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# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

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

## Change Batteries / Share the Light

By Tanni L. Anthony



The following piece was written by Rachel Dansby Freeman.

“When a flashlight grows dim or quits working, do you just throw it away? Of course not. You change the batteries. When a person messes up or finds themselves in a dark place, do you cast them aside? Of course not! You help them change their batteries.

Some need AA batteries                   ... **A**ttention and **A**ffection;  
some need AAA batteries               ... **A**ttention, **A**ffection, and **A**cceptance;  
some need C batteries                   ... **C**ompassion;  
some need D batteries                   ... **D**irection.

And if they still don’t seem to shine...simply sit with them quietly and share your light.”

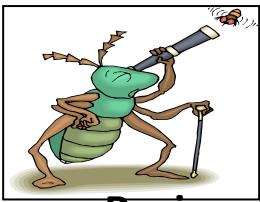
This simple lesson reminds us that we need to be attentive to ourselves and to one another. We each need self-care and care from others. Rest, time away from electronics and work tasks, an encouraging word, a kind action, true moments of someone listening, a note in the mail, a smile across the room, a welcome hug, a plan to do something together ... there are so many ways to help change / charge the batteries of ourselves and our students, parents, friends, family, and colleagues.

As this calendar year comes to close, there are many things to celebrate and look forward to ahead in the upcoming winter break and advent of 2022. It is also time to rest. Kids are tired, parents are tired, and teachers / workers are tired. The energy level is tapped out for so many people. There have been a lot of battery drains along the way.

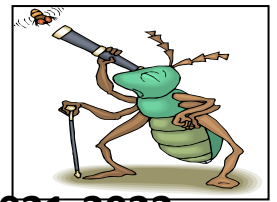
Look inward, look outward. Whose batteries are low? Who needs a recharge or a change of batteries? Who needs the light-force of others? Pay attention, offer verbal and real affection, be compassionate, provide sensitive direction. Be the light. Share the light. When we hold the torch to light another’s path, we illuminate and brighten our own lives ... and also set the stage to be the recipient when others do the same for us when our own batteries run low.

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# LOW VISION EVALUATION



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

| Region   | Dates                | Paperwork Due     | Site Coordinator |
|----------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Metro    | February 17-19, 2022 | January 31, 2022  | Karin Hensel     |
| Southern | March 10, 2022       | February 24, 2022 | Debbie Haberkorn |

### Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

By Debbie Haberkorn

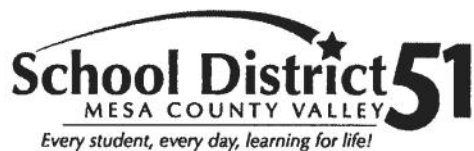
The Northern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held October 21st and 22nd at Enight Skills Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. Eleven students from five Administrative Units (Boulder County District RE1 -J, Boulder County District RE-2, Larimer County District R-1, Weld County District RE-4 and Weld County District 6) received in-person evaluations. Eleven parents and eight TVIs attended the evaluation with their students. The LVE Clinic team would like to thank the Enight Skills Center for hosting the event, and **Chris Holmes, Aryn McNichol, Liz Wieder, Sally Burch, Sarah Goodfellow, Jeanine Holmes, Jenna Martin, and Vicki Chinski** for bringing students.

Thank you, **Liz Wieder**, for doing such a fantastic job of coordinating this clinic. It takes a team to plan and host the clinic!

### Other Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic News

- ◆ The November Southern LVE Clinic was postponed due to the low number of students scheduled. There is one remaining clinic for the Southern region, which continue as a one day or may expand to a two day clinic.
- ◆ The remaining clinics of the year are set. It is critical that we are receiving the needed student paperwork in a timely manner. Incomplete or late paperwork may cause the cancellation of a clinic.
- ◆ A wonderful thank you to Angela Sims and Erin Noe for the kind and most appreciated thank you letter than you can find on page 3 of this newsletter.





Vision Services, Hawthorne Building  
410 Hill Avenue, Grand Junction, CO  
81501

September 28, 2021

Tanni Anthony, Ph.D.  
Director, Access, Learning and Literacy  
Exceptional Student Services  
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Tanni,

We are writing to tell you how much we appreciate the Low Vision Team. The September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Western Slope Clinic was a success. The team saw seven students from various school districts on the Western Slope and as always, the feedback we received from parents and other teachers who brought their child/student to the clinic was overwhelmingly positive. It's always an eye opener to watch Dr. Theune patiently answer parent's questions about their child's eye condition. He once again was able to explain things on a level that parents could understand. These discussions are not only valuable to the families but also to the TVIs. We always learn so much from being able to sit in on the discussions.

This year we had a coordinator from Mesa D51 take the time to attend the clinic to learn more about it. She was impressed with the patience and expertise of the team. The amount of equipment they brought and the teams' ability to understand just the right tool to try was an eye opener. She felt the information given to the families and teachers was incredible and was impressed that CDE would sponsor a clinic of this caliber.

All of the low vision students, parents, and teachers who attended the clinic were exposed to a variety of optical devices that will assist the students in accessing their educational materials, as well as, the world outside of that setting. Students are now using hand held or electronic magnification and telescopic devices to access their educational materials and environment. The use of these devices in the educational setting has greatly reduced the costly need for large print.

Above all, our students are now able to access information in the educational environment as a result of the clinic. I hope that the clinic will continue to be funded at the state level because of the tremendous outcome it has for students and literacy in all aspects of their daily lives.

Thanks again for continuing to support the clinic financially and philosophically at the state level. The Low Vision Clinic team continues to be an outstanding group of professionals. We are appreciative of the service they provide to our students. The Low Vision Clinic is a model program and we are fortunate to have this valuable resource in our state.

Sincerely,

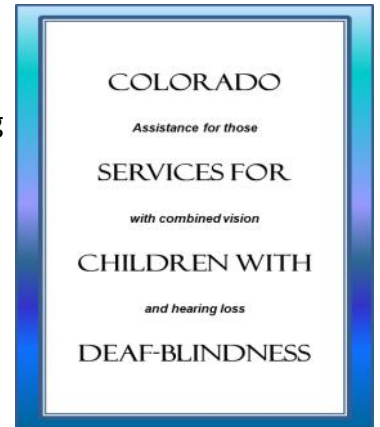
Angela Sims and Erin Noe  
Teachers for Students with Visual Impairments  
Orientation and Mobility Instructors

Cc: Dr. Tom Theune, Wendy Stoltman, Debbie Haberkorn

# 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 (**Tanni Anthony, Gina Herrera, Roberta Curtis, Jessica Meisel, and Wendy Stoltman**) and one specialized contractor (**Cindy Colwell**) on board with the project.

Check out our website at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db>

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

We have geared up for our December 1, 2021 Count. Agency and district contacts were sent the Child Count Packet of Information in late November. This went out the door a little later than anticipated. As such, the due date for completed Child Count Forms will be January 30, 2022. We thank you so much for your careful review of the forms. For each child already identified, the packet contains a "short form." which details the fields already populated. Please take time to attend to providing the most current information, such as the dates of Functional Vision and Functional Hearing Assessments, eye exams, and audiology exams. The last two items are crucial in order for the child to remain on the Colorado Child Count.

Last year, for the first time in years, we saw a decline in our identified infants and toddlers with deaf-blindness. Colorado has always been a national leader in the identification of our youngest children with combined vision and hearing loss. Please help us be proactive with these early identification efforts!

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!

## Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

### *Colorado Intervener Award*

*Cassandra Waterbury received an Amway Hero 2021 Award. She is a certified intervener who has worked in Colorado for many years. A video was made to explain the work of an intervener and honor Cassandra. Please take a moment to watch and share with others. We would recommend that you talk through the videos key points with parents or others to support an understanding of the key concepts within the video.*

**[2021 Amway Heroes of Change video](#)**

### Colorado Community Intervener Project

You can find newsletters, publications, handouts, videos, and podcasts are a myriad of topics that include behavioral supports, orientation and mobility, deaf-blind interaction, communication, and teachers of the deaf-blind.

We are happy to announce the beginning of a new program to assist children and youth who are DeafBlind (ages 0-21) to meaningfully participate in activities outside of school such as going to story time at the library, socializing with friends, a museum, community events, family interactions, and more. The intervener's role is to provide all the incidental information a typical child would get through vision and hearing and assist them with both receptive and expressive communication with their friends, family, peers, and professionals.

Interveners work one-to-one with an individual to learn their unique communication and access needs to help them benefit from all aspects of life. This looks different for each individual but might be explaining what the dinosaur bones at the museum look like to a child, helping a child ask peers at a playground to play, explaining the music and movement happening at the Nutcracker, or sitting with a child at family dinner and helping them participate in conversation about their day.

The Intervener Community Pilot, hosted by Family Voices CO, will provide intervener services for 10 hours a month for 10 children/youth to work on increasing both community integration and communication skills.

For more information about the program, please contact Elli Streifer at [elli.streifer@gmail.com](mailto:elli.streifer@gmail.com).



### Texas Deaf-Blind Project Resources

There are so many great resources on this webpage - be sure to check it out! <https://txdeafblindproject.org/>

You can find newsletters, publications, handouts, videos, and podcasts are a myriad of topics that include behavioral supports, orientation and mobility, deaf-blind interaction, communication, and teachers of the deaf-blind.



# Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

## A Community Intervener Story

By Kiera Zink

*Editor's Note: I asked Kiera if she would write this story for our newsletter to give a concrete example of how an intervener can make an impact within the community. This project, detailed on page 5, is an opportunity for interveners to serve in community settings, beyond the school environment and day. Thank you to Kiera for sharing this story with us.*



I am a mom of a 7-year-old girl who is Deafblind, and I wanted to share a quick success story about our experience with her having an Intervener in the community. We recently started to attend a new church that had created a special needs ministry. Prior to having our Intervener attend Sunday school with our daughter, the kids would all have worship together then disperse into their age-appropriate rooms to learn with their peers. She would be put with a very kind volunteer that would try to keep her entertained and happy but not trained with the tools to support and teach her.

Our daughter loves music so always enjoys this time but didn't have access to really make it meaningful to her. We asked our community Intervener, who also happens to be her school Intervener for the past 2 years, to come with us one Sunday and has a wonderful bond and relationship with her. Upon picking our daughter up from Sunday school, our Intervener mentioned she taught her some new signs to a song they sang-she showed me, and we went home.

Once we were home I asked my daughter if she had fun at church that day, she signed "yes." I then asked if she learned anything new and she grabbed my hands and signed her new signs that she learned that said "Jesus loves me" from the song *Jesus Loves me, Yes I Know*. I was so emotional because she is a simple signer and relies on us to help her sign. She has not been able to pick up and learn new sign this quickly without having to have it repeated multiple times.

This is an example as to why I am so passionate about bringing this Community Intervener pilot through Family Voices to Colorado so that our children can have meaningful interactions, communication, and learning. This is just the beginning, and I cannot wait to watch her grow and develop with the help of her Community Intervener.

AN OBSTACLE  
IS OFTEN A  
STEPPING STONE

- William Prescott



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## 2021-2022 DEAF-BLINDNESS WEBINAR SERIES

The Colorado Deaf-Blind Project is pleased to announce a series of webinars that will be offered once a month throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

Time for all webinars: 3:30 -5:30 p.m.

January 11, 2022

*Classic Literacy Lessons: Story Boxes, Experience Books, and Authentic Choice-making* with Susan Bruce

February 8, 2022

*Systematic Instruction for Students with Severe Disabilities (Part 2): Constant Time Delay* with MaryAnn Demchak and Chevonne Sutter

March 8, 2022

*Supporting the Use of Consistent Interventions: A Framework for Collaborating with Educational Teams Serving Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss* with Tracy Evans Luiselli

**Participants:** Colorado parents of and professionals working with children birth through 21 years with significant supports needs, including deaf-blindness. The focus is on learners who are not yet proficient in verbal and/or sign language.

**Training Expectations:** Full attendance of any session is a requirement. Please do not sign up for any of these training events if you cannot commit to the full hour.

[Deaf-Blind Webinar series registration link](#)

\*When registering please indicate if you require any accommodation(s). All accommodations must be requested no later than two weeks prior to the event. Requests made after this time cannot be guaranteed.

For questions regarding registration, please reach out to Roberta Curtis, [curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:curtis_r@cde.state.co.us).

**Colorado Department of Education**

Exceptional Student Services Unit | 1560 Broadway, #1100, Denver, CO 80202



- October 12, 2021
- November 9, 2021
- December 14, 2021
- January 11, 2022
- February 8, 2022
- March 8, 2022

For any other questions, 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).



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

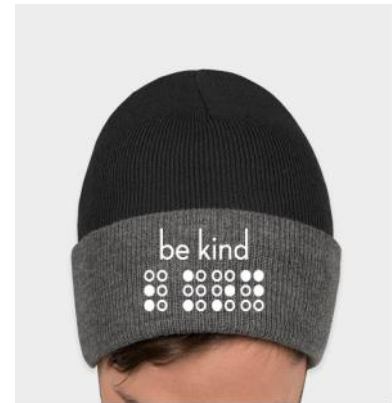
### CAER is Selling BE Kind Beanies!

*By Heather Solberg*

CAER now has super cute hats for sale for Louis Braille's Birthday in January! Come join us in supporting mini grants! If you can't purchase, donate whatever you feel, or if you can't donate please share this link so others may get the opportunity to help CAER.

Check it out at:

[Braille Beanies for Louis Braille's Birthday Fundraising](#)



## Come join CAER at Wreaths Across America Saturday December 18, 2021



### Fairmount Cemetery

430 South Quebec Street, Denver CO 80247

Meet @ 9:30 a.m. in parking lot located on

S. Quebec Street

(closest intersection S. Quebec St & E. Street  
and Alameda Avenue)

Wreath laying begins at 10:00 a.m.

Questions, please contact

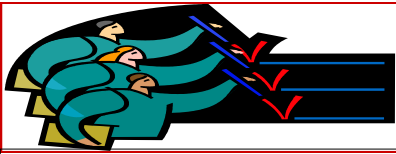
Barb Galgano 303-918-7123

Heather Solberg 303-505-2758

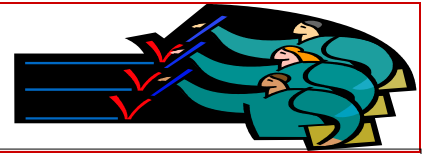
**Everyone welcome!**

**See you soon!**





# CHECK IT OUT!



## APH WEBINARS



Access Academy is the education professional's one-stop resource for the training webinars you need to get the most out of APH products and services. The majority of Access Academy webinars also provide [Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals](#) (ACVREP) credit. APH Partner Showcase is part of Access Academy, but does not offer ACVREP credits. The Showcase is strictly informational/promotional, and highlights some of APH's partner vendors in field, and their product(s).

### **Bug Out at Alphapointe's Technology Camp! Ideas for STEAM Activities with Code Jumper**

*December 8, 2021, 3:00 – 4:30 PM EST*

Code Jumper is a STEM tool that builds critical thinking skills in students of all abilities. In this webinar, learn how Code Jumper can be used to grow students' confidence and interest in STEAM as we take a closer look at Alphapointe's summer Technology Camp for students 12-18 who have visual impairments. Join us for an exploration of Code Jumper Lesson 5: Debugging and exterminate your questions about Code Jumper.

[Register Here for Bug Out at Alphapointe's Technology Camp! Ideas for STEAM Activities with Code Jumper](#)

### **Using Braille Commands with VoiceOver: "Apple"-ly Your Braille Skills to the Mantis and Chameleon**

*December 9, 2021, 12:00 – 1:00 PM EST*

It's beginning to look a lot like the end of the semester, so come join us for a refresher on using your braille display with VoiceOver. Our primary focus will be the Chameleon 20 braille display from APH but we'll also cover some tips relevant to the Mantis Q40 and all of our Perkins keyboard braille tips will be relevant for other braille displays. Check it out and by the end you will be zipping around your Apple device with braille at your fingertips!

[Register Here for Using Braille Commands with VoiceOver: "Apple"-ly Your Braille Skills to the Mantis and Chameleon](#)

### **What's new with ZoomText?**

*December 13, 2021, 12:00 – 1:00 PM EST*

Get ready for ZoomText 2022! Join Ben Knolles for more information about the Quick Access toolbar, learn how to get the most out of the voice assistant, and review the features that make ZoomText a must-have.

[Register Here for What's New with Zoom Text](#)

### **Collaboration Station: How to Track Changes and Comments with JAWS**

*Tuesday, December 14, 2021, 11:30 – 1:00 PM EST*

Collaboration is a fundamental skill at school and in the workplace. Students and staffers need the ability to work seamlessly on the same Word Document, especially as folks continue to attend school or work remotely. Join Elizabeth Whitaker and learn about how track changes and comments can allow the whole team to have input on a work-in-progress.

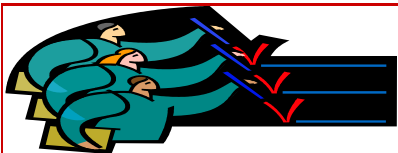
[Register Here for Collaboration Station: How to Track Changes and Comments with JAWS](#)

### **Health is Meaningful Living: A Focus on Sex Education**

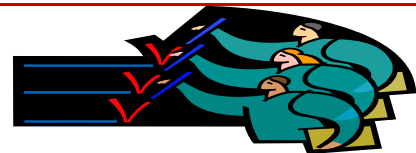
*December 15, 2021, 1:00 – 2:30 PM EST*

Every student should have access to quality and comprehensive health education. With the purpose of promoting independence, the *Health Education Guidebook for Students with Visual Impairments: A Guidebook for Teachers* is the perfect tool to assist educators with designing meaningful instruction. Attend this final webinar in a series and learn the meaning of comprehensive sexual health education, ways to explain its importance to stakeholders, and correlate ways to embed discussion into social skills instruction.

[Register Here for Health is Meaningful Living: A Focus on Sex Education](#)



# 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.

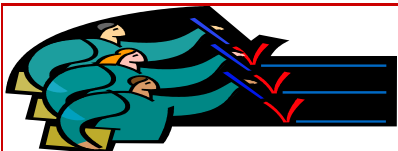
SBS recognizes that there are important professional membership organizations that provide TSVIs/TVIs a voice among other professional voices, but the Registry will provide the forum for TSVIs/TVIs to be highly visible and have their own unique voice on the national stage.

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.

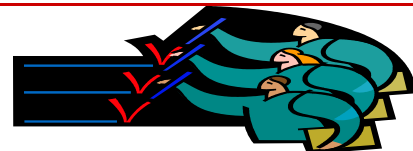
Participating in this Registry is voluntary. For questions or additional information, please email:

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





## CHECK IT OUT!



Perkins CVI Now group is hosting a series of lectures and discussions focused on the impact CVI has on students' mathematics learning. The first video in the series was created by Matt Tietjen. Matt is a leader in the field of CVI and is both thoughtful on this topic and creative with his solutions. Many of his suggestions will work for all our students, not just those with CVI.

You are encourage to check out Matt's video and join us for the group discussion on December 7th at 3:00 pm EST. Please pass this along to other educators and families who you feel may be interested.

[Register now for the CVI and Math Study Group](#)

### Updated NIMAS Policy Document

A [newly revised question and answer document](#) is now available on the Department of Education's website as a resource to support SEAs, LEAs, and other stakeholders in the provision of accessible textbooks and related materials using the NIMAS file format, in coordination with the [National Instructional Materials Access Center](#) (NIMAC).

This updated document addresses recent changes to eligibility requirements following the Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act and also discusses the NIMAC's expanded role in accepting and disseminating qualifying digital educational materials to eligible users (following the Department's 2020 [Notice of Interpretation](#) clarifying the definition of "print instructional materials").



### Well-Being Support Line Available for Educators

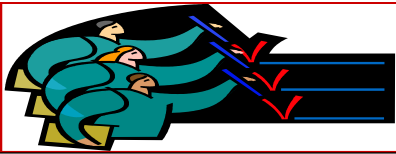
More than 200 educators from 30 different school districts across Colorado accessed the Well-Being Support Line last school year – a resource being offered again this year for any educator.

The free service offered through the University of Colorado's Department of Psychology and the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's Colorado Spirit Crisis Counseling program is available to any educator across the state, including teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, health care teams and support staff.

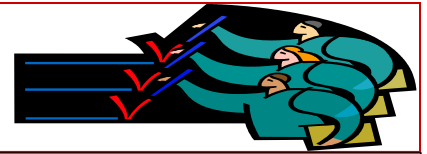
Educators and school employees seeking support can talk to a trained crisis counselor volunteer from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week via telephone or text message. When educators call, they will be asked to leave a phone number, and a staffer will call or text back. Trained volunteers will listen, offer ideas for problem solving, self-care, or community resources. If an educator needs more support or ongoing mental health care, the staff will help connect callers with more support or ongoing mental health care. Call or text 303-724-2500 or [visit this link for more information](#).

[Visit the Colorado Educator Support webpage](#) for more information regarding resources, including an online support program to learn more about skills and strategies for educators to learn how to support themselves and their students with strategies and skills and to learn more about stress, trauma, depression and wellness.





# 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.

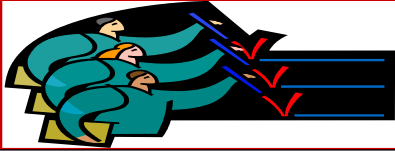


### \*\* eBooks

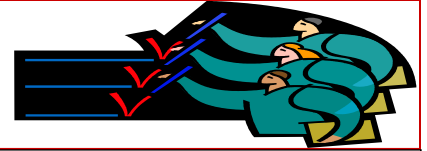
[Book share](#) provides accessible eBooks for eligible individuals with barriers to reading. The resources linked here will help students with dyslexia, blindness/ visual impairment, cerebral palsy, and other print reading barriers to continue learning during school closures.







# CHECK IT OUT!



## Mountain Mobility: Winter Camp for Visually Impaired Youth Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup> – Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup>

Dear Camper,

The Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte will be running a winter weekend-long snow sports camp specifically designed for youth who are blind or visually impaired. The camp will bring youth together for a weekend of skiing, snowboarding and other fun activities in the Rocky Mountains. The ASC will be providing three days of one-on-one lessons taught by professional adaptive ski/snowboard instructors. This camp will focus on building confidence and making connections with others who share similar experiences.

Connecting to the outdoors will be a large aspect of the camp, yet campers will also focus on a variety of invaluable life skills throughout the weekend. Campers will shop for groceries, prepare their own meals and interact in a team setting. Additionally, campers will advance their orientation and mobility skills as they learn to travel through the bustling town of Crested Butte, Colorado.

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

Check out the [Adaptive Sports website](#) for the following items to help you organize:

- A packing list
- An itinerary for the weekend
- A registration packet and waiver
- Permission to Transport
- Ski/Snowboard rental form

**Please note:** All applications must be received by Friday, January 7, 2022 and will be accepted in the order they are received. Students who are accepted to the camp will be notified mid-January or sooner. There is a \$50 camper fee and payment can be made through check or credit card. Checks must be made out to Adaptive Sports Center. Credit card payment can be made over the phone, please call Hannah Lang at 970-349-2296 x 102.

Shuttle vans will be organized for transportation to Crested Butte on Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup> from central locations once the camp roster is set. Students will also be transported back to these central locations from Crested Butte after the camp on Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Please mail registration, waivers, and payment to:

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



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

-Adaptive Sports Center

# Resources and Materials

## COVID-19 FAQ's Information and Resources including Compensatory Services

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

## CDE Professional Development: Real-Time and Archived

### Professional Development opportunities

[Click here for more information about CDE Professional Development offerings, including Library on On-Demand Resources and Upcoming Opportunities](#)

Spe·cial  
ed·u·ca·tion  
teach·er

*noun*

---

A differentiation  
rockstar who enables  
independence, fosters  
success, and nurtures  
hope and dignity.

*See also: data superhero,  
accessibility maestro*

# Resources and Materials



University of Colorado **Anschutz Medical Campus**

You do so much to support your students and the community - how can we help support you?

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

## Teacher/Educator Mental Health and Support Services



This past year was hard - social distancing, masks, remote learning. We don't know what this coming year will look like, but maybe we can help you through it.

**Group Sessions and Workshops**  
**Individual Support Sessions**  
**Online Self-Paced Program**  
**Well-Being Support Line (303-724-2500 call/text)**

The Educator Support Program is a free service for all Colorado educators and school employees.  
Professional Development and Graduate Credits Available

Visit [www.coloradoeducatorsupport.com](http://www.coloradoeducatorsupport.com) or call 303-724-2500 for more information

In collaboration with the University of Colorado Department of Psychiatry, Partners in Children's Mental Health, Colorado Education Association, Office of Behavioral Health and CDPHE Colorado Spirit.





# CDE Happenings

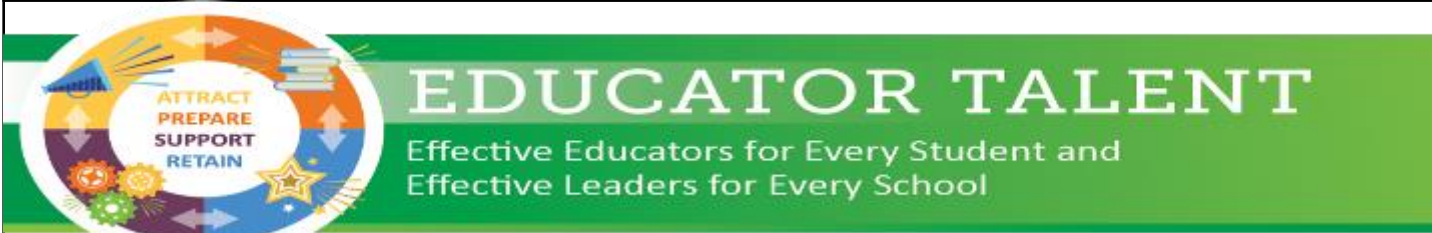
## Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired</b><br/><b>Ages Birth-21: (9.02)</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Must hold a master’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution in special education visual impairment or its equivalent, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education.</li> <li>✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for Special Education Specialists: Visually Impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

For information about the endorsement requirements for the School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, go to: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

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



### **Educator Talent Website**

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

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





## Licensure Requirements for TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment

For information about Colorado licensing requirements in the area of Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment and/or School O&M Specialist, please refer to the information contained within Educator Licensing’s Endorsement Requirements page at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

### CDE Licensure Requirement for O&M Specialists

If you are working in a Colorado administrative unit as a School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, please know that you **MUST** have a current CDE license as a Special Services Provider: School O&M Specialist. If you do not have this license, your scope of O&M services should be restricted significantly to those skills that could already be taught by a TVI. Without this license, you are placing yourself and your AU at risk for O&M-related liability. There is no temporary or emergency licenses for School O&M Specialists.

Questions or need some assistance? Contact Tanni at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

### Initial CDE Braille Competency Testing Requirements

**Initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate:** All licensed teachers endorsed in the area of visual impairment, including those individuals employed on a temporary status (Temporary Educator Eligibility-TEE), who are completing their university program in visual impairment, must have a valid CDE Certificate of Braille Competency or a CDE Renewal Certificate of Braille Competency on file with their current administrative unit of employment. The CDE Certificate of Braille Competency must be earned no later than May 31st of the first instructional year, with a Colorado administrative unit as a teacher of students who are blind/visually impaired. If a TVI moves from one Colorado administrative unit to another, the expectation of first-year braille competency demonstration does not “reactivate” from year-to-year. The testing clock begins with the first day of Colorado employment as a TVI.

The initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate expires five years from its date of issue.

### Renewal CDE Braille Competency Certificate

There is a one time expectation to renew the initial CDE certificate five years after its initial issue. This is accomplished by completing 15 renewal modules across the five year renewal period. These modules must be taken with one of the CDE Braille Proctors.

For more information about Colorado’s braille competency requirements, please go to:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs)



You can do it !



## **K-3 Teacher Evidence-Based Reading Training Requirements**

All kindergarten through third-grade teachers in Colorado must submit evidence of their compliance with the K-3 evidence-based reading training requirements by Aug. 1, 2022. [Teachers will submit documentation through the Colorado Online Licensing system.](#) The goal is for all TVIs in public schools to complete this training.

[Learn about the hour, content and assessment requirements to complete this training and the various training options that are available for K-3 teachers.](#)

## **CO Department of Human Services Launches Program to Promote Youth Mental Health**

The CDHS Office of Behavioral Health and partners have launched I Matter, a program to promote youth emotional and mental health. Young people can take a confidential survey to be matched up with a mental health professional who can best support them. Every youth is then eligible for three free counseling sessions. [Visit IMatterColorado.org to learn more.](#)

## **Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan**

After months of intense stakeholder engagement and building upon years of work in Colorado to align our early childhood system, the Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan is one step closer to approval. On November 1, the Transition Working Group submitted the plan to the Early Childhood Leadership Council, which has until Monday, November 15th, to approve the plan, at which point it will be final and shared with the Colorado Legislature.

[Access the completed Department of Early Childhood Transition Plan here \(PDF\).](#)

A report of recommendations for the universal preschool program will be submitted on January 1, 2022, to the ECLC.

[Information about the planning process, including opportunities to get involved, can be found on this website.](#)

## **READ Act Office Hours**

The Literacy Team in the Preschool Through 3rd Grade office will be scheduling live monthly office hours to share updates on the READ Act Teacher training. Topics may include:

- Information about the READ Act teacher training requirement
- Important dates for teachers and districts to be aware of
- Information on pathway options to meet the READ Act teacher training requirement
- Information on teacher reporting to the Colorado Online Licensing system (COOL)
- Information on district reporting

**\*\*\*Please send all questions to: [readacttraining@cde.state.co.us](mailto:readacttraining@cde.state.co.us)**



## SPP/APR 6-Year Target Setting Public Comment Period Open

The public comment period is open from November 8, 2021 – January 7, 2022 for broad stakeholder input on the proposed targets and improvement strategies for performance indicators in the Colorado State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). A CDE communication plan to reach a diverse audience begins today and will include the following announcement:

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires every state to develop a State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) that evaluates the state's efforts on implementing the requirements and purposes of IDEA and describes how the state will improve upon those efforts. The SPP/APR includes indicators that measure child and family outcomes and other indicators that measure compliance with the requirements of IDEA. Every six years states must reset baselines and targets for their SPP/APR performance indicators. States must get broad stakeholder input before submitting their new baselines and targets on Feb. 1, 2022. Between Nov. 8, 2021, and Jan. 7, 2022, Colorado is soliciting broad stakeholder input on the state's proposed targets and improvement strategies for each of the indicators. Colorado has created a webpage that includes videos that describe the various targets and improvement strategies as well as an online function to provide feedback.

Contact: Gloria Durosko, Data and General Supervision Liaison

*A little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness*



*- RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI*



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



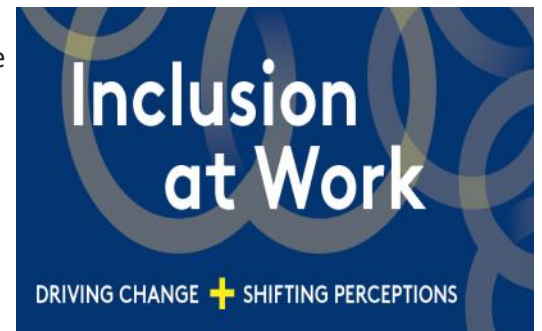
**Save the Date—American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference  
May 1-3, 2022  
Hyatt Regency Arlington, VA**

Join us for the [American Foundation for the Blind's Leadership Conference \(AFBLC\)](#) and Helen Keller Achievement Awards (HKAA). We aim to increase leadership capacity in order to create a world of no limits for people who are blind. We are committed to **putting inclusion to work**, which will be a major emphasis of our 2022 AFBLC. The Helen Keller Achievement Awards Dinner, which takes place during the conference, recognizes the notable achievements of individuals and organizations that are leaders in improving the lives of people with disabilities. Past awardees include Amazon, Apple, Google, and JPMorgan Chase, as well as giants from the performing arts, including Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, and Patty Duke.

AFBLC provides a forum in which leaders from a variety of fields—including research, technology, education, corporations, health, and government organizations—have the opportunity to expand their knowledge of best practices, refine leadership skills, identify inclusion practices that work, and share concerns and strategies. The Migel Medal, Corinne Kirchner Research Award, and Llura Gund Leadership Award will be presented at the AFB Leadership Conference.

We look forward to gathering with you again to explore the conference themes of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Save the date for **May 1-3, 2022** and stay tuned—early-bird registration will be available in January!

In Partnership,  
Kirk Adams



## **American Psychological Association; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Inclusive Language Guidelines**

The APA has published a free document that details inclusive language practices. Maysa Akbar, PhD, ABPP Chief Diversity Officer offers this narrative about the guidelines, “As we strive to further infuse principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) into the fabric of society, those committed to effecting change must acknowledge language as a powerful tool that can draw us closer together or drive us further apart. Simply put, words matter. The words we use are key to creating psychologically safe, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environments. These guidelines aim to raise awareness, guide learning, and support the use of culturally sensitive terms and phrases that center the voices and perspectives of those who are often marginalized or stereotyped. They also explain the origins for problematic terms and phrases and offer suitable alternatives or more contemporary replacements. This document will be flexible and iterative in nature, continuing to evolve as new terminology emerges or current language becomes obsolete. By embracing inclusive language and encouraging others to do the same, we firmly believe that we will not only communicate effectively with more people, but also better adapt to a diversifying society and globe.”

Check out the [APH Inclusive Language Guidelines document](#).






# Calendar of Events

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

- December 15**      **BVI Office Hours** (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- December 17**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting** – 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Zoom  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- 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**      **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- January 5**      **Creating Connections: Pre-Employment Transition Services**—5:00 –6:00 p.m.  
Contact: Michele Reed at [michele.reed@state.co.us](mailto:michele.reed@state.co.us) or 303-866-3512
- 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 12**      **CSDB Board of Trustee Meeting** - check CSDB website to determine Zoom or in-person  
Contact: [www.csdb.org](http://www.csdb.org)
- January 19**      **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- January 20-21**      **Webinar Modules 1-3 for the CDE State Conference on BVI—Zoom**  
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 28**      **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting** – 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., in person/CSDB campus  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)
- January 31**      **Deaf-Blind Child Count Paperwork due Back to Tanni**  
**CIMC Parent Consent Forms due Back to the CIMC to Keep Students on the State Database**
- February 2**      **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- February 3**      **Webinar Modules 4 and 5 for the CDE State Conference on BVI—Zoom**  
Contact: Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- 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)




# Calendar of Events

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

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| February 8     | <b>Deaf-Blind Webinar Series</b> —Systematic Instruction Part 2 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.<br>Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e2bc2329b5c040f79bceede5d68e85a3</a> |
| February 9     | <b>Metro TVI / O&amp;M Specialist Meeting</b><br>Contact: <a href="mailto:jlei@cherrycreekschools.org">jlei@cherrycreekschools.org</a>  |
| February 9     | <b>CSDB Board of Trustee Meeting</b> - check CSDB website to determine Zoom or in-person<br>Contact: <a href="http://www.csdb.org">www.csdb.org</a>   |
| February 16    | <b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.<br>Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>  |
| February 17-19 | <b>Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver<br>Contact: Karin Hensel at <a href="mailto:khensel@dcsdk12.org">khensel@dcsdk12.org</a>  |
| February 17-21 | <b>Mountain Mobility</b><br>Contact: Kaitlin Lombardi— <a href="mailto:kaitlinmlombardi@gmail.com">kaitlinmlombardi@gmail.com</a>   |
| February 18    | <b>Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting</b> – 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Zoom<br>Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>  |
| March 2        | <b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.<br>Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>  |
| March 4        | <b>First Friday CIMC</b> – 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 2:30—3:30 p.m.<br>Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>   |
| March 8        | <b>Deaf-Blind Webinar Series</b> – Supporting Consistent Interventions (3:30 to 5:30 p.m.)<br>Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>  |
| March 9        | <b>CSDB Board of Trustee Meeting</b> - check CSDB website to determine Zoom or in-person<br>Contact: <a href="http://www.csdb.org">www.csdb.org</a>   |
| March 10       | <b>Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic</b> —CSDB in Colorado Springs<br>Contact: Debbie Haberkorn at <a href="mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org">dhaberkorn@csdb.org</a>   |
| March 15       | <b>See the Future Fund Scholarship Applications Due</b><br>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>  |
| March 16       | <b>BVI Office Hours</b> – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.<br>Registration: <a href="https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347">https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347</a>  |
| March 18       | <b>Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting</b> – 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., in person/CSDB campus<br>Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>   |




# Calendar of Events

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

- 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 6**                    **Vision Coalition** - Virtual  
Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- April 15**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting** – 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Zoom  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- 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 13**                    **CSDB Board of Trustee Meeting** - check CSDB website to determine Zoom or in-person  
Contact: [www.cldb.org](http://www.cldb.org)
- 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 11**                    **CSDB Board of Trustee Meeting** - check CSDB website to determine Zoom or in-person  
Contact: [www.cldb.org](http://www.cldb.org)
- May 18**                    **BVI Office Hours** – 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Registration: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e347>
- May 20**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting** – 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., in person/CSDB campus  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- 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)
- June 17**                    **Southern Region TVI/DVR Meeting** – 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m., Zoom  
Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@cldb.org](mailto:jolson@cldb.org)
- July 22 - 24**                **AER International Conference 2022** – in person/St. Louis, MO
- August 30**                **End Date of READ Act Teacher Training Requirement**  
For training options, go to: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/teacher-training>



## 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>.



# CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment

Virtual Format, Five 3-hour webinar sessions

January 20, 21 and February 2022  
8:00am – 4:00pm

Presented By



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## Weaving the Strands: The Science of Reading and Students with Visual Impairments

Presented by Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea

Reading is a fundamental skill for all students to master in school—including, of course, our students who have low vision or are blind. But how can we provide evidence-based instruction for our varied and individual students? How can we best work with classroom teachers to ensure that our students make their best progress? What are the essential elements we need to provide?

This series of five three-hour interactive webinars will help you put the Each webinar will present information on a specific topic along with practical, kid-friendly (and teacher-friendly!) activities that you can do to help motivate and captivate students to engage in reading and writing.

Topics to be covered will include:

- Session 1: *What is the "science of reading" anyway? And what does it have to do with my students?*
- Session 2: *Phonological aspects of reading*
- Session 3: *Vocabulary: Goodbye to "Mad, Glad, Sad"*
- Session 4: *Comprehension: Reading for a purpose*
- Session 5: *Fluency: Reading on ice skates*

The information and activities shared will apply to both braille readers and print readers with low vision with a discussion of how the child's visual impairment may impact learning in that specific area. Strategies and techniques for instruction and intervention will be shared, as well as effective assessment and progress monitoring.

*Participants may wish to sign up for only some topics or the entire series. Credit can be obtained by participating in a project and by completion of a quiz at the end of the series.*

**[2022 BVI Conference Registration Link](#)**

Dr. Frances Mary D'Andrea is an international expert in the literacy assessment and strategies for students who are blind/visually impaired. From 1995-2005, she worked at the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and helped establish their National Literacy Center.

Dr. D'Andrea has served as AFB's representative to the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) since 1998. She is currently chair of BANA's General Committee on UEB and served as BANA Chair 2012-2015. She has published numerous articles and books, such as serving as co-author of *Ashcroft Programmed Instruction in Braille: Unified English Braille*, and *The Braille Enthusiast's Dictionary*.

Dr. D'Andrea has conducted numerous workshops and presentations both nationally and internationally. She serves on many committees and national task forces related to the education of students with visual impairments.

### QUESTIONS?

Contact Tanni Anthony at  
[Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)



# Orientation & Mobility

## Current and Potential Tele-Visual Rehabilitation & Visual Functions' Assessment

We have been asked to disseminate the survey. It is an optional survey for you to complete. The survey looks at the professionals' experience with providing remote "Low Vision Assessment" & "Tele-Visual Rehabilitation".

If you are an Orientation and Mobility Specialist, please select the category of "Other" when identifying your profession and enter that you are an O&M.



# Cortical & Cerebral Visual Impairment

## CVI Course

George Mason University and the Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Vision Impairment announce a new course offering, EDSE 597: Special Topics, Cortical and Cerebral Visual Impairment.

**Dates:** Every Thursday from January 27, 2022 to May 5, 2022      **Time:** 4:30-7:10 pm

**Format:** Synchronous online through web-conference

**Instructor:** Dr. Sandra Newcomb      **Credits:** 3 (University credit is awarded for this course upon successful completion)

This course is ideal for students in the blindness/vision impairment program, teachers of students who are blind and visually impaired, adapted curriculum/special education teachers, administrators, related service providers, early intervention specialists, and many more.

Please note, this is an advanced graduate level educational course; a prior degree in education or related field is necessary.

Interested individuals who are not current Mason students may apply to Mason as a non-degree student. Restrictions and admission requirements apply. Please apply soon, the deadline is in early January.

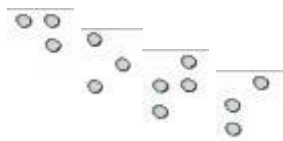
Current Mason VI Consortium students may register through the Consortium Blackboard registration page (EDSE 597-6v1).

Current Mason non-VI students may register through Patriot Web: Cortical/Cerebral Vision Impairment - 20613 - EDSE 597 - DL1

Current ODU and Radford VI Consortium students may register through their Consortium liaison.

Course availability is dependent on minimum enrollment and other provisions stipulated by George Mason University. Course maximum enrollment does apply, please apply/register early.

More information: please contact course lead, Dr. Kimberly Avila: [kavila@gmu.edu](mailto:kavila@gmu.edu)



# 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.

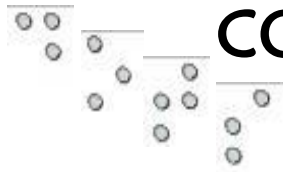
The Practice Test items have been posted on the braille competency webpage—that information and other resources can be found at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs).

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

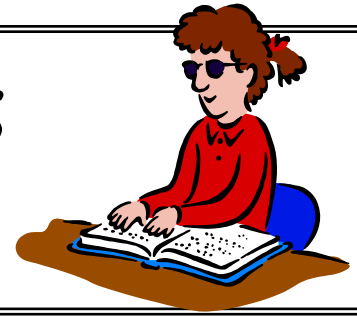
## Braillewriter Repair

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



## CMAS Braille Format Orders

Please be working with your District Assessment Coordinator to order braille format CMAS Tests for the 2021-22 Administration. The CMAS Order Window is January 10—January 29, 2022.

## Tactile Graphics Instruction Survey

The American Printing House for the Blind is asking for TVIs to complete a survey on the topic of Tactile Graphics Instruction. If you have a moment to share your expertise, it would be most appreciated. The goals of the project are to: (a) gather input from the blindness field about tactile graphics literacy; (b) increase instructors' comfort with tactile graphics with the expectation that this will improve student tactile graphics literacy, and (c) create and share instructional resources of some type, for instructors and/or students.

Go to: [Tactile Graphics Instruction Survey](#)

## 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).

## Braille Readers are Leaders

The American Action Fund for blind children and adults has launched this year's braille readers are leaders contest. The contest is open with categories for children and adults. Sign up today and try your hands. Put your fingers to work. [Braille Readers are Leaders details and signup.](#)



"The thing I love most about braille is it allows me to have silence. We live in such a noisy world and it allows me to sit in the sun and read a book and you need to get away from the constant sounds of life, and there's no way to capture that in other forms of technology."

LAURA WOLK

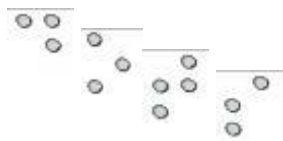


Meet Laura Wolk, this week's Face of Braille. Wolk has been a braille reader since the age of 3 and is the first blind woman to clerk for the Supreme Court. Read more about her braille story and how you can support braille literacy for blind children and adults.

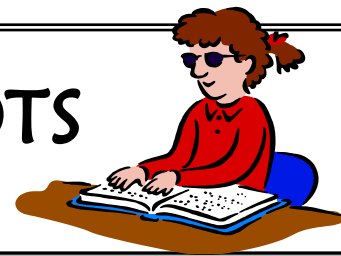
[#MyBrailleStory](#) [#FacesOfBraille](#) [#Braille](#) [#BrailleIsLiteracy](#)







# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## **A Study on Investigating the Community Experiences of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments in Creating Math and Science Tactile Graphics**

Hello Professionals,

My name is Jinseok Park, a doctoral student from the Department of Psychoeducational and Disability Studies at the University of Arizona. Dr. Sunggye Hong, my academic advisor, and I are recruiting 10 certified Teachers of students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) for my dissertation study to investigate the teacher community experiences in creating math and science tactile graphics.

There will be no monetary or direct compensation for your participation. However, as an appreciation for the time and effort to participate in the study, you will receive a \$100 merchant gift card if you complete all the activities in this study.

Eligible teachers must:

- 1) be math/science teachers in schools for the blind or itinerant teachers working with students with VI
- 2) have a middle and high school student with VI who uses the sense of touch as a primary learning media and needs tactile graphics for math and science learning
- 3) be able to participate in this study fully online using emails, virtual meetings, and discussion groups.

If you participate in this study, you will join these activities as follows:

1. 5 Online meetings via Zoom to brainstorm ideas and share resources for tactile graphics
2. Creation of up to two sets of math and science tactile graphics
3. Self- and peer-evaluation of your graphics quality using a rubric
4. Revisions of your creations based on the evaluation results
5. 2 online interviews via Zoom to share your experiences
6. Online archiving of your tactile graphics

Age, gender, and ethnicity data may be collected as documenting demographics; however, this study will not use these characteristics as variables.

If you want to participate, please sign up for this online [CONSENT FORM](#). [RECRUITMENT LETTER](#)

If you need more information on this study, please contact Jinseok Park at [jinseokpark@email.arizona.edu](mailto:jinseokpark@email.arizona.edu) to talk more.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

Best wishes,

*Jinseok Park*

Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Disability and Psychoeducational Studies  
College of Education—University of Arizona  
1430 E 2nd St, Tucson, AZ 85721  
(520) 328-7649

## All the Way to the River

Elizabeth Gilbert

"Some years ago, I was stuck on a crosstown bus in New York City during rush hour. Traffic was barely moving. The bus was filled with cold, tired people who were deeply irritated with one another, with the world itself. Two men barked at each other about a shove that might or might not have been intentional. A pregnant woman got on, and nobody offered her a seat. Rage was in the air; no mercy would be found here.

But as the bus approached Seventh Avenue, the driver got on the intercom. "Folks," he said, "I know you have had a rough day and you are frustrated. I can't do anything about the weather or traffic, but here is what I can do. As each one of you gets off the bus, I will reach out my hand to you. As you walk by, drop your troubles into the palm of my hand, okay? Don't take your problems home to your families tonight, just leave them with me. My route goes right by the Hudson River, and when I drive by there later, I will open the window and throw your troubles in the water."

It was as if a spell had lifted. Everyone burst out laughing. Faces gleamed with surprised delight. People who had been pretending for the past hour not to notice each other's existence were suddenly grinning at each other like, is this guy serious? Oh, he was serious.

At the next stop, just as promised, the driver reached out his hand, palm up, and waited. One by one, all the exiting commuters placed their hand just above his and mimed the gesture of dropping something into his palm. Some people laughed as they did this, some teared up but everyone did it. The driver repeated the same lovely ritual at the next stop, too. And the next. All the way to the river.

We live in a hard world, my friends. Sometimes it is extra difficult to be a human being. Sometimes you have a bad day. Sometimes you have a bad day that lasts for several years. You struggle and fail. You lose jobs, money, friends, faith, and love. You witness horrible events unfolding in the news, and you become fearful and withdrawn. There are times when everything seems cloaked in darkness. You long for the light but don't know where to find it.

But what if you are the light? What if you are the very agent of illumination that a dark situation begs for? That's what this bus driver taught me, that anyone can be the light, at any moment. This guy wasn't some big power player. He wasn't a spiritual leader. He wasn't some media-savvy influencer. He was a bus driver, one of society's most invisible workers. But he possessed real power, and he used it beautifully for our benefit.

When life feels especially grim, or when I feel particularly powerless in the face of the world's troubles, I think of this man and ask myself, What can I do, right now, to be the light? Of course, I can't personally end all wars, or solve global warming, or transform vexing people into entirely different creatures. I definitely can't control traffic. But I do have some influence on everyone I brush up against, even if we never speak or learn each other's name.

"No matter who you are, or where you are, or how mundane or tough your situation may seem, I believe you can illuminate your world. In fact, I believe this is the only way the world will ever be illuminated, one bright act of grace at a time, all the way to the river."



## **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).

# 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.

- 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!





# just for PARENTS

## Braille Letter: Request a Santa or Winter Letter

The National Federation of the Blind is getting more braille into the hands of blind and low-vision children—introducing the improved Santa Letter and Winter Celebration Program of the National Federation of the Blind. Each year, for many years now, elves at the National Federation of the Blind have been Santa’s helpers in sending out Braille letters to children all around the country. This year, they are expanding our program to have a winter themed Braille letter for those who do not celebrate Christmas.

NFB is providing both letters and the activities to go along with them in English and Spanish. The letters and activities provided in the celebration packet are in print as well for sighted family members and friends. If you are interested, go to and complete the request Santa Letter form. The program is now open. The letters and celebration packets will be sent out in December. Requests will be open until December 17.

[Request a celebration letter and packet today!](#)

## NFBCO Blind Parents Division Elect Leadership Team

Monday evening October 25<sup>th</sup> our Blind Parent's Division held their annual meeting. The Blind Parents Division was founded to provide mutual support, advocacy, fellowship, and a forum to share tips and tricks. The board members who will lead the effort over the next year are Maureen Nietfeld, president, Shon Spears, vice president, Brittany Savage, secretary, Kevin Kovacs, treasurer, board members are Papi Adams, Jo Elizabeth Pinto, Nate Trela, David Nietfeld

## Learning Box Activities: 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:

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

Let’s learn about positive and negative numbers. Students will be provided with a Braille/large print number line. They will have opportunities to engage in math problems that would require use of the number lines.

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) and Anahit LaBarre, [alabarre@cocenter.org](mailto:alabarre@cocenter.org)



# just for PARENTS

## Life Lessons at the Turkey Trot

By Jo Elizabeth Pinto

My eight-year-old daughter Sarah inspired my socks off yesterday. Actually, I was wearing fur-lined snow boots, but she inspired me just the same. I went to watch her participate in her school's annual Turkey Trot with the rest of her third-grade class.

Fortunately, the storm from the day before had subsided. It was still nippy out, and the ground was slippery with slightly melting snow, but the sun shone brightly.

"I won't win, Mom," Sarah had predicted glumly that morning. "I'm the slowest girl in the third grade."

"Just have fun and try your best," I had encouraged her as she left for school.

The race started, and my daughter was soon well behind the pack. She had left the winter jacket she usually wore at a friend's house. The one she had on was a hand-me-down from an older cousin. It was too big for her, and the hood wouldn't quit flopping over her eyes. She had also forgotten to put on gloves that morning. I had let her borrow mine before the race. They were too large for her hands, so she kept pushing the hood out of her face with these hopelessly floppy leather gloves that fit her like swim flippers.

I stood at the finish line as the runners came in. Soon, my daughter was left on the race course--alone. My heart sank as the seconds ticked by, lengthening into a minute, then two. A teacher went out to walk the last of the course with Sarah. I could have hugged that woman. At least my baby wouldn't have to cross the finish line all by herself under the stares of her classmates.

Finally the dean said, "We have one more friend to cheer on."

The entire third grade began to chant in unison, "Sarah! Sarah! Sarah! Sarah!"

I held out my arms, and my little girl rushed into them, burying her face in my purple coat to hide her humiliation.

"They're all cheering for you!" I told her.

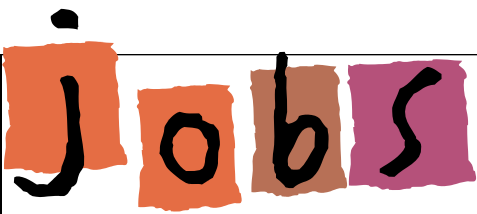
"Because I came in last," she whispered.

"No!" I turned her around to face the other students. "They're cheering for you because you kept on walking. You could have given up. You could have quit, but you didn't. You kept right on walking. That means a lot."

I gave my little girl one more bear hug, and sent her off with the rest of her class to finish the school day. No more fuss. She inspired the socks off me. But at the same time, I hope she learned some valuable lessons about perseverance, about tenacity, about acting with dignity when victory doesn't come her way. Because to tell the truth, life will hand her more opportunities to practice perseverance than to take victory laps. She'll need to remember how to keep on walking when she's the only one left on the course, when the ground is slippery and her hood is falling in her eyes, when the way is long and lonely. As her blind mom, I know a thing or two about that. But blindness doesn't give me a corner on that market. Tenacity and fortitude are life skills any mom should be more than ready to pass along to her daughter when the chance arises.

This story appears in Jo's mothering memoir, "Daddy Won't Let Mom Drive the Car: True Tales of Parenting in the Dark." The book, full of similar lighthearted vignettes and a few more serious ones, is designed to show that while blindness might alter a few everyday logistics of parenthood, it doesn't change what it means to be a family. It's available in audio, Kindle, and paperback formats on Amazon or by visiting Jo's Website at <https://www.brightsideauthor.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](#).
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI (Home Visit focus)** - Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please reach out to Melinda Carter at [mcarter@anchorcenter.org](mailto:mcarter@anchorcenter.org).

### Across Metro, Norther, and Western Regions

- ◆ **Contact Work with Flexible Hours**—A Shared Vision. For more information about working in many areas of the state with the 0-2 population, please contact Steve Lindauer at [slindauer@asharedvision.org](mailto:slindauer@asharedvision.org).

### 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 and O&M Specialist** — Falcon 49 School District. Please contact Ronda May at [rmay@d49.org](mailto:rmay@d49.org)

### Eastern Region

- ◆ **O&M Specialist Contract Work**—East Central BOCES—Contact Beverly Bragg at (719) 740-0544 or [bevb@ecboces.org](mailto:bevb@ecboces.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 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).







Winter 2022  
Online PEP Academy

Friday, January 28  
Saturday, January 29  
Saturday, February 5

**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

## Winter 2022 PEP Academy

*Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences is offering two Online PEP Academies in 2021 - 2022. 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 invierno 2022

Viernes, 28 de enero  
Sábado, 29 de enero  
Sábado, 5 de febrero

**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 invierno de 2022

*Las Conferencias de Padres Alentando a Padres (PEP) está ofreciendo una Academia PEP en línea en 2021 - 2022. 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.

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)

# VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

December 8, 2021

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Melinda Carter, Nancy Cozart, Melissa French, Anahit LaBarre, Paula Landry, Erin Noe, Sara Noel, Jim Olson, Michele Reed, and Chloann Woolley

Absent: Jamie Lugo, Paula Conroy

Guest: Tina Boddicker

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

## **ACRONYM LEGEND**

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

## **MEMBERS OF VISION COALITION FOR THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR**

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
- Anchor Center for Blind Children – Melinda Carter
- Colorado AER Chapter – Nancy Cozart
- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Anahit LaBarre
- Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Michele Reed
- Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Jamie Lugo
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Sara Noel
- Metro TVI / COMS– Nancy Cozart
- Northern TVI / COMS – Melissa French
- Southern TVI / COMS – Chloann Woolley
- University of Northern Colorado – Paula Conroy
- Western TVI / COMS – Erin Noe

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

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We say farewell and thank you to Julie King for her past time with us on the Vision Coalition. We welcome Erin Noe as our new western region representative.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our most recent TVI meeting was on November 10th. Topics included:

General Announcements:

(a)EBAE braille book being sent to Africa. If you have any books to send, send to Attn: Mulambwa Gondwe, Sisabelo Sake Inclusive School for Blind Children, Private Bag E891, Suite 733, Manda Hill Shopping Mall, Plot 3717/3 Mulobezi Road, Olympia Park, Lusaka Zambia Africa. The boxes should not be more than 15 pounds apiece. Fill out an EASU USIPS form for each box. Note: If you copy the address onto an 8 by 1/3 by 11 inch piece of paper, put your return address in the corner and the label the paper as Free Matter for the Blind You can then photocopy however many you need When your boxes are packed, you have the complete label ready to go. If you know the age or grade level of the books, please that on the size of the box. Note: If your braille books are already in boxes, take some books out to make sure the weight is not more than 15 pounds and you can put the overage into new boxes. Stuff the boxes with paper ot keep the books from moving around.

If you want, look on Facebook for the Sisabelo Saka School: [27519623064374](https://www.facebook.com/27519623064374)

These are the kids who will be receiving the elementary readers. <https://fb.watch/94-fgVqyQ>

Thank you from Mulambwa (1 minute video).

(b) Clarification was made that braille materials can be ordered for any student on our caseloads. Quota Funds can only be ordered for students with updated forms completed that meet the definition/function of legal blindness; (c) Tactile Art Club continues to be active. In November, participants created centerpieces for Thanksgiving; (d) FAST activities through CCB- contact Anahit LaBarre. The next event is Saturday December 11th from 1-3 pm.; (e) Michelle Chacon offered a reminder about CCB's Homework Club and monthly Learning Boxes; and (f) a braille curriculum for older students: <https://www.actualactuals.com>

The primary topic of the meeting was Indirect Service Time and Direct Service Time. A question was asked - do you feel like all/most of the indirect work you do on behalf of your students is reflected in the indirect time on the IEP? There was discussion of Resource Allocation Document Update from Amber Rundle Kahn

Indirect Time: When determining indirect time, what activities do you include in that calculation (meetings with teachers, material prep for class, planning for lessons, etc.)?

- o -How do you approach prep time for braille students that is mostly done by brailist/para? Or the prep time that is currently being done by the TVI but could be done by a brailist/para? Do you include it in the LRE grid?
- o Some TVIs/districts include indirect time (that could be done by paras/braillists) in LRE grid; some don't. Some will separate indirect time in LRE grid that is done for braille adaptations vs. consulting with team
- o One rule of thumb- add at least 15 min indirect per 1 hour direct (adjust from there), plus 2 hour/year for IEPs
- o What guidance is your district providing in terms of determining indirect services? Guidance has varied by directors (even within districts)

Direct service time:

- o Including the direct time that a para/brailist does in the LRE grid?
- o Some districts do include direct time by paras/braillists in the grid; some just describe it in the service delivery statement
- o Enrich: Text assist can be added by tech department to add developed statements into IEP

- o Rubrics for IEP goals? TSBVI rubrics
- o IEP writing ideas. For students with significant support needs: should we write separate objectives or collaborative objectives? Add “with support from TVI” in other providers’ goals, as well as specific accommodation needs
- o Guidance can be very district dependent
- o Functionality-based goals

*Assignment:* Tanni and Nancy will do a review of the most current iteration of the workload formula document that was updated a few years back. We will work with Amber, who took a lead role on this project. One area to cross-check is the service time specific to learners with blindness/visual impairment and significant support needs. Another factor to consider is telehealth considerations specific to pandemic circumstances / geography and availability of a TVI. The idea is to update the document and then do a focus group during a BVI Office Hours.

The next Meeting is February 9, 2022 from 3:30-5:00 p.m. This meeting is open to all TVIs / O&M Specialists across the state.

- Shared Folders with examples- Melinda Russell to create folders
  - o Service Delivery Statement for direct/indirect service time
  - o Goal writing for students with more significant needs
    - § Update goals on CDE site?
- Possibly reschedule DVR update

### **Northern Region (Melissa French)**

The Northern Colorado TVIs and O&Ms met on Friday October 29<sup>th</sup> virtually. Discussion topics included procedures for documenting consultation times, and strategies to improve consultation with teams. We also discussed current APH video magnifiers and CCTV. Students seem to like the Cloverbook, and the Jupiter appears to be an upgrade from the Visiobook. Another discussion topic focused on the purchase of long white canes. Most districts purchase them for student use. Some districts have used grants through private donors, low vision clinic and Ensign to purchase canes for families who may needed support. Lastly, we discussed the assessment and instructional tools that are working for students with CVI. ToAd Assessment and Instructional kit from APH was mentioned as well as, collaboration with PTs to use visual stimulation to drive gross motor.

#### *Discussin Items:*

- *Will the READ Act be required for TVIs?* This is not a requirement for relicensure. It is advisable to work with your Special Education Director / building principals about the need to participate in this statewide requirement of personnel working with K-3 students and their literacy instruction.
- Tanni strongly encourages TVIs to be proactive with one of the 7 avenues as reading achievement is fundamental to the success of our students. We have seen a dramatic increase in significant reading deficiencies of our learners with visual impairment, including blindness across the K-3 grades. This is concerning. The TVIs knowledge of the science of reading and the impact of BVI upon reading development is critical to how instruction is planned and implemented for our learners.

### **Southern Region (Chloann Woolley)**

The Southern Region TVI-DVR meeting continues to meet once a month on an alternate schedule between one-hour morning zoom meetings (7:30-8:30am); and two hour afternoon in-person meetings (2:30-4:30 Zoom option for those that cannot travel, if possible). The morning zoom meeting on October 15th hosted Dr. Puzateri, the owner of *Low Vision Services of Southern Colorado*. Check out his website for more information.

<https://www.lowvisionsoco.com/home.htm> Our November meeting was held in person on Friday November 19th, at CSDB, with a campus tour from, Principal Jamie Lugo and a CIMC Tour from, CIMC Coordinator Jim Olson. Many thanks for the tour Jim and Jamie. It was a great opportunity to see the possibilities and opportunities of services we can consider for our students with visual impairments within the state. The people in attendance now have more information to provide to families about the continuum of services to their children with visual impairments within



Colorado. The first Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was cancelled. The second clinic date is scheduled for March 10, 2022. The Southern Region continues to be shorthanded. Districts 20 and 49 continue to advertise for open positions for TVIs. Many teachers have been taking advantage of the Deafblind Training Webinars and BVI Office Hours. A specific comment stated that all the DB Webinar Series has been great!. We've also had teachers participating in the book study offered by CDE: *Comprehensive Literacy for All* by Karen Erickson and Dr. David Koppenhaver. The book study group has been excited about a guest appearance by Dr. Karen Erickson to answer questions for the attendees. Thank you CDE for supporting our professional development. *(This book study has been offered by Gina Herrera and her SSN Coaches – we have two TVIs involved in the book studies!)*

Next month's meeting will be virtual, using the Zoom platform: December 17 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. (zoom) Mark your new 2022 calendars with our scheduled meetings for the year:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| January 28  | 2:30-4:30 (CSDB, Lions conference room) |
| February 18 | 7:30-8:20am (zoom)                      |
| March 18    | 2:30-4:30 (CSDB, Lions conference room) |
| April 15    | 7:30-8:20am (zoom)                      |
| May 20      | 2:30-4:30 (CSDB, Lions conference room) |

Check out the VisionAware holiday gift ideas: <https://visionaware.org/blog/visually-impaired-now-what/2021-holiday-gift-ideas-for-people-who-are-blind-or-low-vision>

#### *Discussion Items:*

- o *How have teachers been dealing with staff shortages?* Is this a topic for a BVI Office Hours. It may be helpful to have a website with a lot of resources that will support other staff persons. Sara shared that there are 10 unfilled requests specific to CSDB Outreach. Paula shared A Shared Vision has new referrals that would benefit from new staff. So we have needs across the state. Please be in touch with Tanni on expected retirement or unfilled positions. We do have contact personnel who may be able to take on a new contract.
- o *Video recommendation to help explain the CVI range.* Presented by a nurse - simple and clear for families and staff - [Retted: What Do They See? Vision in Ret](#)
- o *Statement about the BVI Office Hours and DB Webinar Series:* it would be nice if there was one a month and for 2 hours when there is a presentation. Also can these be recorded. Thanks for the feedback, it is difficult to find that magical time for when things are offered, and we know that everyone is getting inundated with trainings. The BVI Office Hours are specific to TVIs, O&M Specialists, braillists, and VI paras. The DB Webinar Series has a much broader audience of all professionals working with learners with significant supports needs too.

#### **Western Region (Erin Noe)**

The Western Slope TVI/COMSs have been meeting virtually every month this school year. Due to the distance on the Western Slope this has been very helpful for brainstorming ideas and supporting one another in the field. Some of the discussions have included: eye reports, IEP goals, READ ACT, and technology. We were sorry to see Julie King leave our Western Slope team. We are excited to have Beth Myers back and Mike Plansker join us from Front Range!

#### *Discussion Items:*

- o *How do other districts handle TVI subs?* There can often be coverage for a TVI in a district where there is one or more. In districts where there is one TVI, there is often not a sub, and the time must be made up. The IEP maybe written for monthly services, which gives more latitude on when the service can happen. There may be opportunities to add minutes during different sessions to meet overall minute requirements. Paraeducator support can sometimes be appropriate. The IEP may include statements, such as, "Under the direction of a TVI, the paraeducator can ... (not provide new instruction, but support current instruction). Another suggestion is to have planning time within a day that can be converted into make-up time with a student. If there is an extenuating circumstances for a longer leave, it is helpful to have a forwarding email with information about who to contact for questions.

## **A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)**

A Shared Vision ended the year with a record number of children supported by our EI-TVIs! This 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is Colorado's leading provider of early intervention vision services for children who are blind, deaf-blind, or have vision concerns. Our goal is that all families of children with visual impairments have access to and receive essential early intervention services from a community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals. To meet the growing demand for vision services, A Shared Vision is hiring new teachers to our team. Mike Plansker recently joined us to support the Durango region, and Ellen Wallis is seeing families in the Fort Collins area. If you are a teacher of children who are visually impaired and interested in supporting babies and toddlers, email us at [HR@asharedvision.org](mailto:HR@asharedvision.org)

A Shared Vision supports Colorado's families with children who are blind or visually impaired with three programs. Through the Early Intervention Vision Services Program, our 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. A Shared Vision will be doing a modified VIISA training with staff starting in January.

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

Our biggest announcement is that we have hired both a Consultant and a Manager for our Cortical Visual Impairment Initiative (CVII.) They will be working together these next few months on a part-time basis to review the CVII business plan and begin developing a strategy for the initiative. Effective January 3, our Manager will be full-time. The Consultant will work remotely and part-time to guide and inform our practices, which the Manager will be responsible for implementing.

Our own Elise Darrow is our new CVI Manager. Elise has been our Preschool Coordinator since 2019. She is a Teacher for Students with Visual Impairments and earned her bachelor's degree in Speech, Language & Hearing Sciences, and her master's degree in Special Education with an emphasis in Visual Impairments. She has worked at Anchor Center since 2015, in the roles of Teaching Assistant, TSVI, and Orientation and Mobility Specialist. She is licensed as an Orientation & Mobility and has Perkin School for the Blind certification in Cerebral Vision Impairment, and Cortical Vision Impairment.

The consultant is Melody Furze. Melody lives in Olympia, Washington and is currently the University Supervisor at Portland State University, supporting graduate teacher candidates. She is a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments. She has been an Early Interventionist, as well as an instructor in the graduate program at Northern Colorado. She earned a master's degree in Special Education with a focus in Visual Impairment. She will complete her PhD in Special Education from UNC this December. One of her areas of research specialization is CVI, and she is currently a member of the International CVI Workgroup. Melody hopes to come to Denver to see Anchor in-person, and meet the staff, perhaps in December. She will mostly work remotely from Washington but will travel to Denver to work with Elise and the team, as needed.

We also opened our new eye clinic that has two lanes instead of one, so we will be able to serve more families. This new clinic is in what used to be the storage area in the basement of Anchor Center. It has a waiting room with visual and tactile elements for children to enjoy while waiting and more comfortable seating that we could not offer families before.

## Colorado AER Chapter (Nancy Cozart)

### Fundraiser for Mini Grants: Louis Braille Birthday Beanies Are Here!

CAER now has super cute hats for sale for Louis Braille's Birthday in January (See above for picture)! The Beanies come in multiple colors like royal blue, purple, yellow, black, red and black/gray. The beanies are made out of 100% acrylic knit with 100% polyester fleece lining with a 3" folding cuff. Click on the link below to order today or donate instead. \$32



[https://www.customink.com/fundraising/caer-colorado-association-for-the-education-and-rehabilitation-of-blind-and-visually-impaired?utm\\_campaign=desktop-receipt-page-share-v3&utm\\_content=caer-colorado-association-for-the-education-and-rehabilitation-of-blind-and-visually-impaired&utm\\_medium=messaging&utm\\_source=email](https://www.customink.com/fundraising/caer-colorado-association-for-the-education-and-rehabilitation-of-blind-and-visually-impaired?utm_campaign=desktop-receipt-page-share-v3&utm_content=caer-colorado-association-for-the-education-and-rehabilitation-of-blind-and-visually-impaired&utm_medium=messaging&utm_source=email)

**November 2021 Mini Grant Recipients:** The recipients include Michelle Robinson, Jeannie Lei's student, Rebecca Gardom, and Chloann Woolley. "Beanies off" to our recipients and thank you to all of the people who have contributed to CAER funding raising events that bolster the funds for mini-grants. The mini-grants are available to all AER members. Requests for a mini-grant can be submitted at any time during the year, but the vote for the awards happen each November.

**Upcoming Trainings/Conferences:** Each of the following trainings will have a 1 hour contact ACVREP CEU available.

\*\*\*Information will be sent out in emails with Date/Time/Link for the training room. No need to sign up, just show up.

- January 6, 2022 – Podcasts and YouTube / Individuals with Visual Impairment; Nancy Cozart and Heather Solberg
- Next Winter/February 2022 – TaiChi and O&M – Rebecca Gardom

Please go to the following website for updated information regarding Colorado AER:

<https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado>

To get there from the national AER website, go to <https://aerbvi.org>, go to About at the top and pull down to AER Chapters. Then find Colorado on the left side and click on it. This takes you to

<https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/colorado/>

We are currently working with national to restore a few links.

**CAER Meetings:** The Colorado AER Chapter meetings are on the follow dates and the meeting room is open at 5:30 and the meeting begins at 5:45 p.m. Remaining meetings for this school year include December 9, 2021; January 13, 2022; February 10, 2022; March 10, 2021; and April 14, 2022.

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Monthly: <https://unco.zoom.us/meeting/tJErc-2gqzliHtXBACOSmykHN2J2YzPK0GS1/ics?icsToken=98tyKuCtqD8uEtGcuB2GRowMBI-gLPzwmFhHgrdlvj7GLBNeewjeGLBoYItIIPQ>

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://unco.zoom.us/j/9564485984>

The monthly meetings during the standard school calendar year are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 5:45-7:15 pm except for the annual meeting/banquet that is usually scheduled in conjunction with the Colorado Orientation & Mobility Conference in late April or early May.

2021-2022 CAER Board:

Officers

Heather Solberg – President

Nancy Cozart - Treasurer

Michelle Robinson-Secretary

At-Large

Paula Conroy

Barb Galgano

Rebecca Gardom

Jeannie Lei

Chloann Woolley

## Colorado DVR (Michele Reed)

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

*Staff Updates:* Our current vacancies include a Field Instructor for the Pueblo/Southern Colorado office and an Assistive Technology Instructor in the Denver Metro office. We are currently fully staff for BLVS Rehabilitation Counselors.

The Personal Adjustment Training Unit continues to provide training in the community. We continue to discuss and examine ways to provide comprehensive services to the people we serve that include remote training, in-person training, and Zoom virtual group sessions (Reflections, Enrichment Hour, Women's Group, and a Braille Group). We are also going to begin discussions on how to reopen and offer in person training opportunities at the Denver Metro Regional Office. We are anticipating in person skill-specific workshops at the Denver Metro regional office starting January 1, 2022.

*Employment Matters:* BLVS/Pre-Employment Transition Services will be collaborating with ObjectiveED to pilot "Employment Matters for Youth and Young Adults". This is a 5-week job seeker skills training course for students 15-21. This curriculum will include 5 in-person/online (hybrid model) sessions which will include lively discussions, activities, and homework to discover skills to develop a work-readiness profile and search for that desired employment opportunity. ObjectiveEd has provided a gamified "Choose your own Adventure" for students to reinforce work-readiness skills, soft skills, and decision-making skills that are presented during the in person/online sessions. We are very excited about this pilot project. Students interested in participating in this project must have a youth program case or a DVR case open in Colorado. The training course will start on January 11, 2022 4-5:30pm and end on February 8, 2022 4-5:30 p.m. If interested or need more information, please contact Michele Reed at [michele.reed@state.co.us](mailto:michele.reed@state.co.us) or call 303-866-3512. . To register for this pilot program: complete registration form at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUyFUI7Ce8KttFjdFdafKrcUNlohVp4PXm3fGB2r5-azj5g/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

*BLVS/Pre-Employment Transition Services:* This program will be offering *Creating Connections*, information sessions regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services available to students 15-21 quarterly during the 2021-2022 school year. Our second session this school year is January 5, 2021 5:00-6:00 p.m. This is virtual session.

Attendees will learn about the following:

- ◆ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- ◆ Pre-Employment Transition Services Provided by DVR
- ◆ When to Make a Referral to DVR?
- ◆ Youth Programs (Pre-ETS Services) vs. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- ◆ When to Contact a Counselor?
- ◆ What can DVR offer to you and your student?
- ◆ Upcoming Pre-Employment Transition activities

During these sessions, BLVS will announce activities and workshops that will be available to students at DVR and our community partners. To attend, please contact Michele Reed at [michele.reed@state.co.us](mailto:michele.reed@state.co.us) or 303-866-3512.

To join meeting:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84468066419?pwd=d1FYcmtNMHRZV0NUT1JkVEtvT2g4dz09>

Meeting ID: 844 6806 6419

Passcode: 305527

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,84468066419#,,,,\*305527# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,84468066419#,,,,\*305527# US (San Jose)



They are still looking at summer activities. Stay tuned!

### **Colorado Center for The Blind Youth Programs (Anahit LaBarre)**

*CCB/CSDB Mentoring Program:* We are excited to report that our CSDB mentoring program is up and running in person once again! Anahit LaBarre, Martin Becerra and two Independence Training Program students took part in two classes at CSDB in November. We were a part of Senior Capstone Project class, where some active collaboration took place while students shared about their projects and worked on various aspects of them. We also took part in the art class, which was a very interactive and positive way to connect with the students. Our next visit is planned for December 14<sup>th</sup>. We sincerely appreciate being in-person for this mentoring program, making it possible to building meaningful relationships with the students and staff, as well as learning how we can best support the programs provided at CSDB.

*FAST Program (Fun Activities and Skills Training):* We held a successful event in October as part of our FAST program. On a Saturday in October aka blind equality and achievement month, eight school aged students and others came together for a tactile art scavenger hunt inside the Colorado Center for the Blind. The kids then built water rockets from 2-liter soda bottles and shot them off outside the north door of the Center. The lesson of course was all about propulsion, and each rocket was fitted with a sounding device that made it easy to audibly track the progress of the rocket after take-off. Some went left, some right, and one went straight up! Everyone had a wonderful time, and we were all surprised to see how far the rockets soared. The program combined NFBCO's Learning Box program with CCB's FAST (Fun Activities and Skills Training) programs. Of special help were CCB shop teacher Paul Stewart (a CCB grad) and CCB student Cragar Gonzales. Cragar graduated November 19 and returned to Houston where he is studying Atmospheric Science. It was great to have blind role models work alongside the students! We are planning another FAST event for December with some hands-on projects and baking. We will be celebrating the end of 2021 and being able to gather and learn in-person again.

*2022 Summer Programs:* We are finalizing our plans for the Summer of 2022. If circumstances allow, we will hold an in-person program for our high schoolers to learn, have fun and gain some employment experience.

*Homework Club:* We are working hard to promote our Homework Club and let families and professionals know that tutoring services are available to blind/visually impaired school-age students via zoom at no charge. We have had a number of students participate, but we want to assist even more. Subject areas for tutoring are Math, Writing, braille and assistive technology. The sessions are offered twice a week, Tuesdays, and Saturdays.

*Learning Box:* We are happy to share that our Learning Box program is thriving and growing consistently. The October event was combined with the FAST program. Our November session featured a story from one of our Independence Training Students which was accompanied by tactile pictures and coloring page created by tactile artist Ann Cunningham. The story was about a blind woman building her confidence as a runner. The story was based on the student's own experience, and she joined the session to speak to the students about this as well. Students created an image of the character out of modeling clay. Finally, the young students shared their own experiences about how they grew personally by taking part in an activity that was challenging for them. The December Learning Box will be dedicated to exploring tactile number line and graphing, depending on the student's age. Recently DPS reached out and asked if the program could be offered in person. CCB offered an in-person opportunity recently for 15 students with real hands-on experiences specific to magnets and other science-concepts! This was at no cost to the district. The kids had a marvelous time! This type of experience is great for learning and for social connections with the students.

*Family Support:* At the end of October, we attended an annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado. There were many informative sessions, including a presentation from Dr. Tanni Anthony on the current state of the education of blind students in Colorado. As part of the convention, we held an educational seminar for parents and professionals entitled "Traveling the IEP Road." We had a rich panel discussion about the IEP process and how to best collaborate as parents and educators, how to advocate for the student and what the procedures are. The seminar was recorded, and we are able to share the recording with those who were unable to attend.

*Upcoming Events:* Here are some of the events planned for the Spring: shark dissection, dance/talent show, Making

Connections career seminar, game night (including board and Audio games), a combined activity with Parents of Blind Children at which kids will prepare lunch along with blind parent volunteers.

We look forward to a productive and fun 2022! If you have any questions, please contact Anahit LaBarre [alabarre@cocenter.org](mailto:alabarre@cocenter.org)

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

*New Employee:* The CIMC is excited to introduce you to our new staff member, Taylor Crocker. Her email is [tcrocker@cldb.org](mailto:tcrocker@cldb.org). Her office phone number, with voicemail, is (719) 578-2199. Taylor will be your best point of [contact](#) for all questions related to your statewide student registration database, the KLAS library database, and the Student Registration System (SRS) database for the federal quota census. Taylor is excited to work with you to support your students.

*First Friday Zoom Meetings:* The meetings remaining this school year: Morning session from 9:00 a.m-10:00 a.m.; Afternoon session from 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact any CIMC staff member for the Zoom link.

- January 7, 2022            February 4, 2022        March 4, 2022
- April 1, 2022             May 6, 2022             June 3, 2022

Schedule your Zoom meeting with the CIMC staff: We would like to meet with every administrative unit and their vision teams, especially now that the CIMC is fully staffed. We can discuss whatever you want – CIMC procedures, a review of what services and equipment we can provide, etc. Whatever would help your team.

The CIMC manages three databases which reflect student enrollment in your administrative units.

1. Statewide Student Registration Database
2. KLAS (library) Database
3. Student Registration System (SRS) Database for the Federal Quota Census program.

In mid-October, the CIMC ran current reports and emailed them as attachments in encrypted emails to the district designated CIMC contact person as well as the Director of Special Education or their designee for each Administrative Unit (AU). Edits were due back to the CIMC before districts started their Thanksgiving breaks.

*APH Quota Census:* The federal quota census, managed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH), occurs on the first Monday in January, annually. The next count will occur on January 3, 2022. This is the same date Colorado uses for your statewide student registration database reports as well.

Taylor (CIMC) is in the process of completing the data entry edits and new, updated, reports will be emailed a second time to district contacts around January 3, 2022 – so that you can compare them with your student enrollment records specific to January 3, 2022. Edits need to be received by the CIMC by January 31, 2022.

*New Deadline This Year:* As determined by CDE and approved by your Vision Coalition representatives, any students missing the current Parent Consent Form with Parts I & II will be removed from your database reports on February 1st. This Form is a one-time requirement, per administrative unit. If a student changes districts, a new Parent Consent Form should be acquired. Older 2018 versions of the Form need to be updated to the current version of the Form which was last updated in 2019. Additional information is available on the CIMC website: [www.cldb.colorado.gov/cim](http://www.cldb.colorado.gov/cim)

*Metro Denver Regional Braille Challenge:* The 2022 contest will be very similar to last year's contest. The planning committee is finalizing details. The contest will be virtual. CIMC will mail test materials to each TVI. TVIs will proctor their students' tests. The entire month of February will be your test window, but this includes the requirement that the tests are mailed back to the CIMC and physically received in the CIMC by February 28<sup>th</sup>. No exceptions. Late tests will be disqualified. We expect to have Rookie activities again this year to help students who are not competing celebrate braille.

### *Discussion Items:*

- o *How can we best support the Parent Consent Form?* The CIMC cannot pay for DocuSign or other forms of electronic signatures, but this could be used by districts or agencies if this is allowed. TVIs can do a verbal permission via a phone call with a witness and then document this on the form. Also an email permission can be obtained – using an email that explains the consent etc. (attaches the form). Do not take a picture of the form and send it. Please mail or fax or scan it to the CIMC. Keep the original form in the district.

There is a place on the form to insert the name of the TVI – this is often kept blank. PLEASE fill in the TVI's / Agency or AU's name in this spot so the CIMC can connect the child with a TVI / agency / AUs.

for parents of children with additional disabilities, there is an equipment perspective for the child. Also it helps provides information about diagnosis across the state that give perspective of incidence – and the opportunity to, with permission, connect families / providers who have a child / student with a rare condition.

As always, contact us with any questions you may have.

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

*Key Activities:* Middle of the year district assessments started Monday, December 6, 2021. Assessments include NWEA(MAP), Star Math, PALS, Assistive Technology, Independent Living Skills, and Braille.

A 5-Sided Soccer field on the CSDB campus is in discussion with the US Association for Blind Athletes.

CSDB celebrated Homecoming on December 4<sup>th</sup> with an academic bowl competition and basketball and goalball games. We hosted the Utah School for the Deaf and the Blind. The students continue to brainstorm ways for fundraising for our accessible playground. A Bulldog Pop Up Shop (garage sale) was organized and ran by the students over the homecoming weekend. Close to \$1,500 was raised and donated towards the accessible playground project. Another successful White Cane Day was celebrated on October 15<sup>th</sup> at Acacia Park in Colorado Springs with students, families, and community members.

### *Open Positions:*

- Teacher Aide
- Instructional Media Technologist
- School Counselor

### *Upcoming Events:*

- Foresight Ski Trips, December 12-14, 2021, January 30-February 1, 2022, and February 13-15, 2022
- CSDB / Colorado Springs' surrounding areas - Braille Challenge, February 17, 2022. The plan currently is for in-person. This will be monitored for whether it may need to move to a virtual format.

A great resource is the CSDB YouTube Channel! Check it out at: <https://www.youtube.com/csdbchanne>

### **CSDB Outreach Services (Sara Noel)**

CSDB and its Outreach Programs are excited to welcome Cheryl Austin, Outreach Director, to Colorado and to CSDB. Ms. Austin comes highly recommended from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and begins her CSDB journey in January 3, 2022. Once she comes on board, there will be an opportunity to look at Outreach Services going forward.

CSDB Outreach TVIs/COMS continue to serve students in 12 BOCES/districts/charter schools and have 10 outstanding requests for services and Independent Educational Evaluations. Do you know of a TVI or COMS who is student focused, wants to see the rural areas of Colorado, and contribute to a team environment? If so, please contact Dale Wolf at [dewolf@csdb.org](mailto:dewolf@csdb.org)

## Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

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

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

Project Staff: Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are Co-Directors on the grant project. Wendy Stoltman and Jessica Meisel are our Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists for the project. Both Wendy and Jessica provide onsite consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. Cindy Colwell is our Family Specialist.

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

Annual Deaf-Blind Count: The Child Count Data forms for December 1, 2021, have been sent out to agency and administrative unit contact personnel. This paperwork is due back to CDE by the end of January 2022.

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

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

Project Trainings: We have booked our 2021-22 Deaf-Blind Webinar Series with a host of national talent. The updated flyer for the January – March events has just been disseminated. Registration is required and will be closed two weeks ahead of each event in order to have time for requested accommodations. The registration link is: [https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db\\_resource](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-db_resource)

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

BVI Office Hours: Tanni is offering CDE BVI Office Hours every other Wednesday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. via Zoom, though got off to a late start with these offerings! The purpose is to have a dedicated time for people to share how it is going in this time of remote instruction. There will also be sessions with colleagues on key topics. Attendance is optional. All participants must register ahead of each BVI Office Hours. The registration link is: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/e0248345af7c457fa5b6a7a668c5e34>

CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: We have booked out our regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. The Western and Northern Region LVE Clinics have occurred with great success. The most recent Southern LVE Clinic was postponed due to low numbers. Our LVE Clinic team will be wearing masks and adhere to each host site's health and safety practices. We are requiring that all attendees wear masks unless there is a medical reason not to do so.

The clinic team also asks that TVIs are proactive with working with families not to send children who have colds to the clinic. The Purchase Policy, Welcome Letter, and Parent / TVI form have been translated into Spanish and are now on the CDE website.

*CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment:* Dr. FM D'Andrea will be our featured speaker of the training, which is entitled Weaving the Strands: The Science of Reading and Students with Visual Impairments. Training Description: "Reading is a fundamental skill for all students to master in school—including, of course, our students who have low vision or are blind. But how can we provide evidence-based instruction for our varied and individual students? How can we best work with classroom teachers to ensure that our students make their best progress? What are the essential elements we need to provide?" This series of five three-hour interactive webinars will help you put the Each webinar will present information on a specific topic along with practical, kid-friendly (and teacher-friendly!) activities that you can do to help motivate and captivate students to engage in reading and writing. The first three will be on January 20-21 and the second two will be on February 3, 2022. Topics to be covered will include:

- Session 1: What is the "science of reading" anyway? And what does it have to do with *my* students?
- Session 2: Phonological aspects of reading
- Session 3: Vocabulary: Goodbye to "Mad, Glad, Sad"
- Session 4: Comprehension: Reading for a purpose
- Session 5: Fluency: Reading on ice skates

The information and activities shared will apply to both braille readers and print readers with low vision with a discussion of how the child's visual impairment may impact learning in that specific area. Strategies and techniques for instruction and intervention will be shared, as well as effective assessment and progress monitoring.

Participants may wish to sign up for only some topics or the entire series. Credit can be obtained by participating in a project and by completion of a quiz at the end of the series. Tanni will be sending out a flyer with dates / times shortly.

*CDE O&M Seminar:* If you have topic / presenter ideas, please reach out to Tanni. Discussion: GPS, Early Years, O&M Standard, Liability.

*Recruitment and Retention:* We have very few TVI / O&M Specialist openings: 1 FTE in Academy 20. School District and a 1. FTE in Falcon 49 School District. There are also 10 unfilled contracts with CSDB Outreach, and A Shared Vision and Anchor Center need TVI support. Please keep Tanni in the loop on anticipated and real vacancies. We have two people looking for TVI employment in the metro area. If you want to be on the CDE list of contractors, please reach out to Tanni.

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

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



*Braille Competency:* We are doing so well with addressing braille competency across Colorado! Tanni is working with veteran and new TVIs to demonstrate initial braille competency. All TVIs who are new to the field are expected to demonstrate braille competency in their first year of employment in this role. If a TVI extends this date, the administrative unit of employment is at risk for a citation of noncompliance. A Practice Test is posted on the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness website. It includes practice multiple choice items and braille samples. Please be aware that all TVIs in public schools must renew their braille certificate one time after the first five years of initial certification.

*BVI Coach/Mentor Project:* We have two amazing veteran TVIs/O&M Specialist who can provide free technical assistance to school-based TVIs/Orientation and Mobility Specialists. Wendy Stoltman and Elaine Karnes are on board as a coach / mentor. Elaine is offering mentor / coaching assistance specifically in one northern region administrative unit. If you have time to contribute as a BVI Coach / Mentor, reach out to Tanni. We have had several requests already this school year. To request a coach / mentor, contact Tanni at (303) 866-6681 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

*Keeping in Touch Newsletter:* We are putting the finishing touches on the third edition of the school year. The November – December KIT newsletter will be posted on the CDE webpage by mid-December. Please be sure to share this link with parents as we are no longer mailing out the newsletter and do not have the email addresses of most parents who have signed up to receive the newsletter. A representative from each AU is encouraged to reach out to Roberta Curtis at [Curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Curtis_r@cde.state.co.us) to go through parents and key contact information.

*Discussion Item:*

- o *Is the Keeping in Touch Newsletter a viable communication tool, are people reading it via an electronic format?*  
Some people have found the electronic copy helpful as they can go back to it. Maybe not as many across the school year. The link information can be forwarded to others. Tanni is asking for field feedback on the value of the newsletter as a communication tool.

**AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**Proposed DE BVI Budget for 2022-23**

The following activities were discussed for this next round of funding.

- √ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- √ CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB)
- √ Vision Coalition
- √ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- √ BVI Coach / Mentor Project
- √ CDE O&M Seminar
- √ UEB Math Training – on hold until face to face
- √ BVI Office Hours – Focus on Implementation

With the newsletter going electronic, there is no need for funds for this project. Tanni asked for feedback on other areas of BVI support that may require funding support. The focus must be on age 3 and 21 years. A question came up about whether we aim for a 2022-23 in-person conference with a designated topic versus or in addition to virtual once a month BVI Office Hours with a two hour time blocks with key topics, some with local personnel and some with out-of-state personnel. People liked the idea of a topic or two at the state conference with follow up support. The preference for a time of the conference would be early fall to avoid bad-weather months for those who are traveling distances. One topic that was noted was CVI. Another topic is coaching. How to share information about working with general educators. Another topic might be OHN strategies. FVA is another topic. Learners with additional disabilities.

**K – 3 Teacher Evidence-Based Reading Training Requirements**

Colorado school districts are required to ensure all K - 3 teachers complete evidence-based training in teaching reading as a result of changes to the Colorado READ Act in SB 19-199 (PDF). Colorado school districts, charter schools and boards of cooperative services are required to demonstrate that the kindergarten through third grade teachers they employ have completed evidence-based training in teaching reading. HB21-1129 extends the previously approved

deadline of January 31, 2022 to August 1, 2022. Training options are detailed at:  
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/teacher-training>

Districts, BOCES, and charters that do not meet the requirements will be ineligible for READ Act funds for the 2022-23 school year. In subsequent years, districts will need to ensure that teachers new to teaching K – 3rd grade also meet this requirement.

### **CDE Websites**

Tanni shared the following websites and asked for feedback to add new content.

- Orientation and Mobility: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/rs-om>
- Visual Impairment, including Blindness: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision>

**Assignment:** Tanni asked the VC members to discuss the need for new content/ added photos at the regional meetings, back at their school districts and agencies. We want the websites to have helpful content to parents, special education directors, and the BVI field. All suggestions are welcome. Also please consider working with Tanni to embed photos of our students on these pages, with written consent paperwork from the families.

### **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Tanni highlighted three areas of possible focus for the Vision Coalition.

- She is asking whether the Vision Coalition may want to collect other personal statements to truly define what EDI looks like across the Blind Community and for our students.
- In addition, Tanni will be working with our TVIs who are blind/visually impaired during this school year to learn and share their experiences with the field. Their perspective is critical to our employability efforts with our students, as well as enhancing new knowledge and skills for the field.
- Recruitment efforts to enhance the diversity of our field, looking at how we can encourage people to the field of Blindness/Visual Impairment who represent a variety of viewpoints.

**Assignment:** Tanni and Anahit will have more discussions to bring back to our next meeting. Also, there may be opportunities ahead of this time for BVI Office Hour topics.

### **Final Meeting Date for School Year 2021-22 via Zoom:**

- April 6, 2022, 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. via zoom





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## Braille Competency News



◆ Hats off to **Stephanie Crosen** and **Danielle Burden** for earning their CDE Renewal Certificates of Braille Competency! Also apologies to Stephanie for a very tardy delay in making this announcement.—this occurred a very long time ago and got lost in the pandemic shuffle. Also hats off to the following individuals who have earned CDE renewal braille module clock hours: **Nicole Andersen, Vicki Chinski, Jeff Hadala, Melissa French, Sarah Goodfellow, Jeanine Holmes, Julie King, Dana McMullen, Brenna Moser, Erin Noe, Will Reynolds, and Maggie Tutt.**

◆ Thanks to the CDE braille proctors **Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, Sarah Sonnier, and Julie Wetzstein.**

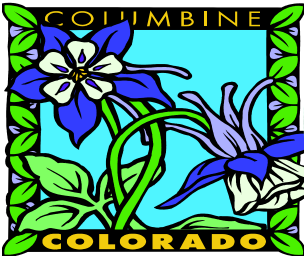
## Professional Development Contributions

◆ Thanks to **Dr. MaryAnn Demchak** and **Chavonne Sutter**, from the Nevada Dual Sensory Impairment Project, who provided training on *Systematic Instruction: Part 1* at the first of our Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant Webinar Series. This training was held on October 12th and had great attendance. Be sure to check out the flyer with the registration link for the remaining DB Webinar Series topics for this school year. Thanks to the TVIs who attended this first one—look forward to seeing more of you at the next ones coming up in the series!

◆ We had an impressive turn out for the first BVI Office Hours of the school year! This was a shared collaboration with the SSN Office Hours. The topic was *Calendars for Students with BVI / Deaf-Blind and SNN*. Presenters were **Tanni Anthony** and **Gina Herrera**. In attendance were **Sally Burch, Robin Brewer, Diane Carroll, Jayme Cusimano, Elsa D'Angelo, Morgan Fitzpatrick, Ann Marie Jansen, Kaitlin Lombardi, Mary Kate McLaughlin, Jessica Meisel, Beth Meyer, Brenna Moser, Sara Noel, Jim Olson, Brittany Pennell, Katy Plutt, and Wendy Stoltman**. So glad to see representation from the following agencies and AUs: Adams 12, Adams 14, Anchor Center, Boulder, Denver, CDE, CSDB, and Douglas.

◆ Thanks to **Robbie Blaha** who provided training on *Calendar Systems for Children with Multiple Disabilities, Including Deaf-Blindness* on November 9th. This was our second of the Colorado Deaf-Blind Grant Webinar Series.. TVIs in attendance included: **Tanni Anthony, Sally Burch, Vicki Chinski, Elsa D'Angelo, Morgan Fitzpatrick, Ann Marie Jansen, Donna Keale, Jenna Martin, Mary Kate McLaughlin, Beth Myers, Janis Mountford, Sara Noel, Jayme Cusimano, Jim Olson, Natalie Palmer, Melissa Shular, Wendy Stoltman, and Ellen Wallis**. What a wonderful turn-out!

◆ We always love hearing back from participants and Donna Keale made our day with these follow-up comments from the Calendar training ... *"I just want to tell you how wonderful this webinar was for me to attend. I have heard Robbie before, and I always feel that I learn something new or a different take away from hearing someone more than once. I am really into the calendar systems and I agree 100% that people jump forward way to fast. Last night I thought about students that I had worked with and used calendar systems and I think the fun in teaching is seeing when they can anticipate and understand. Thank you again for an awesome webinar. I am signed up for the next one and it is in my paper calendar as well as work calendar."* We so appreciate this gratitude for Robbie's content and urge anyone who could not attend to take time to really go through the *Calendars for Students with Multiple Impairments, Including Deafblindness* book that was sent to CO AUs and absorb the content. It is not as simple as symbols and kids. It is critical to truly take time to understand the child's accommodation needs, the level of symbolic ability, and then take on a first just one item in the routine and then, over time, build upon the understanding of anticipation, memory, connection, and communication. The social-emotional connections and conversations that support the calendars can be life-changing for a child with deaf-blindness.



# colorado connections

## More Professional Learning

- ◆ We had a nice turn out for our second BVI Office Hours of the school year! The topic was *Experiences Raising a Child with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia*, the dissertation topic of Dr. Amber Rundle Kahn, our presenter. In attendance were **Janet Anderson, Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, Lisa Hebbert, Ann Marie Jansen, Donna Keale, Jeannie Lei, Beth Meyer Autumn Odette, and Jim Olson**, So glad to see representation from the following agencies and AUs: Adams 12, Aurora, Cherry Creek, CSDB, Delta, and Littleton.

## Personnel Updates

- ◆ **Jennifer Napier** is excited to move to Colorado from Western New York. She is eager to join the team at Cherry Creek School District as a Teacher of Student with Visual Impairments starting in September. Jennifer holds undergraduate degrees in Special Education & Elementary Education from State University of New York at Fredonia. She went on to teach in Buffalo Public Schools until discovering her passion for working with students with visual impairments. While working at Olmsted she went back to school to receive her Masters Degree in teaching students with Visual Impairments through Dominican College. Jennifer comes to Colorado after a wonderful three year career as a TVI with Erie 1 BOCES in Buffalo, NY. Her favorite things are paddle boarding, crossword puzzles, outdoor adventures, and trying new recipes.
- ◆ We are thrilled to add **Elaine Karns** as one of our new CDE TVI Mentor/ Coaches! She will be contracted through this school year. Many of you will remember Elaine as an uber-talented TVI who retired several years back from Poudre School District.
- ◆ The CIMC is excited to introduce you to our new staff member, **Taylor Crocker**. Her email is [tcrocker@csdb.org](mailto:tcrocker@csdb.org). Her office phone number is (719) 578-2199. Taylor will be your best point of contact for all questions related to your statewide student registration database, the KLAS library database, and the Student Registration System (SRS) database for the federal quota census. Taylor is excited to work with you to support our students.

## Parent News

- ◆ A Parent Panel was hosted by the Colorado Parents of Blind Children at the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado 2021 Convention. The October 30th panel, which was entitled Follow the IEP Road, was held in person and via zoom. Panelists included: **Tanni Anthony, Michelle Chacon, Amira Lucas, Michele Reed, and Carlton Ann Cooke Walker**. **Anahit LaBarre** was the moderator. There were several families in attendance with good discussions about the journey from the early to post-secondary transition years.

## Other Great News!

- ◆ Shout out to **Beth Meyers, Erin Noe, Jamie Lugo, Sally Burch, Ellen Wallis, Lori Mattick, Debbie Mendoza, Mike Plansker and Liz Wieder** for their contribution to updating the list of parents on the CDE BVI Database. We would ask that a representative from each district take the time to reach out to Roberta Curtis for this purpose. This helps keep our database accurate with the home and email addresses for the newsletter. Roberta's email is [Curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Curtis_r@cde.state.co.us) You can work to set up a time for a phone conversation. Thank you!
- ◆ Congratulations to **Dana (McMullen)** and **Gregory Downey** who were married on November 27th! Happy ever after to a beautiful couple!



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

**FROM:** Colorado Department of Education  
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