, and resources.

<https://www.nationaldb.org/>



# Information About Deaf-Blindness: Be in the Know

## Important Archived Webinar

**Shifting Your Perspective: Lessons and Insights from Spanish-Speaking Families:** What's it like when you speak Spanish and are raising a child with deaf-blindness in the US? In this webinar, hear from a dynamic panel of Spanish-speaking families who'll discuss their personal experiences, including their struggles and successes. Find out what it's like learning the diagnosis, accessing services, and locating support, and hear what they want other families and providers to know. Importantly, this webinar offers a unique perspective: It was conducted in Spanish with English captions and live English interpreters. The captions within the recording were based on the live English interpretation and are subject to inaccuracy. Check it out at: [Shifting Your Perspective: Lessons and Insights from Spanish-Speaking Families | National Center on Deaf-Blindness \(nationaldb.org\)](https://nationaldb.org)



IDAHO PROJECT FOR  
**CHILDREN AND YOUTH**  
WITH DEAF-BLINDNESS

Dr. Robin Greenfield of the Idaho Project for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness has several helpful resources on her project's website.

### Video Fact Sheets on:

- Using Hand Under Hand
- Using the Pause Strategy

These Fact Sheets can be found at: <https://idahocdhd.org/cydb/Resources/Videos>.

**Podcast Series**, which provides training and consultation to service providers and families of children and young adults who have a combined vision and hearing loss. The series is still in progress and features known experts in the field of deaf-blindness. Thus far, the series has featured:

- David Brown (assessment focus)
- Maurice Belote (communication focus)
- Tanni Anthony (early childhood focus)

The series will also include Phil Schweigert, Robbie Blaha, and maybe a few others!

Take a listen at: <https://idahocdhd.org/cydb/resources/podcast-series>





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



### AER and Freedom Scientific Join Forces!

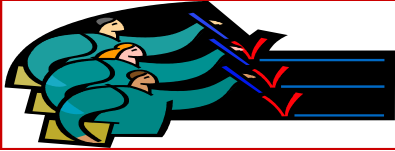


AER is pleased that Freedom Scientific, a Vispero brand, has collaborated with us during June to help support our efforts to provide AERBVI members with continued professional development opportunities. As always, Freedom Scientific furthers its commitment to being the world's leading assistive technology provider for people who are blind/visually impaired.

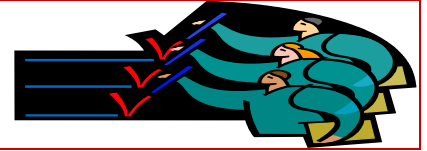
[Visit Freedom Scientific](#)

[Visit the AER eLearning Center](#)

Vispero's family of brands—Freedom Scientific, Enhanced Vision, and Optelec—deliver superior lines of optical and video magnifiers, wearables, scanning and reading devices, and easy-to-use software. AER appreciates the support from Vispero for their members and nonmembers alike to continue their personal professional development from home, work, or anywhere in between!



# CHECK IT OUT!



## Tactile Art 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 16, and December 21, 2021.

For more information, please reach out to Rishika Kartik at [rishikakartik@gmail.com](mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com).

**APH Friday, September 10, 2021, 12:00 – 1:30 PM EST**

### Babies with CVI: Nurturing Visual Abilities and Development in Early Childhood

“What can I do to make this child flourish?” Join this webinar and learn firsthand from teacher and author Anne McComiskey of what it takes to help parents and new professionals work with babies from birth to 36 months who are newly diagnosed with CVI. Practical explanations and activity ideas from the new APH Press book entitled *Babies with CVI* will be shared with hopes of helping more children flourish in early visual development.

[Register Here](#)

**Friday, September 10, 2021, 12:00 – 1:00 PM EST**

### Triple Threat: JAWS + ZoomText = Fusion

The return to the classroom often raises the question of what access software will best meet students’ needs. Go back to school with Ben Knolles of Vispero to examine Fusion, ZoomText, and JAWS. Compare and contrast all three solutions, explore configuration options, and discover the educational resources available for the 2021-22 academic year.

[Register Here](#)

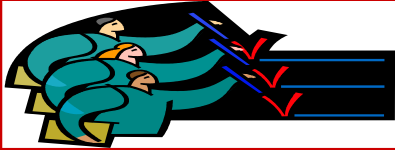
For more information about Access Academy and upcoming Access Academy webinars, please visit the [About Access Academy webpage](#) **Webinars Coming Your Way**.

## Future Depends on Teachers

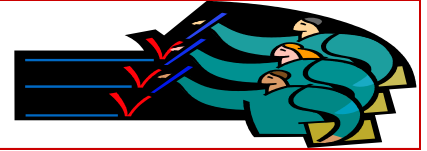
TEACH Colorado just announced a new public awareness campaign. "[The Future Depends on Teachers](#)" celebrates the role teachers play in shaping our future and invites people to explore teaching at a time when they are needed more than ever.

Please check it out when you have a moment.





# CHECK IT OUT!



## “Tools for Life” for Colorado Residents



### Application Deadline: October 15, 2021

Providing financial assistance to families of visually impaired and blind students (Pre K–Transition) who are residents of Colorado. This assistance is to help purchase necessary adaptive equipment which students may own and utilize in their home and community. These tools will help support literacy and the pursuit of higher education.

To Apply and for more information, go to:

[www.seethefuture.org](http://www.seethefuture.org)

Click on the “Tools for Life Application” link on the Home page. If you have questions, contact Tom Theune, OD – Chairperson of the SEE THE FUTURE Fund at (719) 471-3200, [twtheune@comcast.net](mailto:twtheune@comcast.net).

### White Cane Awareness Day – October 15th!



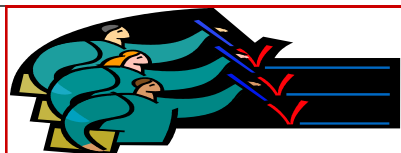
We celebrate White Cane Awareness Day every year on October 15. For people who are blind/visually impaired, the white cane is an essential tool that gives the ability to achieve a full and independent life. It allows its users to move freely and safely from place to place—whether it's at work, at school, or around their neighborhoods.

"White Cane Awareness Day is our way of emphasizing the critical role that this tool plays in living the lives we want and informing the public about its true significance." — NFB President Mark A. Riccobono

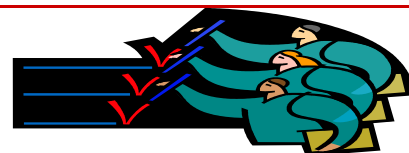


**We hope that the Orientation and Mobility Specialists across the state have plans to celebrate this important day with their students.**

**Raise a little (or big!) cane!**



# CHECK IT OUT!



## Statement from Ed Bosso, President of Educational Programs and Superintendent



We believe wholeheartedly that every child can learn with the right support. That's why we strive to reach every family in need, and why we won't give less than our best every time, for every child and for every family.

For families living with Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI), the stakes are incredibly high. Given the field's lack of adequate resources and expertise, Perkins has committed to be part of the solution. And we know we can't address this crisis alone. That's why we've convened parents, educators, medical professionals, and CVI experts to help us forge the best path forward, together.

For five years, the Perkins-Roman Range Endorsement has been part of our toolkit. However, we've seen some unintended consequences; namely, as an institution, we could not ensure assessor competency in administering the CVI Range. Therefore, we've decided to discontinue that Endorsement. We understand this decision is disappointing to some, but our commitment to our families—and doing our very best for them—comes first.

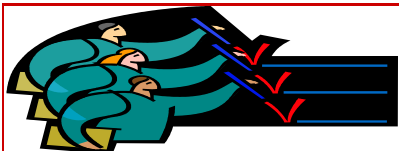
We want to be clear that the end of the Endorsement does not mean we are moving away from the Roman CVI Range and the methodology connected to the CVI Range. Dr. Roman's contributions and legacy are remarkable, and that's why we'll continue to offer professionals training on the CVI Range. Dr. Roman's perspective continues to be one part of our integrated, inclusive approach to comprehensive assessment and building promising practices and educational programming for children with CVI.

At Perkins, we embrace an inclusive approach to CVI, an approach that ensures that all unique visual behaviors are considered and an approach that includes all children regardless of how their CVI uniquely manifests itself. From our convening of stakeholders in the 2018 CVI COLAB, our work in the 2019 CVI Symposium and through our ongoing Symposium working groups, we continue to learn and grow in our philosophy and understanding of CVI. We believe that bringing ideas together from multiple perspectives—individuals with CVI, families, educators, researchers, and medical professionals—unlocks the best solutions for meeting the unique needs of all children with CVI. In our work, we use the term Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment to include the work of all the leading theorists and all documented elements of CVI. This ensures the inclusion of all children with CVI, with brain-based visual impairments, in getting the assessment, care and education they deserve.

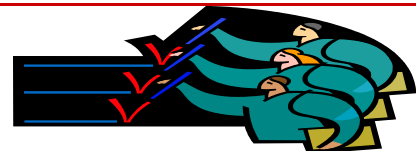
We believe in the power of collaboration, diverse thinking, and constant learning to best support all children with CVI. To that end, we use a comprehensive and integrated approach to CVI assessment and educational programming at Perkins that incorporates the work of leading theorists and current research, so we can best understand and meet the needs of the whole child. And we intend to take this work beyond our campus gates.

Until then, we promise this: We are fully committed to building awareness, supporting families, increasing advocacy, and fostering collaboration to move CVI forward. We will continue to place individuals with CVI and their families at the center of everything we do—we elevate their voices and promote their self-advocacy. We will continue to offer high-quality training for educators and providers. We will continue to support school districts in need of CVI professional development. We will continue to collaborate with universities about the critical importance of comprehensive CVI training for TVIs. We will continue to build partnerships with medical institutions and researchers.

Perkins will continue to step up for every child with CVI and push for the best approaches to tackle this challenge. There is so much work to do and our kids can't wait.



**CHECK IT OUT!**



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
OF COLORADO

**6 Dot Dash**



PRESENTED BY:



**#ComeRunWithUs September 18, 2021 at 8:30 AM**

**Colorado Center for the Blind**

**2233 W. Shepperd Ave, Littleton, CO 80120**

Join the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado and the Colorado Center for the Blind for 5K run/walk event to raise awareness and funds for Braille Literacy. For more information visit us online at [www.6dotdashco.com](http://www.6dotdashco.com)

**THIS EVENT OFFERS FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!**

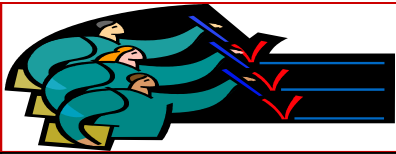
**T-shirts Finishers Medal Fun Race Expo 5K Inflatable Slide  
Food Truck Shaved Ice Drawings and Giveaways Puppy Booth**



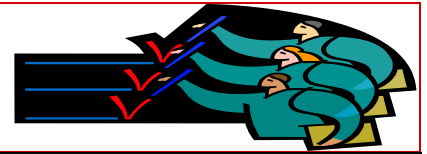
**[Join Our Facebook Group – Colorado 6 Dot Dash](#)**

**[Sign Up Today www.6dotdashco.com/registration](http://www.6dotdashco.com/registration)**

**FREE REGISTRATION FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS WHO FUNDRAISE \$100**



# CHECK IT OUT!



**Connect with the OSEP Update**—Check out the Office of Special Education Program’s newsletter! [Click here to subscribe](#). You can also check out the [IDEA website newsletter archive](#) for past editions of the OSEP Newsletter.



**Visit the OSERS Blog**—Visit the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) blog for powerful stories and useful information from parents, families, educators, and practitioners in the field. You can bookmark [sites.ed.gov/osers](https://sites.ed.gov/osers) for future posts!



**Connect with OSERS on Twitter**

Follow us: [@Ed Sped Rehab](https://twitter.com/Ed_Sped_Rehab)

\* If you have questions or comments, please send them

to [josiah.willey@ed.gov](mailto:josiah.willey@ed.gov)

**Access and Engagement II Report**—The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) has released the results of Access and Engagement II: An Examination of How the COVID-19 Pandemic Continued to Impact Students with Visual Impairments, Their Families, and Professionals Nine Months Later. This study is a follow up to the first Access and Engagement study, with data collected during the early days of the pandemic. Read this [AFB Access and Engagement press release](#) to learn more.

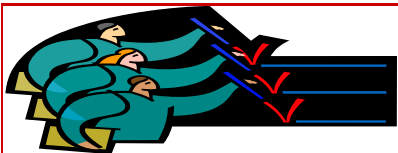
**Learning Ally** is a leading education solutions organization dedicated to transforming the lives of struggling learners. The Learning Ally Audiobook Solution is a proven multi-sensory reading accommodation for students with a reading deficit composed of high quality, human-read audiobooks, student-centric features, and a suite of teacher resources to monitor and support student success. Used in more than 17,000 schools, this essential solution bridges the gap between a student’s reading ability and their cognitive capability, empowering them to become engaged learners and reach their academic potential. Check out some [sample human-read audiobooks](#) that help to level the playing field for students and bridge them to grade-level content while they are still working on explicit decoding skills at a lower level. These books allow students to read what their friends are reading and what is assigned in their classes. To learn more about whether your school or district already has an existing membership, or to learn more about purchasing a membership, visit our website at [Learningally.org](https://learningally.org) or call 1-800-221-4792. In Colorado, Scott Burns is our contact at (720) 279-4986 or [sburns@learningally.org](mailto:sburns@learningally.org).

**Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference Postponed**—We are disappointed to announce that due to COVID-19, we are postponing the Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference, scheduled for December 1-4, 2021, in St. Pete Beach, Florida. With the proliferation of the COVID-19 Delta variant, we simply will not risk the safety and well-being of our students, our families, or ourselves. It would be irresponsible of us to ask our colleagues, vendors, presenters, teachers, and others to travel to and participate in a face-to-face conference at this time.

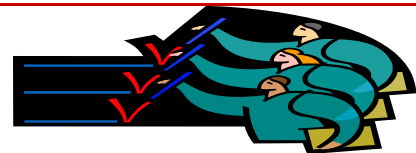
As we firmly believe the heart and soul of the Literacy Conference is the face-to-face interactions, networking, and relationships that occur, a virtual conference just would not reflect the spirit of the Literacy Conference. To that end, we are negotiating with the TradeWinds to reschedule the conference for a future date. This has obviously been a difficult decision. We have contractual obligations with the TradeWinds that include a cancellation fee. As most of you are aware, this is a grass-roots organization that depends solely on revenue from the conference and donations. Without a conference, our coffers are bare! If you would like to make a donation to help sustain the Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference, please use this link: <http://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/payment.php>. (You can donate with a credit card or through a Pay Pal Account.)

The TradeWinds will automatically cancel all hotel reservations that were made under the GITWL room block. If you do not receive a cancellation email by September 3, 2021, please contact the hotel directly at 800-360-4016. Watch your email for further information regarding rescheduled dates.

Sincerely, Cay Holbrook, Janie Blome, Elizabeth Anderson, and Kay Ratzlaff



# CHECK IT OUT!



## National Registry for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments Launches

**Success Beyond Sight**, (SBS), a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization, has created a FREE National Registry for TSVIs/TVIs (NRTSVI) to empower a national voice for TSVIs/TVIs and to provide a means to reach, on a national level, TSVIs/TVIs with free resources and important professional information.

Success Beyond Sight recognizes the crucial role that Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs/TVIs) play in the long-term success of their students. Strong instruction and mentorship by TSVIs/TVIs are common denominators for many highly accomplished adults who were born without vision or who lost their vision as children.

Because TSVIs/TVIs are licensed/credentialed/certified/endorsed in their state of practice, there has not been a Registry recognizing them as a nationally important profession demonstrating the power of their numbers. SBS formed an Advisory Board to help guide the development of the NRTSVI. Advisory Board members are Dr. Laura Bozeman, Dr. Rona Pogrud, Dr. Amy Parker, Dr. Cheryl Kamei-Hannan, Jill Brown and Dr. Nicole Johnson.

SBS is providing FREE access to the *Journal of Vision Impairment & Blindness (JVIB)* for all registrants. *JVIB* is the resource for peer-reviewed research and articles for professionals serving individuals who are blind or have low vision.

TSVIs/TVIs will be able to be directly engaged with, and have a voice in, national discussions regarding:

- The funding needed to train current and future professionals and to secure the survival of this very important profession.
- Efforts to ensure sufficient funding for all students who require specialized services from a TSVI/TVI.
- The sharing of important information and opportunities to be included in relevant surveys and research to benefit the profession.
- Appropriate caseloads.
- Legislative advocacy.

SBS recognizes that there are important professional membership organizations that provide TSVIs/TVIs a voice among other professional voices, but the Registry will provide the forum for TSVIs/TVIs to be highly visible and have their own unique voice on the national stage.

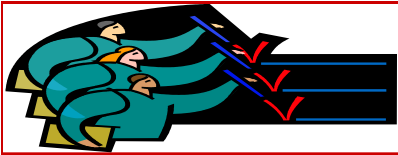
If you are a TSVI/TVI or teacher licensed, credentialed, certified, or endorsed in at least one state to teach children who have visual impairments, go to the [National Registry for TSVIs](#) to learn more and to register.

Participating in this Registry is voluntary. For questions or additional information, please email:

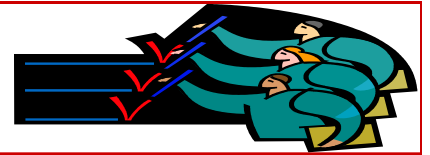
[NRTSVI@successbeyondsight.org](mailto:NRTSVI@successbeyondsight.org).







# CHECK IT OUT!



## Return to School Roadmap

The U.S. Department of Education has released a [Return to School Roadmap](#). It emphasizes three areas (Prioritizing Health and Safety of Families, Building School Communities and Supporting Social/Emotional/Mental Health, and Accelerate Academic Achievement). To create a strong foundation for students' academic success, we must prioritize their social, emotional and mental health. Here are some steps you can take to build school communities and support students' social, emotional, and mental health this academic year. Below are resources from the Department of Education and across the Federal government to support this effort. To learn more, <https://sites.ed.gov/>.

## CAST

The Center for Applied Specialized Technology offers a variety of institutes and workshops for educators at all levels—and their organizations—to build their understanding and practice of UDL, accessibility, and professional development. These virtual professional learning gatherings are interactive and experiential opportunities to develop action plans for the exploration, integration, and implementation of UDL:

- [Supercharge Your Professional Learning](#)  
Weekly sessions starting Tuesday, September 7 through Tuesday, October 12, 2021
- [Introduction to UDL Addressing the Variability of All Learners](#)  
Thursday, October 21 – Friday, October 22, 2021
- [UDL Implementation Academy](#)  
Thursday, October 28 – Friday, October 29, 2021
- [UDL Beyond the Basics](#)  
Thursday, November 4 – Friday, November 5, 2021

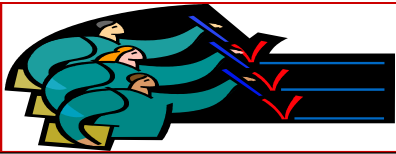


## Free Concussion Management Team Training

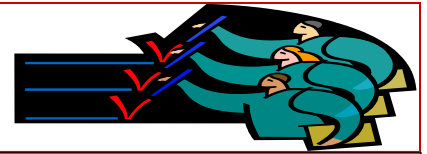
It is estimated that in the US, over 2 million concussions occur each year in children under the age of 18. School personnel can take an active role in supporting all students who are impacted by taking CDE's free online Return to Learn Concussion Management Team training. [Click Here for Additional Information](#)

For more information, contact:

Toni Grishman, BSN, RN  
Health and Wellness  
Phone: 303-866-6454  
Email: [grishman\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:grishman_t@cde.state.co.us)



# 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](#) website has a wealth of information to support educators and 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

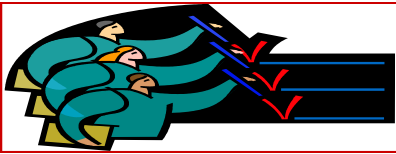
The [National AEM Center at CAST](#) has developed resources to support students who need accessible materials and technologies while learning remotely during the COVID-19 crisis.



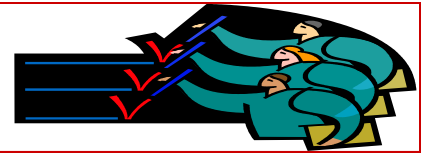
### \*\* eBooks

[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.





# CHECK IT OUT!



## CAMP ABILITIES



## FOUR CORNERS



### What is Camp Abilities Four Corners?

The Visually Impaired Blind Athletes of Northern Arizona (VIBA-NAZ) is a non-profit board created to support a new Camp Abilities program in the Four Corners area specific to children who are blind or visually impaired. The weeklong summer sports camp will be held in the Four Corners area, but open to anyone who qualifies, from anywhere in the world.

Camp Abilities is a national program created to empower children and teens with visual impairments to be physically active and productive members of their schools, towns, cities, and communities, as well as to improve the health and well-being of people with sensory impairments. Camp Abilities teaches kids, teens, and young adults what they can do in the areas of sports and recreation, which is often overlooked in their educational and home environments.

Camp Abilities Four Corners will offer sports and recreation activities that reflect the geography and culture of the Four Corners region (Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico). Arizona has supported a Camp Abilities program in Tucson. This new Four Corners program will partner with Camp Abilities Tucson (CAT) to share staff, equipment, and participants. Students are welcome to attend both camps, in two distinct regions of the southwest that support different kinds of sports and recreation opportunities based on geography, culture, and weather.

The VIBA-NAZ board is on track to launch the first weeklong sports camp in June 2022, to be based at the Cameron Trading Post in Cameron, AZ, and open to 15 initial athlete participants. In order to reach this goal, the board has established non-profit status and plans to raise funds through direct donations and fund-raising activities.

Check out [Camp Abilities Four Corners](https://www.campabilitiesfourcorners.org/) for more details.

<https://www.campabilitiesfourcorners.org/>

# Resources and Materials

## COVID-19 Resources

### US Department of Education Information

Check the Department's [COVID-19 Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel](#) web page for information and resources, including information and resources from other federal agencies.

### Updated CDC Guidance

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has released updated [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#). The updated guidance focuses on helping administrators in K-12 schools, along with state and local health officials, safely support in-person learning, as well as sports and other extracurricular activities.

### New Guidance Reaffirms Importance of Full Implementation of IDEA Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) sent a [letter to its state and local partners](#) reiterating its commitment to ensuring children with disabilities and their families have successful early intervention and educational experiences in the 2021–2022 school year.

This letter outlines a series of question and answers (Q&As) as children and students return to in-person learning. The Q&As focus on topics to help ensure that — regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic or the mode of instruction — children with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and that infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families receive early intervention services.

The [Q&As document on Child Find Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) is the first Q&A in the series and reaffirms the importance of appropriate implementation of IDEA's child find obligations, which requires the identification, location and evaluation, of all children with disabilities in the states. An effective child find system is an ongoing part of each state's responsibility to ensure that FAPE is made available to all eligible children with disabilities.

- [Read the Press Release](#)
- [Read the Letter to OSERS State and Local Partners](#)
- [Read the Q&A on Child Find Under Part B of IDEA](#)

# Resources and Materials

## Long COVID under Section 504 and the IDEA:

A Resource to Support Children, Students, Educators, Schools, Service Providers, and Families

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for schools in meeting the needs of all children and students in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. These challenges will continue as schools and public agencies seek to ensure support and equity for children and students experiencing the long-term adverse health effects of COVID-19, commonly referred to as long COVID.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified long COVID as another term for post-COVID conditions. According to the CDC, post-COVID conditions “are a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems people can experience more than four weeks after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Even people who did not have symptoms when they were infected can have post-COVID conditions.”

A child or student experiencing long COVID or other conditions that have arisen as a result of COVID-19 may be eligible for special education and related services under IDEA, and/or may be entitled to protections and services under Section 504. Some children and students who were already identified as having a disability under IDEA and/or Section 504 and who have contracted COVID-19 may experience new or worsened symptoms related to their pre-existing disability, to COVID-19, or to both. If these symptoms persist in the form of long COVID, these children or students may need new or different related aids and services, specialized instruction, or reasonable modifications. Other children or students may be found eligible for services under IDEA and/or Section 504 for the first time because of the adverse impact of long COVID on the child’s educational achievement and functioning (IDEA), or if long COVID substantially limits one or more of the student’s major life activities (Section 504).

If the child is eligible for services under Part C of IDEA, an IFSP will be developed by the Individual Family Service Plan Team, which includes the infant’s or toddler’s parent. Likewise, a child determined eligible for services under Part B will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by the IEP Team, which includes the child’s parent. If a student is eligible for services or reasonable modifications under Section 504, schools often record those services and modifications in a document called a Section 504 plan. Under Section 504, for example, a group of knowledgeable people may determine that a student requires a reasonable modification to the attendance policy to receive excused absences for long COVID-related illness or medical appointments beyond the initial period of illness.

For more information, check out:

- [CDC’s Post-COVID Conditions website](#)
- [Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504](#)
- [Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students’ Needs](#)
- [Request for Evaluation under IDEA’s requirements](#)



# Resources and Materials

## Eye Am Kids

Eye Am Kids started out as a way to support children who have visual impairments. A mom with 2 children who have ocular albinism, she wanted to support other children and their families. All of their boxes offer a book with braille, sensory bin activities, a tactile craft activity, and ways to support the family all surrounded by a monthly theme. Their JR boxes are for younger children, with a board book and more support needed for the activities. The CVI boxes are designed to support CVI characteristics needed to help these children visually access the activities. The Eye Am boxes are for older children with the book completely in braille and less support needed to complete the activities.



More information about Eye Am Kids [products](#) and past boxes ([www.eyeamkids.com](http://www.eyeamkids.com)).

Find them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) @eyeamkids and email directly to [Melisa.Matthews@eyeamkids.com](mailto:Melisa.Matthews@eyeamkids.com).

## Clusive

Clusive is an adaptive and accessible web-based reader created for students with a wide range of learning needs, especially those with disabilities. Clusive is designed through a UDL lens and contains research-based features to help learners build self-awareness through discovering, choosing, and using preferences that help build learning skills. For more information, visit [Welcome to Clusive homepage](http://Welcome to Clusive homepage) ([clusive.cast.org](http://clusive.cast.org))

## IEP Guide Information for Accessible Materials

The AEM Center at CAST's updated guide to AEM in the IEP provides examples of specific places in an IEP where it may be appropriate to refer to a student's need for and use of accessible materials and technologies. Whether you are revising an existing IEP or creating a new one, use the guide to include AEM in the IEP and ensure every student who needs accessible materials and technologies has the opportunity to experience independence, participation, and progress this school year. You can download the guide at: [AEM Center: AEM in the IEP](http://AEM Center: AEM in the IEP) ([cast.org](http://cast.org)).

## Hadley School for the Blind

Founded in 1920 by William Hadley, an educator who lost his eyesight later in life, [Hadley](#) offers practical help, connection and support free of charge to anyone with a visual impairment, their families, and professionals supporting them. Since July 2020, more than 14,000 learners have accessed nearly 60,000 workshops. The program currently has over a 70% completion rate and has scored over 97% in satisfaction ratings. Hadley provides online, large print, braille and audio media, reaching all 50 states and 100 countries. And more people learn braille from Hadley than from any other organization worldwide.



The Hadley School for the Blind

## Developing Young Children's Math Skills

The Department's [Institute of Education Sciences'](#) Regional Educational Laboratory Program ([Central](#), [Appalachia](#), and [Northwest](#)), has developed [resources](#) to provide quick tips, evidence-based activities and games, and videos that families and caregivers can use at home to support math learning for children ages 2-8.



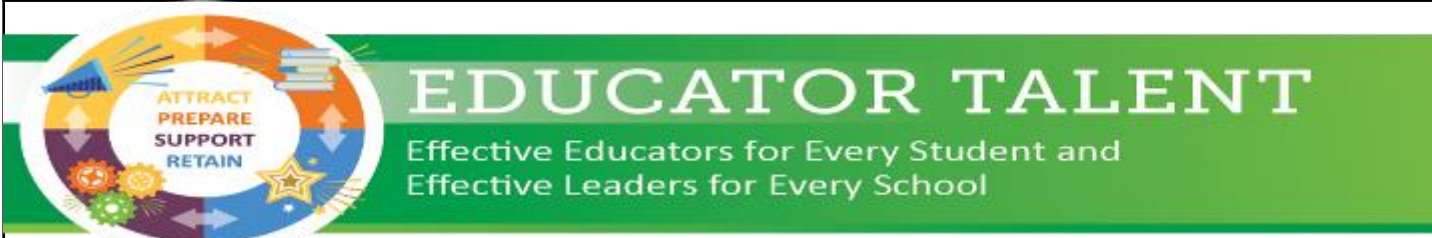
## Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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

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

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

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





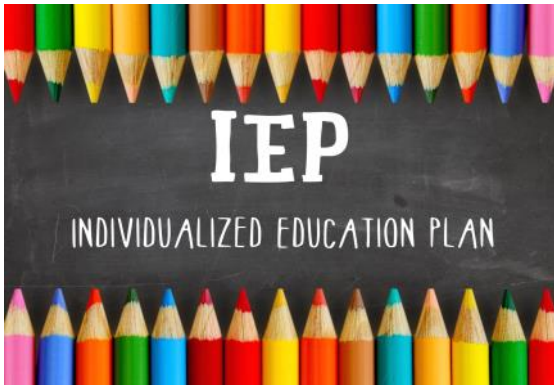


## Update from CDPHE

### CDPHE Introduces New COVID-19 Testing Program for Schools

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is introducing a new COVID-19 testing program for schools starting in mid-June and continuing throughout the 2021-22 school year. [Information on the new testing program is available in this letter to superintendents and school leaders.](#)

## State IEP System News



### Ascend Colorado's System Available July 1

Ascend Colorado, the state's Individualized Education Program system developed with CDE and AnLar, LLC., was made available to all Colorado Administrative Units on July 1.

The system can be accessed by teams of educators, service providers and families of students with disabilities to develop and implement IEPs. [Please visit the Ascend Colorado website for more information.](#)

### Update on Special Education Data Management System

The state's purchasing office is allowing Administrative Units to continue accessing the Frontline IEP system for another year at no cost even though AnLar, LLC, is contracted to build both a new state-sponsored IEP system and state Data Management System.

Additionally, CDE will continue to have access to the Special Education DMS and the Gifted DMS for another year. All data collected through Thursday, June 30, will remain in the current DMS. Ultimately, CDE will transfer all data to the new DMS.

New data collected during the 2021-22 school year will begin being stored in the new DMS. Though the systems will not be identical, the overall process of uploading the data or checking information provided by CDE to districts will be similar.

Finally, it is important to note that Data Pipeline and the DMS are separate systems. There will be no transfer of data from the current DMS to Data Pipeline, nor is it expected that there will be any data transfer from the new DMS to Data Pipeline. AUs will continue to access and upload information to Data Pipeline as they have always done.

Additional information regarding changes to the DMS will be forthcoming as a more detailed timeline is developed.



## Update to Special Education FAQs in Response to COVID-19

CDE has updated one section of the department's [Special Education FAQs in Response to COVID-19](#) to align with direction and guidance from OSEP. Specifically, Question 11 has been added to the [Compensatory Services](#) topic section. If you have any questions, contact Brandon Edelman, [edelman\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:edelman_b@cde.state.co.us).

## COVID-19 FAQs and Resources, Including Compensatory Services, Available

Information about Compensatory Services and other topics can be found on the [Office of Special Education's webpage](#) or on the [Special Education Director's Corner webpage](#). Information and resources for schools can be found on [CDE's COVID-19 Resources for Schools webpage](#).

This toolkit and the resources included within it were developed in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials and the Colorado Department of Education. Check out all the many details of the [Toolkit Resource Guidance](#). (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolguidance21-22>).

**Setting The Standard Webinar Series**—CDE's Office of Standards and Instructional Support is offering an ongoing webinar series that will be facilitated by CDE and national experts in the areas of interventions, equity, social emotional learning, and math. The webinars are held the first Wednesday of each month from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The next webinar will be Wednesday, Sept. 1: Impactful Intervention: Meeting students where they are and getting them to mastery. [Visit the Setting the Standard Webinar Series webpage for more information.](#)

For More Information, Contact: Jamie Hurley, Office of Standards and Instructional Support  
Phone: (303) 866-6453 Email: [hurley\\_J@cde.state.co.us](mailto:hurley_J@cde.state.co.us)

## Special Education and Behavioral Health Licensure Renewal Requirements

As a result of the passage of [HB 20-1128](#) and [HB 20-1312](#) during the 2020 legislative session, educators are now required to complete a minimum of 10 contact hours of training in special education and behavioral health in order to renew their professional license:

- This requirement applies to all educators seeking to renew any teacher, special service provider, principal, and/or administrator professional license on or after June 30, 2023.
- This is an ongoing requirement for every renewal of a professional license after the above date.
- For renewal of a professional license, at least 10 of the 90 contact hours of professional development activities must be related to:
  - Behavioral health training that is culturally responsive and trauma- and evidence-informed, which may include:
    - Mental health first aid training, specific to youth and teens.
    - Training modules concerning teen suicide prevention.
    - Training on interconnected systems framework for positive behavioral interventions and supports and mental health.
    - Training approved or provided by the school district where the teacher is employed.
    - Training modules concerning child traumatic stress.
  - Increasing awareness of laws and practices relating to educating students with disabilities in the classroom, including but not limited to Child Find and inclusive learning environments.
- An educator may obtain the 10 hours required through any combination of special education or behavioral health courses so long as that combination includes substantial training in both areas. A single professional development course or activity may satisfy both content requirements.
- Professional development utilized to meet this requirement does **not** need to be pre-approved by CDE. Read more about [professional development requirements](#).



## \*DAC\* - CDE Assessment Update Colorado PSAT/SAT Update

July 28, 2021

Bookmark us! <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment>

### PSAT/SAT Update

#### **Spring 2021 PSAT/SAT Individual Student Level Data Files Available Today**

While districts and schools have had access to PSAT/SAT data in the College Board portal since the end of June, single district and school **individual student** level data files for the spring 2021 Colorado PSAT in grades 9 and 10, and SAT in grade 11, are available today in the PSAT/SAT 2021 Syncplicity assessment folder. This year's file includes Colorado performance level indicators for Mathematics and Evidence-based Reading and Writing adopted by the State Board of Education in March, 2020, based on educator committee recommendations. The performance levels are:

1. Does Not Yet Meet Expectations
2. Approached Expectations
3. Met Expectations (cut score is the same as College Board's College and Career Readiness benchmark)
4. Exceeded Expectations

Please check out the [Colorado PSAT/SAT student data file layout](#). All state assessment results will be embargoed and must not be publicly disseminated, distributed, or published by any means until they are publicly released by the state. However, districts and schools may use aggregated and individual student level results internally for informational and planning purposes before that time. Please be sure that any data you release after the State Board meeting has had the appropriate suppressions applied to meet federal and state data privacy requirements. If you have any questions about the data file, please contact Jasmine Carey at [carey\\_J@cde.state.co.us](mailto:carey_J@cde.state.co.us).

#### **Spring 2022 SAT and PSAT Test Dates**

As previously announced, the Colorado SAT is scheduled to be administered on the following dates in spring 2022:

- Primary SAT test date: Wednesday, April 13, 2022
- Make-up SAT test date: Tuesday, April 26, 2022

The window for 11th grade students *who are approved for multi-day accommodations* on the SAT will be April 13 – April 15, 2022. Although not recommended, districts that operate under a 4-day week and have Fridays as scheduled non-contact days will be permitted to conclude testing for these students on Monday, April 18, if needed.

The Colorado PSAT in grades 9 and 10 are scheduled to be administered on the following dates in spring 2022:

- Primary test date: Wednesday, April 13 – Friday, April 15: District choice for primary test date\*
- Make-up test date: Tuesday, April 26 – Thursday, April 28: District choice for make-up test date\*\*

\* Each school will administer the PSAT on one of the three available primary test dates. Grade 9 may be administered on a different day than Grade 10 if needed. DACs are encouraged to make a district-wide decision but may allow individual schools to select their primary test date. Districts that operate under a 4-day week and have Fridays as scheduled non-contact days will be permitted to schedule the primary test date for the Colorado PSAT on Monday, April 18 if needed.

\*\* Each school will administer the PSAT on one of the three available make-up test dates. Grade 9 make-up tests may be administered on a different day than Grade 10 if needed. DACs are encouraged to make a district-wide decision but may allow individual schools to select their make-up PSAT test date.



## \*DAC\* - CDE Assessment Update—continued Colorado PSAT/SAT Update

July 28, 2021

Bookmark us! <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment>

### For More Information

If you have general questions or need assistance, contact:

- CMAS, **Sara Loerzel** ([loerzel\\_s@cde.state.co.us](mailto:loerzel_s@cde.state.co.us))
- PSAT/SAT, **Jared Anthony** ([anthony\\_j@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_j@cde.state.co.us))
- CoAlt & Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, **Arti Sachdeva** ([sachdeva\\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:sachdeva_a@cde.state.co.us))
- ACCESS for ELLs & Accommodations for English Learners, **Heather Villalobos Pavia** ([villalobospavia\\_h@cde.state.co.us](mailto:villalobospavia_h@cde.state.co.us))
- NAEP and Assessment Technology, **Collin Bonner** ([bonner\\_c@cde.state.co.us](mailto:bonner_c@cde.state.co.us))
- Colorado Assessment Literacy Program, **Angela Landrum** ([landrum\\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:landrum_a@cde.state.co.us))

Colorado Department of Education Assessment Division webpage (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment>)

## School Year 2021-2022 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Office Hours

Hello Educators and Parents,

Welcome to a new school year and to the 2021-2022 Virtual Office Hours. I would love to have you join me for learning and discussion on the following dates. Brief presentations and topics may be revised or added based on feedback. And bring your questions for discussion.

Office hours will be held at 9:00 AM on the fourth Tuesday on the following dates:

- September 28, 2021 – *Educators are SUPER Heroes - Neuroeducational Evaluation* - [September registration](#)
- October 26, 2021 – *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – What Every Educator Should Know* - [October registration](#)
- November 23, 2021 - TBD - [November registration](#)
- January 25, 2022 - TBD - [January registration](#)
- February 22, 2022 - TBD - [February registration](#)
- March 22, 2022 - TBD - [March registration](#)
- April 26, 2022 - TBD - [April registration](#)

Registration is required for each Brain Injury & Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder office hour session. Register by clicking on the monthly links above. If you have questions that you would like to talk/email with me outside of the Office Hour sessions, feel free to email Heather at: [hotchkiss\\_h@cde.state.co.us](mailto:hotchkiss_h@cde.state.co.us).



# *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)*



## **EDI Resources**

[OSEP Releases Fast Facts on the Race and Ethnicity of Children with Disabilities Served under IDEA Part B](#) published on 08/19/2021.

[Guide for Discussing Race in the Classroom](#) published on 08/18/2021.

## **Award Winning Accessible Programs**

The U.S. Department of Education’s Educational Technology, Media, and Materials program is the primary source of support for accessible technology and media-related activities under IDEA. A recipient of the Department’s Television Access grant, Bridge Multimedia, has provided the audio descriptions for 13 Emmy Award-nominated shows and one Emmy Award-winning program, the 2021 Children’s Emmy Award winner, “PBS KIDS Talk About.” This program is a series that explores racial identity, inequity, racism, justice, and “good trouble.” Bridge Multimedia also provided disability portrayal consultancy for the Emmy Award-nominated show “Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum” (PBS KIDS).

**Competencies for Culturally Responsive Teaching**—This report from New America identifies eight competencies for culturally responsive teaching (CRT). These competencies describe what professionals should know and be able to do and reflect asset-based approaches that position the language, cultures, and identities of students as strengths that can be leveraged to bridge rigorous new learning. Check out the link below to learn more about how CRT can benefit all students through individualized instruction that honors children’s varied identities and experiences.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Reflection Guide**—This is a great tool to help guide reflection about how to implement the 8 competencies described in the article above. Also by New America, this guide is intended to support the reflective practice and ongoing learning of culturally responsive teachers. The reflection questions for each competency would be valuable to faculty, coaches, mentors, administrators, and others who are committed to developing a deeper understanding of culturally responsive practices. Use of this resource would support self-appraisal, goal setting, and make critical conversations across the eight competencies more concrete.

**Developing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Behavior Guidance Policies** describes how to revise program policies to support practices that promote equity and inclusion for all children.

**Reflecting on Anti-bias Education in Action: The Early Years**—This 48-minute film features the voices of educators in diverse early childhood classrooms. Vignettes demonstrate anti-bias strategies and the critical importance of reflection on identity, context, and practice in antibias education. The film presents four anti-bias goals that foster critical thinking and encourage a deep understanding of the complexity of the issues that arise when implementing anti-bias education. The entire film has closed captions in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

**Quality UPK Teachings in Diverse Settings**—This study describes culturally relevant and linguistically sustaining teaching practices that are rooted in the science of how young children learn. Make sure to check out the photos of what these practices look like in action and consider how play, active learning, and meaningful, authentic experiences support the development of positive self-identity and empathy across cultures, languages, and socioeconomics.

**Advancing Equity**—This 2019 resource from NAEYC, which was endorsed by DEC, offers recommendations for educators and practitioners. Read the whole document, and then return to pages 17-18 for the definition of key terms such as ability, ableism, and bias.




# Calendar of Events

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

September 8	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>
September 14	<b>Deaf-Blind Webinar Series</b> – Overview of Deaf-Blindness from 3:30—5:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3</a>
September 18	<b>6Dot Dash</b> Registration: <a href="http://6dotdashco.com/registration/">http://6dotdashco.com/registration/</a>
September 19	<b>Learning Box for Kids</b> — Creating a Story with Clay from 2:00—3:00 p.m. Contact: Michelle Chacon at <a href="mailto:blindedcolo@gmail.com">blindedcolo@gmail.com</a>
September 21	<b>Tactile Art Club</b> —5:00 p.m. Contact: Rishika Kartik at <a href="mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com">rishikakartik@gmail.com</a>
September 22	<b>Vision Coalition</b> - virtual by Zoom Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
September 22	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>
September 24-25	<b>Western Region Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —Grand Junction Contact: Angela Sims at <a href="mailto:angela.sims@d51schools.org">angela.sims@d51schools.org</a>
October 1	<b>First Friday CIMC</b> – 9:00-10:00am AND 2:30-3:30pm Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@cldb.org">jolson@cldb.org</a>
October 6	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>
October 12	<b>Deaf-Blind Webinar Series</b> —Systematic Instruction Part 1 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3</a>
October 15	<b>White Cane Day</b> —Raise a Little or a Big Cane!
October 15	<b>Tools for Life Applications Due</b> Please go to: <a href="https://www.seethefuture.org/learn-more-tools-for-life.html">https://www.seethefuture.org/learn-more-tools-for-life.html</a>
October 16	<b>Learning Box for Kids</b> — Building Rockets from 2:00—3:00 p.m. Contact: Michelle Chacon at <a href="mailto:blindedcolo@gmail.com">blindedcolo@gmail.com</a>
October 19	<b>Tactile Art Club</b> —5:00 p.m. Contact: Rishika Kartik at <a href="mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com">rishikakartik@gmail.com</a>




# Calendar of Events

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

October 20	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>
October 21-22	<b>Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —Fort Collins Contact: Liz Wieder at <a href="mailto:wieder_elizabeth@svvsd.org">wieder_elizabeth@svvsd.org</a>
October 28-31	<b>NFB-CO 67th Annual State Convention</b> —in person/Lone Tree, CO Contact: Scott LaBarre at <a href="mailto:slabarre@labarrelaw.com">slabarre@labarrelaw.com</a>
November 3	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>
November 9	<b>Deaf-Blind Webinar Series</b> –Calendars for Students with DB / BVI/MD - 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3</a>
November 12	<b>Second Friday CIMC</b> – 9:00-10:00am and 2:30-3:30pm Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
November 14	<b>Learning Box for Kids</b> — Learning about the Number Line from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Contact: Michelle Chacon at <a href="mailto:blindedcolo@gmail.com">blindedcolo@gmail.com</a>
November 16	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> —Topic: Calendar Systems—3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>
November 16	<b>Tactile Art Club</b> —5:00 p.m. Contact: Rishika Kartik at <a href="mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com">rishikakartik@gmail.com</a>
November 17	<b>Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —CSDB in Colorado Springs Contact: Debbie Haberkorn at <a href="mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org">dhaberkorn@csdb.org</a>
December 1	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>
December 3	<b>First Friday CIMC</b> – 9:00-10:00am AND 2:30-3:30pm Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
December 12	<b>Learning Box for Kids</b> — Weather around the World from 2:00—3:00 p.m. Contact: Michelle Chacon at <a href="mailto:blindedcolo@gmail.com">blindedcolo@gmail.com</a>
December 14	<b>Deaf-Blind Webinar Series</b> — Experience Books – <a href="#">Registration</a> (3:30 to 5:30 p.m.) Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3</a>
December 15	<b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>




# Calendar of Events

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

**December 21**      **Tactile Art Club**—5:00 p.m.  
 Contact: Rishika Kartik at [rishikakartik@gmail.com](mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com)

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

- January 5, 2022**      **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- January 7**            **First Friday CIMC** – 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- January 11**          **Deaf-Blind Webinar Series** – Classic Literacy Lessons from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3>
- January 19**          **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- January 19-21**      **CDE State Conference on BVI**—back up virtual plan if in person must be cancelled  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- January 20-21**      **CDE State Conference on BVI**—in person plan at Lowry Conference Center in Denver  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- 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>
- February 2**            **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- February 4**            **First Friday CIMC** – 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- February 8**          **Deaf-Blind Webinar Series**—Systematic Instruction Part 2 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3>
- February 16**         **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- February 17-19**     **Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**—Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver  
 Contact: Karin Hensel at [khensel@dcsdk12.org](mailto:khensel@dcsdk12.org)
- March 2**              **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>






# Calendar of Events

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

- March 4**                    **First Friday CIMC** – 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- March 8**                    **Deaf-Blind Webinar Series** – (3:30 to 5:30 p.m.)  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- March 10**                    **Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic**—CSDB in Colorado Springs  
 Contact: Debbie Haberkorn at [dhaberkorn@cldb.org](mailto:dhaberkorn@cldb.org)
- March 15**                    **See the Future Fund Scholarship Applications Due**  
 Please go to: <https://www.seethefuture.org/learn-more-tools-for-life.html>
- March 16**                    **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- April 1**                      **First Friday CIMC** – 9:00-10:00am AND 2:30-3:30pm  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- April 6**                      **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- April 12**                    **Deaf-Blind Webinar Series** – Registration (3:30 to 5:30 p.m.)  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- April 20**                    **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- May 4**                        **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- May 6**                        **First Friday CIMC** – 9:00-10:00am AND 2:30-3:30pm  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- May 10**                    **Deaf-Blind Webinar Series** – Registration (3:30 to 5:30 p.m.)  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- May 18**                    **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
 Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- June 3**                      **First Friday CIMC** – 9:00-10:00am AND 2:30-3:30pm  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)



## ESSU Virtual Office Hours

During this time of remote instruction, the Office of Special Education has been fielding many phone and email questions regarding how best to support the accessibility, behavior, learning, social-emotional, and transition needs of learners with disabilities. In response to requests from the field, the following office hours will continue throughout the summer, with all others resuming in the fall. Go to this webpage to check out the dates and time for regular Office Hours specific to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/node/54207>

- Alternate Dispute Resolution
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Brain Injury and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- School-Based Mental Health and Special Education
- Secondary Transition
- Significant Support Needs
- Social/Emotional/Behavior

All of the above are in addition to the BVI Office Hours posted on our Calendar of Events.

## TSBVI Outreach Coffee Hours

These sessions happen on Mondays at 3:00 PM (CDT) starting on August 2nd, 2021. Captioning will be provided. If you need anything else, please email Kaycee Bennett at [bennettk@tsbvi.edu](mailto:bennettk@tsbvi.edu). Some logistics will be different this time around, but you can expect the same commitment to providing information, discussion, and collaboration on topics important to students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind, including CVI, Active Learning, distance strategies, and family engagement.

1. Coffee Hour sessions happen every week on Mondays at 3:00 pm (CDT) starting on August 2nd, 2021.
2. Registration is required for each session. This means that CEUs are available! Registration links can be found in the schedule on this page. (You must have an account in their ESC-Works system to register for the Coffee Hour sessions. If you do not have an account, you can [set one up here.](#))
3. Zoom links will be provided for each session. So again, please make sure you register!

Check out the series at: <https://www.tsbvi.edu/coffeehour>.

**CONVENTION BULLETIN**  
**THE BLIND OF COLORADO LIVING THE LIVES WE WANT!**

**THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND**  
**OF COLORADO**

***67<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION***  
***October 28 through October 31, 2021***

The 67th Annual State Convention will kick off Thursday, October 28, in Denver, Colorado, with a variety of seminars and initial socializing. The programming will continue all weekend long with exhibitors, informative and inspiring presentations during general sessions, additional breakout seminars including meetings of our several special interest divisions, interactive and exciting social events, and much more! Join the largest gathering of blind people in Colorado to make a difference in the lives of the blind across the state! We will be holding a hybrid convention starting Thursday, October 28. The main sessions for exhibitors will be on Friday, October 29, with other opportunities sprinkled throughout the weekend. Please note that the Convention is still being planned and not all sessions are finalized. Stay tuned for a full Convention Agenda slated to be released in early October. We will also be sending updates throughout the summer.

**THE NFBCO CONVENTION HOTEL:** Our 2021 convention will be held at the Marriott Denver South at Park Meadows, located at 10345 Park Meadows Dr., Lone Tree, CO 80124.

**HOTEL ROOM RATES:** The NFBCO room rate is \$104 a night. There is no limit on room occupancy. Reservations MUST be made by Friday, October 8.

To reserve your room, call the hotel at 303-925-0004. You will need to press 1 for reservations, which will take you to the Marriott 1-800 number call center. You must mention that you are with the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado. If they cannot find our block under our full name, try asking for NFB. If this still doesn't work please contact Lisa Bonderson, at 303-504-5979.

Stay tuned to your email and check our web site at [www.nfbco.org](http://www.nfbco.org) for more information about convention registration. Or Contact Lisa Bonderson at [lkb@labarrelaw.com](mailto:lkb@labarrelaw.com).

**FOR MORE CONVENTION INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Scott C. LaBarre, President

Phone: (303) 504-5979      [slabarre@labarrelaw.com](mailto:slabarre@labarrelaw.com)





# Orientation & Mobility

## 2021 Summer Mountain Mobility Trip to Crested Butte and the Adaptive Sports Center

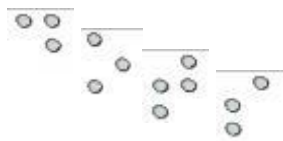
By Mike Plansker

A group of seven of us made the journey to Crested Butte the week of July 25-30 for a jam packed week of activities, cooking, O&M, and new and renewed friendships. As usual, the staff with the Adapted Sports Center (ASC) were fantastic. Day one involved traveling and shopping for a massive amount of groceries for the week. On day two, everyone challenged themselves on the high and low ropes courses. Some were afraid of heights, but you would never have known with how well they did on the high ropes. Day three, we hit the bikes and pedaled 10+ miles on an assortment of upright, recumbent, and tandem bikes. The campers were amazed they rode so far and were quite proud of themselves. We were boating on a private lake on day four. Campers were able to test out stand up paddle boards, kayaks, and canoes. A storm rolled in and cut the activities a little short after lunch, but a great day was had by all. The final day of activities was spent rock climbing. While this was not a preferred activity for some of the campers, everyone got on the rock in some form or fashion to meet their individual goals.

When we were not playing, the campers learned some new skills and were able to use some existing skills in a new area. There were many eggs and sandwiches made, vegetables cut, ground beef cooked, and dishes washed. The campers were also challenged to use the O&M skills and tools to navigate from our house to locations in Crested Butte.

Evenings were spent partaking in activities planned by the ASC, like obstacle courses and human knots. The campers also played many games of Apples to Apples, Chess, and Yahtzee. New friendships were formed and older friendships re-visited. A fun week was had by all.





# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## Colorado Braille Competency Committee

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

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

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

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

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

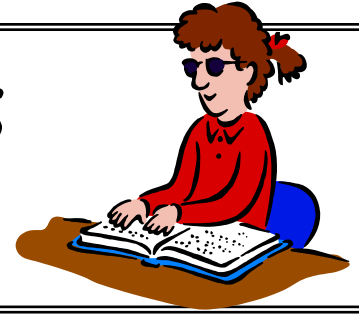
**For summer assistance, please be in touch with Tanni first to secure an available proctor / mentor.**

## Braillewriter Repair

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



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



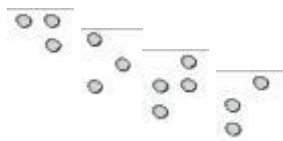
## Meet Your CDE Braille Competency Committee!

**Tanni Anthony** assumed leadership of the CDE Braille Committee many years ago. The current committee still has two founding members (Brenda and Sarah). We owe a debt of gratitude to former first members Jan Barron and Lucia Hasty. Two state tests have been created (with periodic updates) under the guidance of this expert committee. The first testing materials were specific to English Braille American Edition. A major update occurred in 2016-17 to convert all testing materials to the Unified English Braille Code. Braille is what got Tanni into our profession. She took the braille course at her undergraduate university just thinking that she should know braille as a well-prepared elementary and special educator. She had no idea there was even a program on that campus to train TVIs! She went on to complete the program ... and the rest, as they say, is history! It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve Colorado on our statewide braille work.

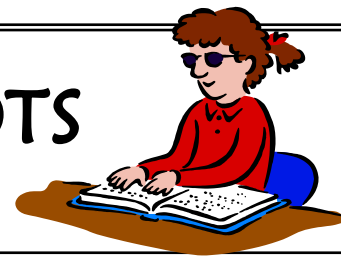
**Nancy Cozart** has been a teacher for students with visual impairment and a certified O&M specialist for 34 years. Nancy shares, "There are many aspects in my professional role that I treasure, but one at the top has to be my love for braille instruction. We have to continue to advocate for quality instruction and services for children to acquire literacy skills as their peers do! I have been fortunate to have at least one braille student each year. The format changes, but I have offered Braille Clubs for my student's peers to learn about braille. Sometimes, it is an informal "lunch bunch" and other times it has been an after school extra-curricular activity. The students get to be involved in implementing the activities and the clubs have had a positive impact in the schools." Nancy has been a presenter at local, regional, state, and national trainings on topics including daily living skills, pre/braille skills, braille assessments and advocacy. She joined the CDE Braille Committee in 2016.

**Christine Maynard** began learning braille with her son, along with his teacher Anna Swenson, in northern Virginia in 1991. In 2004, she joined Academy District 20 School District as a Vision Para and became CDE Braille Certified. Since that time, Christine earned her Library of Congress Braille Certification in UEB. In 2016, with the change in braille code, Chris joined the CDE Braille Committee. She has contributed in creating and proofreading many of the teaching and testing materials. Chris has mentored and proctored in the Southern Region and presented at CSDB for refresher updates.

**Jo Elizabeth Pinto** has been blind since birth. She learned to read braille by touch as a public school student. She got her certification as a literary proofreader in the mid-nineties and started working for the state of Colorado in 1997. In 2005, she began proofreading textbooks full-time from home for clients across the country. Jo is our proofreader of the Colorado Braille Competency Test braille samples. In addition to literary braille, Jo Elizabeth can read both Nemeth and Spanish, which keeps her services in high demand. In addition to her work, Jo Elizabeth enjoys baking, reading, and gardening with her preteen daughter, and creative writing. She published her first novel, "*The Bright Side of Darkness*," in 2015. Since then, she has published two books of memoirs, one on blind parenting in 2019, and one on finding strength during difficult times in 2020! To see more about her award-winning books, available in paperback, Kindle, and audio formats, please click <http://www.amazon.com/author/jepinto> or [www.brightsideauthor.com](http://www.brightsideauthor.com).



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



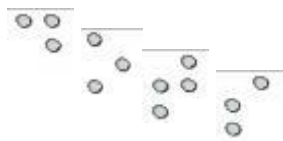
## Meet Your CDE Braille Committee!

**Brenda Shepard** began on the CDE Braille Committee when the first braille competency test was developed following enactment of the Colorado Braille Bill. Brenda worked as a TVI/ COMS for 20 years and then moved into administration, which included supervision of Program for Students Who are Visually Impaired for another 12 years. Brenda taught braille instruction in public school, as well as two semesters at UNC in 1981. Following her retirement in 2012, she worked to develop and teach the Refresher Braille coursework to train teachers in UEB code, development. She has contributed greatly to the refinement of the 15 Braille Renewal Modules / Braille Competency Test materials, and mentoring TVIs to develop Braille knowledge and skills.

**Sarah Sonnier** has been on the braille committee since its inception. She helped to write the original Braille Competency Test for the State of Colorado, updated the test when Colorado switched to UEB, wrote Braille Renewal Modules, and served as a mentor for TVIs in braille. Sarah also served on the CDE committee to give advice to the former national test publishers of Colorado's State English Language Arts and Math assessments regarding the adaptations needed to make the tests accessible to braille readers. Sarah serves primarily braille test candidates on the Western Slope. She was a TVI for 40 years in Mesa Valley School District in Grand Junction and taught braille to many students during her career. Sarah is now retired and continues to administer competency tests, modules, offers mentoring for teachers, and consultation services for CDE.

**Julie Wetzstein** has been working as a TVI /COMS for 28 years, and has taught braille to students all but one of those years. She also worked as a Braillist for Boulder Valley Schools, and provided contract braille transcription for the CIMC and Wyoming Schools, concurrent with teaching. Julie has also taught braille to a number of paraprofessionals during her teaching tenure. As a member of the CDE Braille Committee for 17 years, Julie has mentored new teachers, proctored State Braille Competency Testing and renewal modules, and helped develop braille testing materials. Julie shares that she thoroughly enjoys teaching and producing braille, and especially enjoys transcribing math materials into Nemeth with accompanying tactile diagrams. Over the years, Julie has attended numerous conferences and workshops on all aspects of braille production, and is currently pursuing her Library of Congress certification for the UEB Code.

*Thank you to our CDE Braille Committee for So Many Hours of  
Expertise and Support to Colorado TVIs!*



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## New APH UEB Products

Many of popular products of the American Printing House for Blind have been translated into UEB format. Read their blog, [Beloved APH Products Get UEB Update](#), to find a list of new and coming soon UEB products for you and your students.



## Braille Reading Rate Resources

Thanks to Karin Hensel for sharing a resource by Diane Brauner, [Perkins School for the Blind eLearning Reading Rates](#)



# National Braille Association

Since their founding in 1945, the National Braille Association has been led by a team who is dedicated to ensuring that braille readers receive the best materials possible. Teachers of the visually impaired and braille transcribers in North America receive education from leading experts through these services.

Check out their webpage at <https://www.nationalbraille.org/> for information about:

- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Conferences
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Ask an Expert
- ◆ Publications
- ◆ Training Bureau
- ◆ Web-Based Learning



## UEB Technical Versus Nemeth Braille Codes

The Colorado Department of Education does not dictate a math code for students with blindness/visual impairments. Two math codes are approved by the Braille Authority of North America. The decision about the math code is an individual student-by-student or IEP decision.

Both codes are viable for instruction and state testing. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).





## TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

### Announcing the SEE THE FUTURE Fund 2021 Scholarship Recipients (\$28,000)

## CONGRATULATIONS!!

We are so pleased to announce the three individuals who were awarded See the Future Scholarships from last school year. Applications for the 2021-22 See the Future Fund applicants are due March 15, 2022.

#### **Kaitlyn Contreras**

**Award:** \$12,000 four-year scholarship  
**High School:** Thomas MacLaren School  
**City:** Colorado Springs  
**Attending:** Colorado State University  
**Probable Major:** Mechanical Equine Science

#### **Joy Hast**

**Award:** \$10,000 four-year scholarship  
**High School:** Home Schooled  
**City:** Kremmling  
**Attending:** Bob Jones University – Greenville, SC  
**Probable Major:** Fashion Design / Creative Writing

#### **Christopher Collins**

**Award:** \$6,000 three-year scholarship  
**High School:** Widefield  
**City:** Colorado Springs  
**Attended:** CU - Boulder  
**Graduate Program:** Law



As a field, we get up every morning to prepare children and youth with blindness/visual impairment and deaf-blindness for their present lives as early intervention, early childhood, or school-age learners. The constant goal is preparation for post-school life with a focus on vocational or college training. It is exciting to see these young people have places to go, careers to build, jobs to obtain, and a life outside of public school. Congrats to the students, their families, and all who have contributed to their success!



## **TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!**

### **“Education for Life”**

for Colorado Residents

*Application Deadline: March 1, 2022*



**Encouraging all students with blindness/visual impairment to apply  
who have a direction and passion to build an  
education foundation for the rest of their lives.**

**Scholarships Awarded for:**

**Certificate Programs (i.e.. Massage Therapy)**

**Associates (2 year) degrees**

**Bachelors (4 year) degrees**

**Masters Degrees**

**Doctorate Degrees**

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

**To apply**

**[Go To: www.seethefuture.org](http://www.seethefuture.org)**

and click on the “Education for Life Application” link on the Home page. If you have questions, contact Tom Theune, OD – Chairperson of the SEE THE FUTURE Fund at (719) 471-3200, [twtheune@comcast.net](mailto:twtheune@comcast.net)

# Secondary Transition Focus Group for Parents/ Families Of Students with Disabilities

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**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## What

*What is a focus group? A focus group is used to gather in-depth insights through group interaction. Participants will be asked a series of questions to discover their knowledge of the secondary transition planning process for youth ages 15-21.*

## Who

*All parents/families of youth with disabilities.*

## Why

*Transition planning is required for youth ages 15-21. However, transition planning actually begins much earlier. Information gained will be used to understand the needs of parents/families to assure they have the information, training, and supports needed to successfully navigate the secondary transition planning.*

## When

- *September 22, 2021; 12-1pm*
- *September 22, 2021; 6-7pm (Spanish- speaking parents/families)*

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## How

- *All focus group meetings will be virtual.*
- *Please select the session that you plan to attend and indicate whether you need accommodations.*
- *You will receive a confirmation email that includes a link to the meeting.*

## REGISTER HERE

(<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4050ce42711244ed821d20c1183e89b6>)

*Registration closes two weeks prior to the event. Please contact Gail Lott at [lott\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:lott_g@cde.state.co.us) with any questions regarding these webinars.*

# Grupo focal de transición secundaria para padres/ familias de estudiantes con discapacidades

---



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## Qué

¿Qué es un grupo focal? Un grupo focal se utiliza para recopilar conocimientos en profundidad a través de la interacción grupal. A los participantes se les hará una serie de preguntas para descubrir su conocimiento sobre el proceso de planificación de la transición secundaria para jóvenes de 15 a 21 años.

## Quién

Todos los padres/familiares de jóvenes con discapacidades.

## Por qué

La planificación de transición se requiere para jóvenes entre 15 y 21 años de edad. No obstante, la planificación de la transición comienza mucho antes. La información recopilada se utilizará para comprender las necesidades de los padres/familias a fin de garantizar que tengan la información, la capacitación y el apoyo necesarios para conocer con éxito el proceso de planificación de la transición secundaria.

## Cuándo

- 22 de septiembre de 2021; 12-1pm
  - 22 de septiembre de 2021; 6-7pm (padres/familias que hablan español)
- 

## Cómo

- Todas las reuniones del grupo focal serán de forma virtual.
- Seleccione la sesión a la que desea asistir e indique si necesita algún tipo de adaptación.
- Recibirá un correo electrónico de confirmación que incluye un enlace para la reunión.

## **INSCRÍBASE AQUÍ**

(<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/4050ce42711244ed821d20c1183e89b6>)

La inscripción cierra dos semanas antes del evento. Comuníquese con Gail Lott en [lott\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:lott_g@cde.state.co.us) si tiene preguntas relacionadas con estos seminarios web.

# 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.



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



**First Wednesday of the Month ParentConnect Family Support Group** - [ParentConnect: A family support Group offered in partnership with the Virtual Parent Support Group Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind](#)

APH FamilyConnect and the Chicago Lighthouse are pleased to offer this virtual support group for parents and families of children who are blind or visually impaired. These monthly sessions are for families to connect with and learn from each other about the joys, challenges, and adventures of raising children with visual impairments and blindness. These sessions are open to families. No ACVREP or professional development credits will be available.

- Oct 6, 2021 07:30 PM • Nov 3, 2021 07:30 PM • Dec 1, 2021 07:30 PM • Jan 5, 2022 07:30 PM • Feb 2, 2022 07:30 PM

## APH Change Makers – Parent Podcast on Advocating for Your Child

On this episode of the [American Printing House for the Blind Change Makers Series](https://www.aph.org/change-makers-podcast/) (<https://www.aph.org/change-makers-podcast/>) the presenters are talking about how to advocate as a parent or guardian. The focus of the APH experts is how you can help children get the resources they deserve and how to choose the best educational devices to fit their needs.

### Podcast Guests (In Order of Appearance)

- Sara Brown, APH Public Relations Manager
- Olaya Landa-Vialard, APH ConnectCenter Director
- Leanne Grillott, APH National Director of Outreach Services



## National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

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

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

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





Fall 2021  
Online PEP Academy

Friday, November 5  
Saturday, November 6  
Saturday, November 13

**Live Sessions:**

- Opening Session
- Parenting a Child with a Disability and Rebuilding Dreams
- Living with a Disability
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Panel for Questions and Answers
- Three Facilitated Small Group Discussions

**Self-Paced Content Sessions:**

- The Law and the Education of Children with Disabilities
- Early Childhood Supports and Services
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Transition IEP
- Facilitated IEPs
- Significant Support Needs
- Executive Function Skills
- Advocating with Your Child/Teen
- Mental Health



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## 2021 Fall PEP Academy

*Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences is offering an Online PEP Academy in 2021. PEP brings families and professionals together by sharing ideas, discussing concerns, celebrating successes and obtaining information related to parenting, educating and partnering to support student learning. PEP is a non-specific disability conference that focuses on commonalities.*

### Who is encouraged to participate

- Colorado families who have a child with a disability birth-21
- Directors of special education, principals, special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers
- Health care and Colorado professionals interested in the family and school partnership and who work with children or youth with disabilities

### What to expect

Live and self-paced sessions that help promote family and school partnerships which are essential in supporting students with disabilities. Participants will have **four** weeks to complete the online PEP Academy program. Of no cost to attendees.

### When

The PEP Academy opens on a Friday evening and continues for four to five hours live on two Saturday mornings. Live and self-paced sessions will be available to confirmed participants.

### Where

Confirmed participants will be sent directions with links to access PEP Academy online from a desktop computer, laptop or other mobile device.

### Apply Now!

[www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep)

Or contact Joyce Thiessen-Barrett at 303-866-6757.

Sign language and other language interpretations are available. If you need an accommodation, please request it on your application.

Colorado Department of Education  
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202 • 303-866-6943 • [ramer\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto:ramer_d@cde.state.co.us)



**Está  
invitado**

#### Academia PEP en línea de otoño 2021

Viernes, 5 de noviembre  
Sábado, 6 de noviembre  
Sábado, 13 de noviembre

#### Sesiones en vivo:

- Sesión de apertura
- Cómo educar a un niño con una discapacidad y reconstruir los sueños
- Viviendo con una discapacidad
- Apoyos a la conducta positiva
- Panel de preguntas y respuestas
- Tres debates facilitados en pequeños grupos

#### Sesiones de contenido a ritmo propio:

- La ley y la educación para niños con discapacidades
- Apoyos y servicios para la primera infancia
- Programa de Educación Individualizada (IEP)
- IEP de transición
- IEP facilitados
- Necesidades de apoyo significativas
- Habilidades de la función ejecutiva
- Abogar con su hijo/adolescente
- Salud mental



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## Academia PEP de otoño de 2021

*Las Conferencias de Padres Alentando a Padres (PEP) está ofreciendo una Academia PEP en línea en 2021. PEP reúne a las familias y a los profesionales compartiendo ideas, discutiendo preocupaciones, celebrando los éxitos y obteniendo información relacionada con la crianza, la educación y la asociación para apoyar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. PEP es una conferencia sobre discapacidad no específica que se centra en los puntos comunes.*

#### A quién se anima a participar

- Las familias de Colorado que tienen un niño con una discapacidad desde el nacimiento hasta los 21 años
- Directores de educación especial, directores, maestros de educación especial, maestros de educación general, proveedores de servicios relacionados
- Profesionales del cuidado de la salud y de Colorado interesados en la asociación entre la familia y la escuela y que trabajan con niños o jóvenes con discapacidades

#### Qué debe esperar

Sesiones en vivo y a su ritmo propio que ayudan a promover las asociaciones familiares y escolares que son esenciales para apoyar a los estudiantes con discapacidades. Los participantes tendrán cuatro semanas para completar el programa de la Academia PEP en línea. Sin costo alguno para los asistentes.

#### Cuándo

La Academia PEP abre un viernes por la noche y continúa de cuatro a cinco horas en vivo los dos sábados por la mañana. Se ofrecerán sesiones en vivo y a ritmo propio a los participantes confirmados.

#### Dónde

A los participantes confirmados se les enviarán direcciones con enlaces para acceder a la Academia PEP en línea desde una computadora de escritorio, portátil u otro dispositivo móvil.

#### ¡Aplique ahora!

[www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/pep)

O contacte Joyce Thiessen-Barrett: (303) 866-6757

Se dispone de interpretaciones en lenguaje de señas y otros idiomas. Si necesita un alojamiento, por favor solicítelo en su aplicación.

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1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202 • 303-866-6943 • [ramer\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto:ramer_d@cde.state.co.us)

# just for PARENTS

## Learning Box Activities: September-December 2021

The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, the Colorado Center for the Blind, and the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults are proud to bring these fun learning box activities to your home. Once you register your child, Learning Boxes containing all the necessary materials will be shipped to your home in time for the virtual activity. We are hoping to have one in-person learning box activity in October at the Colorado Center for the Blind. We look forward to working with you and your students!

List of Learning Box activities:

- **September 19, 2021 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Creating a Story with Clay. Students will listen to a short story, then use clay to make characters in the story or create a story of their own.

- **October 16, 2021 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Building Rockets at the CCB. Students will make and decorate their own rockets out of 2-liter soda bottles, then launch them at the Colorado Center for the Blind.

- **November 14, 2021 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Learning About the Number Line. Students will have fun learning about positive and negative numbers on a number line.

- **December 12, 2021 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Weather Around the World. Students will learn about where continents are located on a globe, and how their seasons vary throughout the year.

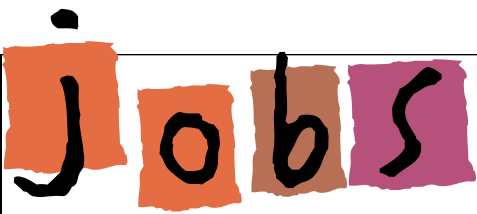
Flyers will be coming soon with links for families to register their students. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Michelle Chacon  
[blindedcolo@gmail.com](mailto:blindedcolo@gmail.com)

Amira Lucas  
[coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com](mailto:coloradoparentsofblindchildren@gmail.com)







## 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 Assistive Technology Specialist**—Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). This position will be operating within the Personal Adjustment Training Program exists to train individuals who have severe visual and/or other disabilities. For more information, please check out the [State of Colorado—DVR job posting](#).

### Southern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist** - Academy 20 School District. Please contact Belinda Lujan-Lindsey at [Belinda.lujan@asd20.org](mailto: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](mailto:Nancy.Mareshmelo@d11.org) for more information.
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI and O&M Specialist** — Falcon 49 School District. Please contact Jean Rice at [jlrice@d49.org](mailto:jlrice@d49.org)

### Eastern Region

- ◆ **O&M Specialist Contract Work**—Contact Beverly Bragg at (719) 740-0544 or [bevb@ecbores.org](mailto:bevb@ecbores.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](mailto:slindauer@asharedvision.org). You can work at your pace and needs! Magic!

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



## Meet Your Vision Coalition

The purpose of the Vision Coalition is to bring the collective resources of the group together to address state priorities improving services to students who are blind/visually impaired (April 1998). This group has met since even before Tanni came to CDE! Its membership has changed over time to include representative TVIs / O&M Specialists from each of our four broad state regions, our EI / EC agency providers, the Colorado Center for the Blind, and DVR. The Vision Coalition works to build a state perspective of service and supports, and to identify issues that benefit from discussion and next steps. Input has been offered on how best to announce and equalize CIMC practices to support students. We have offered two Parent Surveys over the years, as well as identified statewide training topics. We have discussed how best to complete Learning Media Plans, draft language for the revised eligibility criteria of visual impairment, including blindness, and build our relationships with colleagues in early intervention, rehabilitation, and consumer-based service programs.

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

- **Tanni Anthony** shares that Vision Coalition was in place when she arrived in Colorado (from Alaska) in 1992! In her role as the CDE State Consultant on Blindness/Low Vision, she appreciates the VC as an advisory / work group for CDE technical assistance and professional learning events, and policy guidance. She is a proud graduate of UND's undergraduate program in the areas of elementary and special education, the latter of which included their TVI program; the UNC Ed.S. program specific to severe handicapped / visual impairment and endorsement in O&M; and finally the University of long-standing She is long stranding peer Reviewer of the *Journal of Visual Impairments and Blindness*, and is involved on national committees, teaching university courses, and professional writing.
- **Melinda Carter** currently serves as the Director of Children's Programs for Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver. She graduated in 2005 from UNC with her graduate degree in Special Needs/Vision and in 2007 with an endorsement in O&M. She worked for several years in the metro area school districts including Cherry Creek and Jefferson County as an itinerant TVI/O&M Specialist until she came to the Anchor Center in 2017. She was first hired as a TVI and then in 2018 was promoted to her current position.
- **Paula Conroy** is a TVI and COMS in Colorado with over 30 years of experience working with students from birth to age 21. She has been with the University of Northern Colorado for over 20 years as the coordinator of the Special Education: Visual Impairment Emphasis and Orientation and Mobility Programs. Paula has an extensive background in severe needs having come to Colorado as a "teacher of severe and profound needs," as it used to be called. Her areas of interest are English learners, issues around inclusion, behavior, and the development and promotion of movement in those with visual impairments. Paula identifies as a pragmatist and focuses on problem solving and the realities of what teachers currently face in schools.
- **Nancy Cozart** is the Colorado chapter of AER treasurer and also a Past President. She is one of the coordinators of the Denver metro teachers for the visually impaired. She has been a TVI/COMS for over 30 years. She completed both a BA (elementary education, an endorsement in visual impairment and special education) and a MA (early childhood and orientation & mobility) from Michigan State University. Go Spartans! She is a midwesterner, originally from Grand Rapids Michigan. Nancy began her career working in Milwaukee Public Schools and treasures her time there. In 1990, she moved to Colorado and began working for Littleton Public Schools. Off and on through the years, she also completed work at CDE. She is on the CDE Braille Committee as a mentor and test proctor. She loves braille dots! Nancy represents the Metro region and CAER on the Vision Coalition.
- **Melissa French** is an itinerant Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments in Poudre School District, who will be representing the amazing group of TVIs from the northern region. Prior to receiving her master's degree in Visual Impairments from the University of Northern Colorado, Melissa taught for over a decade in special education, moderate needs. Melissa is so excited to have this opportunity to serve her region again!

- **Paula Landry** is an Early Intervention Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments, Orientation and Mobility Specialist and certified VIISA and INSITE trainer. She has over 25 years of experience working with children and families in a variety of social service and educational settings. After teaching at Anchor Center for Blind Children for 10 years, Paula co-founded A Shared Vision in 2016 to focus on providing Early Intervention vision services to underserved families across the state. Paula received her M.A. in Special Education: Vision Impairment from the University of Northern Colorado. She is also the mother of a 20-year-old daughter, Maddie, who is blind.
- **Julie King** is our the Western Slope representative. She has worked in education for over fifteen years in a variety of roles including a general education teacher, special education teacher, teacher of students with visual impairments and blindness, and orientation and mobility specialist. These opportunities have reinforced her belief in inclusion and advocacy for students to reach their full potential. In addition, she has been fortunate to collaborate and learn from so many talented and dedicated professionals. Julie is looking forward to another productive and successful year as part of the Vision Coalition.
- **Anahit LaBarre** is looking forward to collaborating with professionals and families to ensure blind students in Colorado receive necessary support to achieve their maximum potential in school and daily life. Anahit is a teacher of blind students. She has completed her MA degree in Special Education/Visual Impairment though UNC. A year of employment with Jeffco Public Schools provided Anahit with a rich experience of working with youth in the school system, collaborating with colleagues, and learning about how families navigate educational system. Prior to that experience, Anahit worked for ten years at the Colorado Center for the Blind, as part of the program for older adults, teaching technology, braille and daily living skills. Anahit is blind herself and has gone through the training program at the Colorado Center for the Blind to obtain necessary blindness skills.
- **Jamie Lugo** is starting her 7th year as the Principal of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, School for the Blind program. She taught at CSDB for 6 years prior to becoming principal. In 2003, Jamie graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison with an undergraduate degree in special education. Jamie lived in Peru, where she taught English and worked at an orphanage from 2003-2004. In 2004, she moved to Austin, TX and was hired at the TSBVI. She obtained a certification in BVI from Texas Tech University while working as a TVI for TSBVI from 2004-2008. Jamie and her husband moved to Colorado Springs, where she worked for one year as a coordinator for Palmer High School. Jamie missed working with students who are blind/visually impaired, so she applied at CSDB and was hired as a classroom teacher in 2009. She earned her master's degree in Visual Impairment from UNC. Jamie has a strong passion for the Expanded Core Curriculum and working with families to understand the continuum of services available to their children across the State of Colorado.
- **Sara Noel** received her master's degree in Orientation and Mobility from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1992. She worked in Chattanooga for two years before heading back to school at Florida State University for her master's as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, graduating in 1995. Sara then returned to Colorado, where she was born and raised, to work at CSDB for 5 years before heading off to Virginia for 15 years. She returned again to Colorado in 2015 and is currently working in the Outreach Department at The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind as a TVI, COMS, and CLVT serving students across the state of Colorado in public schools and in the Early Intervention program. She is returning to the Vision Coalition as our representative for CSDB Outreach.
- **Jim Olson** is a long time teacher of students with visual impairments (TVI), Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS), and Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT). Jim is the Coordinator of the Colorado Instructional Materials Center (CIMC). He has been a TVI and O&M Specialist with Colorado Springs 11 School District and is a member of the CDE / CSDB Low Vision Evaluation Team.
- **Michele Reed** is an instructor with the Personal Adjustment Training unit at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She coordinates the Pre-Employment Transition Services for the Blind and Low Vision Region, which include work-readiness training, career exploration counseling, post-secondary education counseling, work based experiences, and self-advocacy training for Colorado students ages 15-21. Michele started her career working with individuals with vision loss in Peace Corps Morocco at a school for the blind and returned to the states to get her master's degree at Florida State University. Michele has been in the field working with individuals with vision loss for nearly three decades.



## New Faces and New Places

### NEW FACES AND NEW PLACES FOR OUR WORKFORCE

#### New Faces!

- ◆ We welcome **Tommi Sue Celli** to the Anchor Center for Blind Children. She is a Colorado native, born and raised in Colorado Springs. She now lives in Franktown with her husband and two-year old son. Tommi Sue enjoys being outside playing a sport, hiking, or swimming, being with her family, and sitting on a beach. This is her twelfth year of teaching, and she shares that she is over the moon to be working with Anchor's Home Visit team and supporting families from birth to three years old. Tommie Sue holds an undergraduate degree in Geography from the University of Colorado. After the first couple of years teaching kindergarten, she went back to school and received a second master's degree in Special Education, emphasizing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education. After teaching second and fifth grades, she became a special ed teacher in Colorado Springs. She went back to school to earn a third master's degree in Visual Impairment through UNC. She completed an internship with Anchor and now is a TSVI for them! Tommie Sue shares, "It has been a journey to find my place, but I am able to reach more families and children because of all of the twists and turns. I look forward to collaborating and learning all that I can to be the most effective provider possible."
- ◆ **Bryan Moles** is excited to move to Colorado from Illinois, where he'll be working for Jefferson County Schools. He graduated from the University of Chicago, then went on to get his MSED from Northern Illinois University in Visual Disabilities and O&M. He's been working for Chicago Public Schools as a city-wide teacher and supporting AT district wide. His favorite projects were supporting tech with all his coworkers and setting up the Tactile Media Lab for 3D printing maps and manipulatives for students. Bryan is eagerly looking forward to a new city life, with plenty of hiking in the mountains so close by.
- ◆ Welcome to **Jennifer Napier**, who will be new to Cherry Creek School District, as a TVI. Jennifer is starting in this role in early to mid-September. Jennifer is moving to Colorado from New York.
- ◆ We are so pleased to welcome **Covi Rodriguez** to the Anchor Center for the Blind. She is originally from Aguascalientes, Mexico, and moved to Denver seven years ago. When she moved to Denver, she worked as a nanny of a toddler who had a visual impairment. This experience motivated Covi to become a TSVI! She started working at the Anchor Center three years ago and last school year, she started the TVI master's program at University of Northern Colorado. During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband, her almost six-year-old son, cooking and discovering new fun places around Denver.
- ◆ Welcome to **Micah Scott**, who is now one of the of the TVIs at D11! She will graduate with a master's degree in Special Education with an emphasis in Visual Impairment from the University of Northern Colorado this December! She has been in the program for three years and shares that she cannot put into words how valuable and empowering this educational experience has been. She has just begun my first job as a TVI for Colorado Springs District 11 and is already loving every minute of it! Prior to this role, Micah has been a substitute teacher, paraprofessional in a classroom of learners with significant support needs, and the assistant of an Assistive Technology and Augmentative/Alternative Communication team. She is also working on her certification to be an Orientation and Mobility Specialist. She hopes to complete her O&M requirements by the end of the school year and someday serve as a TVI and COMS. Her favorite things to do are spending time with her three sons, hiking, running, baking, traveling, attending concerts, and trying new restaurants with her friends.



# New Faces and New Places

## NEW FACES AND NEW PLACES FOR OUR WORKFORCE

### New Faces

- ◆ Please welcome **Ellen Wallis** to our wonderful fields of being a TVI and O&M Specialist. Ellen is a Colorado licensed General Education Teacher and received her MA through UNC for Elementary Education. She has taught kindergarten and first grade, STEM, and reading interventions. She completed a TESL certificate program at UCLA and taught ESL for both children and adults. In May of 2021, she completed her MA in Special Education at UNC for VI. Ellen shares that she is thankful for her professors, Dr. Paula Conroy and Dr. Silvia Correa-Torres. Over the summer, Ellen completed her O and M practicum, and is now preparing to take the ACVREP exam. Ellen is excited to be working at the Weld-RE4 school district at Tozer Elementary as her home base. This has been a long-term dream of hers and she shares that, “It is an honor and a joy to work with my students and a wonderful staff, including Jenna Martin.” Ellen will also be working with A Shared Vision as an early intervention TVI. Ellen loves music, playing the piano, and reading. She also enjoys swimming, nature, my family and walking her two English Cocker Spaniels -- Emily and Jane (yes, there is a literary theme there).

### New Places

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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.”
- ◆ **Aubrey McDonald** is in several new places after her a year with the Cherry Creek team. Aubrey will be working for East Central BOCES with a caseload that covers East Central BOCES, North East BOCES, South East BOCES, Fort Morgan, Santa Fe Trails, and RE 1 Valley Sterling! She will also be on-call in Elizabeth and has students with Astravo online schools.
- ◆ **Anahit LaBarre** is the new Colorado Center for the Youth Program Coordinator as of September 1. She will oversee this program and be a member of the Vision Coalition for the upcoming school year. Anahit is a teacher of students with blindness/visual impairment.





# colorado connections



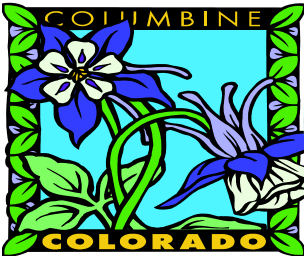
## Braille Competency News

- ◆ Hats off to **Aubrey McDonald** of East Central BOCES, **Patti Shannon** of Thompson School District, **Christopher Holmes** of St. Vrain Valley School District, and **Mary Kate McLaughlin** of Denver Public School District for earning their initial CDE Certificate of Braille Competency.
- ◆ Hats off also to **Lisa Hebbert** from Cherry Creek School District and **Kari Finholt** from Jefferson County School District for earning their CDE Renewal Certificate of Braille Competency.
- ◆ More flying hats to the following individuals who have earned CDE renewal braille module clock hours: **Danielle Burden, Jayme Cusimano, Kari Finholt, Lisa Hebbert, Natalie Palmer, and Will Reynolds**. Thanks to proctors **Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein**.

## Thank You to Staff Who Have Left Their Positions / Roles With the Vision Coalition

- ◆ We say goodbye and best wishes to **Morgan Turner**, who has retired from her many years as a TVI in El Paso 11 School District. Happy next life adventures to Morgan!
- ◆ We also say farewell to **Julie Swegle**, who was a TVI with CSDB. Julie and her family will be relocating to another state. We wish Julie all the best, and thank her for her time in Colorado and specifically with the School for the Blind.
- ◆ A ginormous thank you to **Shannon Cannizzaro** who worked as our Family Specialist for 23 years on the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. When we hired Shannon, her son was very young and now is a successful young adult employed by a local hospital! We watched Shannon develop her advocacy skills with her own children and later share those skills with other families in a proactive, respectful, and effective manner. Her kind heart, passionate communication, and personal expertise were an important asset to the project.
- ◆ Also a big thank you to **Jayme Cusimano** for her work on the Vision Coalition for the past few years. Jayme represented the CSDB Outreach Program. Thank you for your service!





# colorado connections

- ◆ A big thank you to **Martin Becerra** for his past work as the Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program Coordinator and role with the Vision Coalition, based on this role. Martin was a great advocate for the program and did great things to advance its opportunities for children and youth with blindness/visual impairment. He has returned to his role as a CCB Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Martin was also our Vision Coalition representative for the past several years.

## Well Deserved Awards!

- ◆ **James Bristol** received the Principals Of Schools for the Blind Outstanding Paraprofessional of the Year. Congratulations on this national award, James! This is a well-deserved accomplishment!
- ◆ **Jim Olson** was awarded the Outstanding Provider of Outreach Services award from the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind. For 34 years, Jim has served children and families as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, and Certified Low Vision Therapist in public school districts and at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind / Colorado Instructional Materials Center. Congratulations to Jim, we are so proud of you!



## Thanks for Your Contributions!

- ◆ A big thank you and shout out to **Mike Plansker** for sending Tanni many excellent resources for the CDE Orientation and Mobility (O&M) webpage. So appreciated!
- ◆ Well done to **Jessica Hanks** and **Cathy Smyth** for their statewide PEAK Parent Center Training Workshop, Family Support at Anchor Center for the Blind Children, which was held on August 5th through a statewide virtual webinar. Such a great opportunity for parents!
- ◆ HUGE shout out to **Robert Tanaka**, graduate from Anchor Center for Blind Children and of the Denver Public Schools BVI program, as he goes for the gold in Judo in the Tokyo Paralympic games August 27, 2021.

## Milestones Within our BVI Community

- ◆ Congratulations to **Brooke** and **Chris Miller** on the birth of their sixth child! Son Brady was born on May 19. He measured 7 pounds, 15 ounces and was 19.6 inches long! Congratulations to the happy family!
- ◆ Congratulations to **Aryn McNichol** and family on the birth of their new little one in June!

# Who Ya Gonna Call? School Year 2021-22

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

- CSDB Superintendent

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

- USABA Membership and Outreach Coordinator

**Scott Burns** at (303) 349-1091 or [sburns@learningally.org](mailto:sburns@learningally.org)

- Learning Ally – authorized CO NIMAS file user

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

- Anchor Center for Blind Children Representative at Vision Coalition meetings



# Who Ya Gonna Call? School Year 2021-22

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

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

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

- UNC Teacher Training Program on Visual Impairment / O&M Training Program

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

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor - [Cozart\\_n@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Cozart_n@cde.state.co.us)
- Metro TVI/ O&M Specialist and CAER representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- Metro TVI / O&M Specialist Regional Meetings

## CSDB Outreach – Interim Contact until position is filled: [csdboutreach@csdb.org](mailto:csdboutreach@csdb.org)

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

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

- Colorado Center for the Blind

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

- CSDB Director of Special Education
- CSDB and Enrollment Questions

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

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

## Christine Holmberg at (303) 506-3859 or [christine@foresightskiguide.org](mailto:christine@foresightskiguide.org)

- Foresight Ski Guides

# Who Ya Gonna Call? School Year 2021-22

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

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

**Melissa French** at (970) 219-7697 or [mfrench@svvsd.org](mailto:mfrench@svvsd.org)

- Northern Region TVI / O&M Specialist Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

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

- Western Slope TVI / O&M Specialist Representative at Vision Coalition meetings
- Western Slope Regional TVI / O&M Specialist Regional meetings

**Anahit LaBarre** at (303) 778-1130 or [alabarre@cocenter.org](mailto:alabarre@cocenter.org)

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

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

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

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

- Metro TVI / O &M Specialist Regional Meetings

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

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

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

- Colorado Talking Book Library

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

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Aryn McNichol** at (303) 702-8354 x58354 or [mcnichol\\_aryn@svvsd.org](mailto:mcnichol_aryn@svvsd.org)

- Northern Region TVI / O&M Specialist Meetings

**Sara Noel** at (719) 640-4869 or [snoel@csdb.org](mailto:snoel@csdb.org)

- CSDB BVI Outreach representative at Vision Coalition meetings

# Who Ya Gonna Call? School Year 2021-22

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

- CIMC year-round registration of Colorado students who are blind/visually impaired
- Federal Quota Census registration (first Monday in January annually)
- Ex Officio Trustee for the Colorado Department of Education Federal Quota Accounts
- CIMC braille & large print book orders and APH loan materials
- Authorized NIMAS file user for CO
- CIMC Professional Lending Library
- CIMC and Interim Southern Region TVI / O&M Specialist Representative at Vision Coalition meetings

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

- DVR representative at Vision Coalition meetings

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

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

**Angela Sims** at (970) 640-7096 or [angela.sims@d51schools.org](mailto:angela.sims@d51schools.org)

- Site Coordinator for Western Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

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

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

**Heather Solberg** at (303) 505-2758 or [heather.solberg@va.gov](mailto:heather.solberg@va.gov)

- CAER Chapter President

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

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

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

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

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

- Audio Information Network of Colorado

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

- Site Coordinator for Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

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

- CDE Braille Test Proctor and Renewal Modules Proctor

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

- Internship/Student teacher placements



# MAIL TO:

**25-38E-3401**

**Katy Anthes**  
**Commissioner of Education**



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