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# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers  
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness  
October 2022

## October is Blindness Awareness Month

By Tanni Anthony

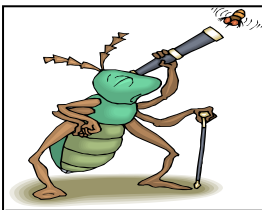
Every October, Blindness Awareness Month brings a heightened focus on the blind and visually impaired community. This includes White Cane Day on October 15<sup>th</sup> and other opportunities during the month to share information to students, teachers, administrators, and community members. There are many ways to increase everyone's commitment to accessible opportunities. Some people respond to data. Others may benefit from a safe forum to ask questions to expand their understanding that kids are kids, and some kids are blind/visually impaired. This might be an opportunity for a panel of students to answer questions and/or to share information or a built out a handout to address myths, misconceptions, and guidance. Most people will appreciate real-life stories. Written or verbal tales of the real stuff, not the over-the-top inspirational headlines that highlight blind kids as superheroes just because they did a daily task and or accounts that result in sympathy. Go for the tales of inclusive realities, honest barriers that need attention, and real-life accomplishments. Demonstrate the power a cane, a braillewriter / notetaker, a magnification tool, audio description.

I recently had a chance to hear about the collaboration between a brailist and the student to build out a meaningful art activity for a required fine-arts credit, math accomplishments using the abacus, and students mastering a new O&M community route. All were shared with personnel who are in training to be special education directors and these stories gave deep insights about each students' abilities, as well as the vital roles of braillists, TVIs, and O&M Specialists.

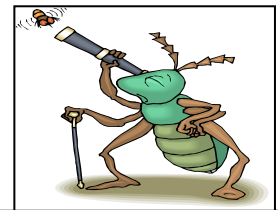
As the month rolls out, I look forward to hearing more stories of families, students, colleagues, and others. I invite any of you to share a story that ignites a sense of pride, accomplishment, a how-to commitment for our students. The first five stories in my email box will win a "mailable prize." Send to [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us) Protect confidentiality unless you have permission to share details. Would love anything from a true student or parent perspective. We will share these out in the next newsletter. Why, because the simple truth is every month is Blindness Awareness Month. We have a lot to do, to share, to support, to create, to dispel, to perpetuate, to accomplish and on the really good days, to celebrate!

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# LOW VISION NEWS



## Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule

Clinic	Clinic Date	Due Date for Paperwork	Site Coordinator
Southern LVE Clinic	October 18, 2022	Tuesday, October 4, 2022	Debbie Haberkorn
Northern LVE Clinic	November 10-11, 2022	Wednesday, October 26, 2022	Liz Wieder
Metro LVE Clinic	February 22-24, 2023	Tuesday, February 7, 2023	Karin Hensel

### Western LVE Clinic

By Debbie Haberkorn

The Western Slope Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic was held September 23rd at the Basil T. Knight Center in Grand Junction. Four students from two Administrative Units (Durango 9R and Montrose County District RE 1J) received low vision evaluations. Four parents and two TVIs attended the evaluation with their students. The LVE Clinic team would like to thank Regional Coordinator Angela Sims for continuing to coordinate the Western Slope Clinic. The new location was quite spacious and the office staff in the building went out of their way to make us feel very welcome!

### Courtesy Rules of Blindness

This information can be found posted on the following National Federation of the Blind website at: <https://nfb.org/programs-services/meet-blind-month/courtesy-rules-blindness>

I am a blind person. Please say hello and get to know me! I want people to feel comfortable around me. Here are some simple tips.

- C**ane My cane (or guide dog) is my independent travel aid. If you think I might need help, please just ask me.
- O**rdinary Blind people are ordinary. It feels awkward if you think I am amazing when I accomplish ordinary tasks like walking or tying my shoes. I also like ordinary things and have ordinary hobbies. It is okay to be amazed if I do something really exceptional.
- U**nderstand I may not recognize your voice if I don't know you well. Please say, "Hi, it is Sue."
- R**emember I may have some sight, but use nonvisual techniques and tools like a cane because it works best for me. Sometimes people think I am "faking" because I see a little, but I am just picking techniques that are most efficient and safe in light of my vision.
- T**alk Please talk to me rather than a companion, and there is no need to speak up so just use your normal speaking voice and talk with me like you would with other people.
- E**xperience I probably have years of experience using non-visual techniques to live my life. Feel free to ask me how I do something, or how best you can assist me, if help is needed.
- S**ee It's ok to still use words such as see and look. I will talk with you like everyone else, although I may not be able to make direct eye contact.
- Y**ield In all 50 states, the law requires drivers to yield the right of way when they see my extended white cane or guide dog. Only the blind may legally carry white canes. I listen to traffic patterns to know when to cross streets and to keep a straight line when moving around.

Thanks for reading about me. I look forward to getting to know you!

For more information about the courtesy rules of blindness, gifts, bequests, programs for the blind, or other matters concerning blindness or the blind, contact the local chapter in your area or contact [nfb@nfb.org](mailto:nfb@nfb.org) or 410-659-9314.

(Revised April 2019)

# Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

## Project Purpose and Status

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 Family Specialist contractor (**Cindy Colwell**) on board with the project.

Get ready for a great school year with monthly trainings, intervener support, parent workshops and networking opportunities, and the June 2023 Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness! Also, 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

Get ready—our December 1, 2022 Child Count Forms will be sent out to key contact personnel in late October to identify all learners, ages birth through 21 years with combined vision and hearing loss. Your time, and attention to detail is most appreciated! Children on the Child Count are eligible for free technical assistance from the project. As you identify new 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!

## 2022-23 Webinar Series

We are in the final stages of booking out our once-a-month webinar series. They will be offered from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on the following dates: October 26, November 30, January 24, February 22, and March 29th. We hope you will join us to learn more about how to identify and support children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss project.



# Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

## Intervener Training

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the CO Deaf-Blind Project) offers intervener training and mentoring to provide support throughout the intervener certification process. Our next course began on August 2022 with a 2<sup>nd</sup> course beginning January 2023!

This program provides a wonderful opportunity for individuals who would like to receive intervener training, and to obtain it free of charge if they are working with a student who is registered on the CO Deaf-Blind Child Count. The program is designed to provide the background knowledge needed for working with students who are deafblind and leads to National Intervener Certification. For more information, please contact Jessica Meisel at [Meisel\\_j@cde.co.state.us](mailto:Meisel_j@cde.co.state.us)



## Free Technical Assistance for Learners with Deaf-Blindness

Technical assistance is the term that field uses to mean “support” or “information” for individuals providing support to children and youth (ages 0-21) with deafblindness. This might be families of children and youth who are deaf-blind, school personnel, and agencies providing services to such children and youth.

Technical assistance may also include:

- personalized on-site consultation with family members / early intervention agency staff / school staff
- in-service training customized to the team’s needs
- workshops sponsored by the project across the state
- family support service, such as Parent Retreats, coffee hours, family outings etc.

We are here to support you! **To request a school or home visit**, complete the Technical Assistance Request Form located [here: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrqst)

Return the form by fax to 303-866-3808 or email Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_G@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us). You can also call Gina at 303-866-6605. Or fill out our new Google Form for Technical Assistance located at <https://forms.gle/FAWsVo2itikrtLR6>





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

### Perkins E-Learning

AER members receive a 20% discount on the total cost of Perkins self-paced tutorials. Each provides an opportunity to enhance your knowledge, skills and abilities, and job performance! Join AER to learn about the needed voucher code to take advantage of this member benefit and earn CE hours. If you are already a AER member and need more information about the voucher code, please reach out to the national AER office. What a great perk!

### Becoming an Author in The New RE:view

Some of the content in this article was posted in recent *AER VOICES*

AER is encouraging people to contribute an article to their new publications, **RE:view**. They invite parents, consumers, and professionals to submit an article on a technique they have found to be helpful ... or any content to share first-hand practice in the field of educating and supporting individuals with visual impairment, including blindness. By publishing a practice piece, you give several thousand readers the chance to exclaim, "What a great idea!" Or perhaps some will say "That's just the way I do it!" or "I use a different approach; maybe I can incorporate the two."

Visit [the TNR page](#) on the AERBVI website and read **Share Your Best Ideas** and look over the submission guidelines. What kind of article will yours be? Is it a practice reflection, a practice report or an applied research report? Or perhaps you prefer to submit an opinion for Views from the Field or a book review?

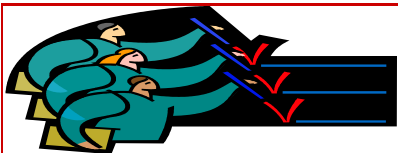
After you have written the draft, it's time to ask for the opinions of a few trusted colleagues. Choose people with experience and professional knowledge; ask them to read and comment on the draft of your manuscript. Ask more than one person so that you will get several reactions. When you have made changes according to the feedback you receive, then you are ready to submit. You can visit TNR's submission process at [The New RE:view](#) and follow the steps toward becoming an author. Congratulations! You are on the way!

Questions about submissions or manuscript preparation can be addressed to *The New RE:view* at [tnr@aerbvi.org](mailto:tnr@aerbvi.org).

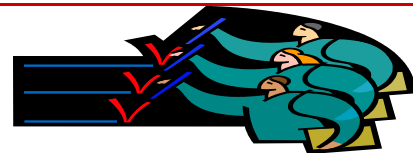
Colorado has so many amazing practitioners—hope to see many Colorado contributions!

### Opportunities for Practice Based-Learning

The Association of the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind/Visually Impaired (AER for short) has 16 divisions which are professional learning communities. Each division provides practice-based learning and focuses on a specific area. As an AER member, you can join 3 divisions FREE; and can join more for as low as \$10 each. Some divisions are position specific like our Orientation and Mobility, VRT and Low Vision divisions; and others are subject or domain focused like our Infant & Preschool, Education Curriculum, Itinerant Personnel, Aging, Administration and Leadership, Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Employment Services, Multiple Disabilities & DeafBlind, Psychosocial Services, Information & Technology, Personnel Preparation, International Services & Global Issues, Physical Activity & Recreation and Neurological Visual Impairment divisions. No matter the subject, AER has a division that addresses your needs. [AER Divisions](#)



# CHECK IT OUT!



## 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 website](#) 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](#).

## Tactile AAC Selection for Students with Visual Impairments

Melissa Hawkins is a research assistant and master's student in the Department of Special Education, Visual Disabilities Program at Vanderbilt University. She is completing a study on "Tactile AAC Selection for Students with Visual Impairments", which involves a short online survey asking TVIs, SLPs, and severe disability special education teachers how they pick tactile AAC (augmentative and alternative communication systems) for students with visual impairment, including blindness. The deadline of the survey will be on Monday, October 31. The survey link is: <https://redcap.link/tactileAAC>

Questions about the survey can be directed to Dr. Rachel Schles at [rachel.schles@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:rachel.schles@vanderbilt.edu)

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## Nemeth Curriculum Field Study

Have you been looking for a curriculum you can use to teach Nemeth code to your students? Did you know that one already exists and has just been updated? Consider becoming a field tester and be the first group to access the updates. Pearson and the NFB are seeking participants who are Teachers of the Visually Impaired, parents of blind students, or blind students who are either using or learning to use braille materials.

If you are interested in participating in this field study, please complete the Nemeth Code Curriculum Field Study Recruiting Survey at: <https://accessibility.pearson.com/research/2022studies/nemeth/> The study will be starting in early October and will explore the effectiveness and usability of the curriculum. Please sign up now and spread the word. Each participant will receive compensation. In addition, everyone involved in the study will have access to the new updated curriculum materials. The authors are Tina Herzberg, Susan Osterhaus, and Sara Larkin. You know who we are!!

When you go out to the website listed above, you will find a link to a video that Tina, Sara, and I did describing the entire curriculum in more detail (along with the accompanying transcript and PowerPoint pdf) if you are interested. Also, we will be giving Kick-Off sessions explaining each of the various parts of the curriculum at several different times on several different days trying to accommodate everyone. We will also be holding "office hours" to answer any questions you might have. Bottom Line: we plan to be very supportive on your adventure if you need us.

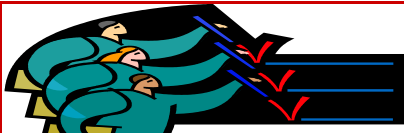
Anyway, please fill out the survey so that you can be considered. We are already screening applicants, so time is of the essence. Of course I want everyone to sign up and use at least some little part of the curriculum now, and use even more later. We are going to try and get funding for more testing next spring, but there is no guarantee that will happen.

Best wishes,

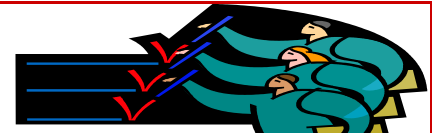
Susan A. Osterhaus, M.Ed., TSVI  
Statewide Mathematics Consultant  
TSBVI Outreach

1100 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78756

<https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resource/project-inspire>



# CHECK IT OUT!



## A Survey of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments to Explore Math Class Enrollments Among High School Students with Visual Impairments.

**What is the study about?** - The researchers are gathering information about the experiences of teachers of students with visual impairments in supporting high school students taking math classes. We are also gathering information about which math classes high school students with visual impairments are taking.

**Who are the researchers?** - Dr. C. Rett McBride, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Georgia State University Perimeter College, [rettmcbride@gsu.edu](mailto:rettmcbride@gsu.edu). / Dr. Tina Herzberg, Professor, University of South Carolina Upstate, [herzberg@uscupstate.edu](mailto:herzberg@uscupstate.edu)

**Who is eligible to participate?** - The target population is itinerant TVIs practicing in the U.S. or its territories who are supporting at least one high school student taking one or more general education math class in the 2022-2023 school year.

**What will participants do?** - Participants will complete a brief online survey that includes demographic questions (state or territory, gender, race/ethnicity, years of professional experience, and teaching certifications), questions about the high school students on their caseloads in the 2022-2023 school year (grade level, math class enrollment, media preference), and questions about their experiences in supporting high school students in math. It is expected that most participants will complete the survey in about 20 minutes.

**How can I learn more and sign up?** - You can contact either of the researchers by email: Dr. McBride ([rettmcbride@gsu.edu](mailto:rettmcbride@gsu.edu)) or Dr. Herzberg ([herzberg@uscupstate.edu](mailto:herzberg@uscupstate.edu)).

To access the survey: [https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ebRA750I3KIARDM](https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ebRA750I3KIARDM)

Please also feel free to share this advertisement and the survey link with other teachers of students with visual impairments who might be interested!

## SWAAAC Monthly Webinar



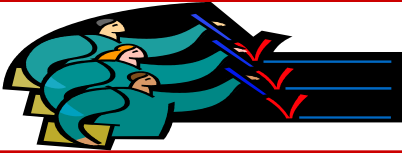
**Thursday, November 10, 2022 3:00 - 4:00 PM, MST**  
**Presented by Chris Bugaj and Rachel Madel**

### Talking with Tech LIVE

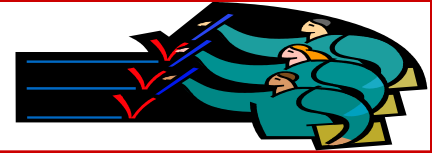
[Talking With Tech](#) is a free, weekly podcast about augmentative/alternative communication. Listeners from around the world have sent in questions about how to consider, select, and implement AAC with students and families. In this interactive session, authentic questions will be posted in a multimedia slide deck and displayed to the participants. Presenters Chris Bugaj and Rachel Madel will facilitate the experience while also providing evidence-based strategies. Together, participants will brainstorm solutions to the questions and these solutions will be documented in a shared resource and via audio recording. The audio recording will be released on the podcast to help everyone in the community benefit and learn from the crowd-sourced solutions. *A Certificate of Attendance will be provided upon completion of the webinar feedback survey.*

**This presentation is FREE; however, registration is required. [Register](#) by October 27, 2022 to reserve your spot!**

**[REGISTER FOR THE NOVEMBER WEBINAR](#)**



# CHECK IT OUT!



## National Virtual Yoga Program

Imperative Movement Consulting, a leader in adaptive recreation and sports programming, is pleased to consult with Blind & Vision Services Rehabilitation of Pittsburgh (BVRs) to implement and promote a national yoga program for people of all abilities with extra care and instruction for individuals who are blind and have low vision.

Blue Awning Yoga and Wellness, a division of BVRs, offers innovative in-person and virtual programming at its stunning studio in the heart of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. An extensive array of yoga classes that include chair, senior movement, restorative, power, and gentle flow are offered. There is a class and experience for everyone!

This program promotes:

### Health & Wellness

The studio embraces all levels of practice and is fully focused on the whole person and their physical and emotional needs. Each class is designed to create a sense of harmony, balance, and mindfulness. Our instructors take care, take time, and truly support participants ultimate journey to wellness.

### Inclusion

An open environment for people of all ages and abilities. Embraces **ALL** by removing predetermined stigmas and barriers Offering virtual classes so that anyone, anywhere can participate

### Community Engagement

Provides opportunities to interact with people of all backgrounds; specifically, individuals who are blind or vision impaired in non-traditional roles. Creates a sense of community by eliminating obstacles that lead to isolation. All classes are interactive and engaging that embrace EVERYONE; the instructors provide feedback, and the participants can ask questions

We hope you will join us on this journey by helping us:

- ◆ Provide health and wellness opportunities for your staff, clients, and students so that they feel encouraged to attend a virtual class
- ◆ Help promote this innovative and unique program within the blindness field
- ◆ Endorse “Yoga for All” so that we build a stronger and more inclusive society

We invite you to visit [www.blueawningyoga.com](http://www.blueawningyoga.com) to learn more about this unique program and the benefits it provides to those you employ and serve. Individuals can sign-up for a class by simply clicking the **Join Us Now** button on the homepage which will redirect them to [www.mindbodyonline.com](http://www.mindbodyonline.com) for registration.

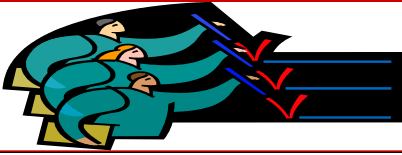
If your agency is interested in learning more regarding this one-of-a-kind national yoga program that is aimed at improving the health and wellness of your clients, students, and employees, please contact Mark Lucas at 719.352.9134. We are happy to tailor a class, class time, or offer private sessions if there should be a need. Our goal is to serve the greater community therefore, we are flexible and willing to collaborate with you.

Recreationally yours,

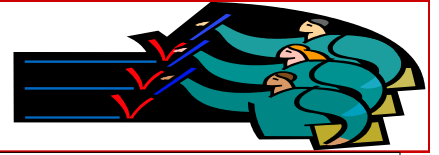
Mark Lucas  
CEO, Imperative Movement Consulting, LLC

Erika Petach  
President/CEO, Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh





# CHECK IT OUT!



## Instruction | Support to Start the School Year Right

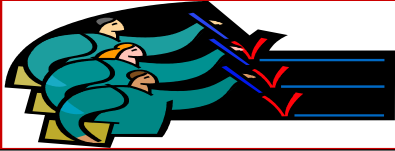
CDE's Office of Standards and Instructional Support has content specialists ready to serve you. The office can cover the content areas of computer science, dance, drama, financial literacy, health, mathematics, music, physical education, reading/writing/communicating, science, social studies and visual arts. There are also specialists in high-impact tutoring and extended learning opportunities.

Each content specialist can answer questions about standards, curriculum, instruction, and how to connect with professional teaching organizations and their activities across the state. [You can find content information for all the specialists on the SIS website.](#)

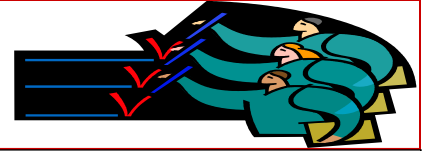
Also, check out the standards across each content area:

- [The Arts](#)
- [Comprehensive Health](#)
- [Computer Science](#)
- [Expanded Learning Opportunities](#)
- [High-Impact Tutoring](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Personal Financial Literacy](#)
- [Reading, Writing, and Communicating](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Social Studies](#)
- [World Languages](#)
- [Extended Evidence Outcomes](#)





# 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 pandemic.



### \*\* 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.



# Resources and Materials

## CO MTSS Information

### Welcome to the Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports Online Academy!

Explore the impressive collection of training resources by topic. Each topic has modules that provide training on specific aspects. Feel free to pick and choose a topic to learn more about; there is no order in which the topics should be completed.

Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports Online Academy has a collection of training resources by topic. Each topic has modules that provide training on specific aspects. There is no order that the topics should be completed, find what you are interested in and learn about those topics!

The link is [Home \(learnworlds.com\)](https://learnworlds.com)

## Available Funding for Educators in Additional Shortage Areas



This may be an important opportunity for you or for someone in your district who will be a great person for our fields of becoming a TVI and / or an Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Qualified applicants may receive up to \$10,000 in financial assistance from the Educator Recruitment and Retention Program to help pay for their educator preparation program fees if they commit to teaching in a [shortage area](#) for three years.

These shortage areas have been expanded for the 2022-23 school year. The rural areas include TVI and Orientation and Mobility Specialists.

These funds may be used to send someone to school to become a TVI or for an existing TVI to go back for an O&M Specialist endorsement. Check it out while there is a chance to apply for this support!

Also, if there is someone in your administrative unit who may be interested in enrolling in a TVI program, please share this information. We need to stock our state and our field with qualified personnel – this may be just the right opportunity for yourself or someone you know!

[For detailed information on eligibility and how to apply, visit the ERR Program webpage.](#)



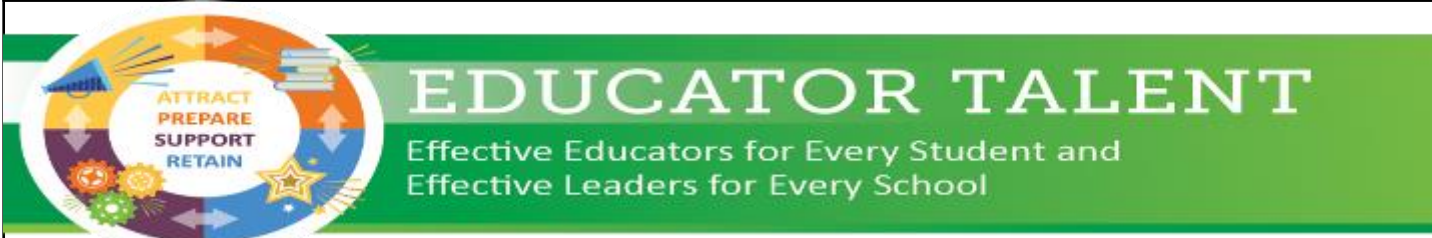
## Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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

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

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

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

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





## Frequently Asked Questions about READ Plans for Grades 4-12

Please take some time to be in the know about READ Plans for students who continue to have significant reading deficiencies in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/frequently-asked-question-about-read-plans-for-grades-4-12>



READING, WRITING,  
AND COMMUNICATING

## Resources for READ Plans for Grades 4-12

[A FAQ resource webpage is available to provide guidance and support to districts in drafting READ plans beyond third grade.](#)

**Writing Framework**—CDE developed a Framework for Writing Instruction to support district-level leaders in creating a research-based framework for the teaching of writing with literacy leaders, instructional coaches and teachers. [Resources can be found on the Framework for Writing Instruction webpage.](#)

## Call for Peer Reviewers to Review Educator Preparation Program Reauthorization

CDE seeks individuals with deep knowledge in the following content areas to participate in an individual peer review of Colorado's educator preparation programs being considered for reauthorization: culturally and linguistically diverse education, early childhood education, elementary education, English language arts, mathematics, music, physical education, principal, science, school counselor, school nurse, social studies, special education, visual arts and world languages. Reviewers will receive access to a training video, and the review itself is anticipated to take between two and five hours to complete. Reviews may be completed anytime from Monday, Nov. 7, through Monday, Nov. 28.

Educators from Colorado school districts, internal CDE content experts and higher education faculty are welcome to engage in this review of educator preparation programs' content as it aligns to Colorado standards.

Questions may be directed to Educator Development at [Educator\\_Development@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Educator_Development@cde.state.co.us). To apply, complete the [reviewer application](#) by Thursday, October 20, 2022.

## Upcoming CMAS Deadlines

By December 15, District Assessment Coordinators must notify CDE's Assessment Division of the following local education provider administration decisions:

- District or school intent to use paper-based testing as the main testing format for CMAS administration. A form will be provided to DACs during administration training.  
District-selected CMAS and CoAlt administration window. Selections of extended computer-based assessment window for ELA and math, early high school science window or regular state assessment window should be submitted upon completion of the CMAS Administration Training for DACs.  
Completed 2022-23 Unique Accommodations Request forms, together with the appropriate supporting data, must be submitted to CDE's Assessment Division by the District Assessment Coordinator. UARs are required for accommodations that may change the construct being measured by the assessment, for example: using a calculator on the non-calculator section of the test. UARs must be approved by CDE before the unique accommodation can be assigned in the vendor assessment systems and provided to a student. As a reminder, auditory presentation of the CMAS English language Arts assessments would change what CMAS is intended to measure and is therefore not an available accommodation.
- ACCESS for English Language Learners UAR due Thursday, December 1, 2022  
CMAS UAR due Thursday, December 15, 2022.  
If you have any questions, reach out to your District Assessment Coordinator about ordering braille-format CMAS tests and/or requesting unique accommodations.

## Changes in the Referral and Evaluation Process for Children Under Age 3

Beginning on May 1, 2022, all referrals and evaluations for children under the age of 3 with developmental concerns or disabilities will be coordinated through Early Intervention Colorado.



This change to Early Intervention referrals and evaluations\* is being made to:

- Ensure families and children across Colorado have equitable access to developmental support
- Streamline the program to be easier for families and providers to navigate

\*granted by legislation SB21-275

Please note that Child Find (Colorado Department of Education/local school districts) will no longer accept referrals for children under age 3 as of May 1. All referrals and evaluations for children under 3 with disabilities or developmental concerns will be coordinated through Early Intervention Colorado.\*\*

Early Intervention referrals and evaluations will occur within a coordinated, state system.

Families will continue to receive Early Intervention services through local Community Centered Boards, either in person or virtually.

### Anyone can make a referral to Early Intervention!

A referral can be made online, by phone or by fax:



Complete the [online referral form](#)



Call 833-733-3734 (833) REFER-EI



Email [GetStartedwithEI@state.co.us](mailto:GetStartedwithEI@state.co.us)



Download the [referral form](#) and fax to 303-866-5944



Contact your [local Community Centered Board](#)

If you have questions about this change, please contact Jody Berg, Early Intervention Evaluations Manager at [jody.berg@state.co.us](mailto:jody.berg@state.co.us) or (720) 633-6099

\*\*Early Intervention Colorado is currently part of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). Once the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) is established, Early Intervention Colorado will reside within the CDEC.





# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)



## Multilingual Learners Identified or Suspected of Having Educational Disabilities

The CDE Exceptional Students Services Unit has filled a position to Multilingual Learners with Educational Disabilities. Hunter Smith ([hunter\\_h@cde.state.co.us](mailto:hunter_h@cde.state.co.us)) is in this role and has been busy updating the website and sharing out resources. As such, we have a new webpage, which is designed to provide guidelines and resources for professionals and families supporting English Language Learners (*a federal designation*) who are also identified with or suspected of having educational disabilities also known as Dually Identified students. English Language Learners (ELLs) are identified as a subgroup of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) population. Resources, opportunities for training and workshops as well as links to other sources of information are posted.

Check it out at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/cld>

### Stay Up to Date - Manténgase Informada/o

Sign up for the Multilingual Learners with Disabilities listserv. To request to be added to the MLDB Listserv [email Steven Dyer](#).

Regístrese en el servidor de listas de estudiantes multilingües con discapacidades. Para pedir que lo/la registremos en el servidor de listas MLDB envíele un [correo electrónico de Steven Dyer](#).

### Office of Special Education Programs ([OSEP Resources](#)) on English Learners

Take some time to be in the know and check out the following documents, especially the most recent OSEP Letter. Very important reading and resources.

[OSEP Fast Facts](#)

[OSEP Spanish Glossary 2nd Edition](#)

[OSEP Letter to Timothy Boals, PhD 2021](#)





# Calendar of Events



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

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>October (month)</b> | <b>Blind Equality Achievement Month</b><br>Contact: <a href="mailto:nfb@nfb.org">nfb@nfb.org</a>  |
| <b>October 13-14</b>   | <b>CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment</b> —Lowry Conference Center<br>Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>                               |
| <b>October 15</b>      | <b>White Cane Day</b> — Celebrate All Over the State! / Raise a Little Cane!  |
| <b>October 15</b>      | <b>Tools for Life Submission Deadline</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>                        |
| <b>October 18</b>      | <b>Southern LVE Clinic</b> — CSDB in Colorado Springs<br>Contact: Debbie Haberkorn at <a href="mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org">dhaberkorn@csdb.org</a>  |
| <b>October 18</b>      | <b>Tactile Art Club</b> - virtual 5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.<br>Contact: Rishika Kartik at <a href="mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com">rishikakartik@gmail.com</a>  |
| <b>October 19</b>      | <b>Sound Bites</b> — 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.<br>Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>   |
| <b>October 21</b>      | <b>Third CIMC Friday (virtual meeting)</b> from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.<br>Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>   |
| <b>October 27-30</b>   | <b>68th Annual State Convention: The NFB of Colorado</b> —DoubleTree by Hilton, Greeley<br>Contact: Jessica Beecham at <a href="mailto:jbbeecham@gmail.com">jbbeecham@gmail.com</a> or Lisa Bonderson at (303) 504-5979 |
| <b>November 1</b>      | <b>Emergent Literacy Workshop</b> —In-Person (8:30 am– 4:30pm)<br>Contact: Gina Herrera at <a href="mailto:Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us">Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us</a>   |
| <b>November 10-11</b>  | <b>Northern LVE Clinic</b> — Ensignt Center in Fort Collins<br>Contact: Liz Wieder at <a href="mailto:wieder_elizabeth@svvsd.org">wieder_elizabeth@svvsd.org</a>  |
| <b>November 11</b>     | <b>Second CIMC Friday (virtual meeting)</b> from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.<br>Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>  |
| <b>November 15</b>     | <b>Tactile Art Club</b> - virtual 5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.<br>Contact: Rishika Kartik at <a href="mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com">rishikakartik@gmail.com</a>  |
| <b>November 16</b>     | <b>Sound Bites</b> — 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.<br>Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>   |





# Calendar of Events

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

**November 30** CO Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series— 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**December 2** First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.)  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

**December 20** Tactile Art Club - virtual 5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Rishika Kartik at [rishikakartik@gmail.com](mailto:rishikakartik@gmail.com)

2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023

**January 4, 2023** Happy Birthday to Louis Braille— Celebrate All Over the State!

**January 6,, 2023** First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.)  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

**January 18, 2023** Sound Bites—3:30 - 4:30 p.m. (Math Strategies with Dr. Derrick Smith)  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**January 25, 2023** CO Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series— 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**February 3** First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.)  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

**February 15** Sound Bites— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**February 22** CO Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series— 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

**February 22-24** Metro LVE Clinic— Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver  
 Contact: Karin Hensel at [khensel@dcsdk12.org](mailto:khensel@dcsdk12.org)

**March 3** First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.)  
 Contact: Jim Olson at [jolson@csdb.org](mailto:jolson@csdb.org)

**March 15** Sound Bites— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at [Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)




# Calendar of Events

2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023

March 29	<b>CO Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series—</b> 3:30 - 5:30 pm. Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
April 7	<b>First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting)</b> from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
April 19	<b>Sound Bites—</b> 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
May 5	<b>First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting)</b> from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Contact: Jim Olson at <a href="mailto:jolson@csdb.org">jolson@csdb.org</a>
May 17	<b>Sound Bites—</b> 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Contact: Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
July 1-6	<b>2023 National Federation of the Blind Convention</b> - Houston, Texas Contact: <a href="mailto:nfb@nfb.org">nfb@nfb.org</a>
Nov 29 - Dec 2	<b>Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference—</b> St. Pete’s Beach, FL Contact: <a href="https://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/">https://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/</a>

If you have any items to get on the calendar, please be in touch with Tanni so we can keep people in the loop on events locally, statewide, and nationally.



## Colorado Tactile Arts Club

Come meet Rishika Kartik, a “creative activist” committed to accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. Rishika is President of the Colorado Tactile Art Club (TAC) where she works to create opportunities for blind/visual impaired students to express themselves and find Community. The TAC meets the third Tuesday of each month.

- Upcoming TAC dates:**
- October 18
  - November 21

Please check out [Rishika’s monthly blog](#) for all the fun art projects students have worked on the last two years. Check out her studio [website](#) with all the details and experience the community that is coming together and creating.

The Colorado Deaf-Blind Project, along with others, is offering a face-to-face  
Make and Take Workshop on Emergent Literacy.

There is no virtual option for this training.

Space is limited, register soon!



# EMERGENT LITERACY WORKSHOP

## COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENT LITERACY: OVERVIEW AND APPLICATION (MAKE IT AND TAKE IT)



COLORADO  
Department of Education

The prospect of teaching students with significant disabilities to begin to read with comprehension and begin to write generatively can seem overwhelming. This presentation will cover: assessment for students who are difficult to assess, shared reading (developing a love of reading, and supporting language through reading), emergent writing (beginning to write with the alphabet), self-selected story listening (listening to and interacting with a range of engaging books across a range of genre), alphabet interaction and phonemic awareness (understanding spoken language at the word, syllable, and letter level). Throughout the day, you will see student samples, videos, and creative use of apps. We will also make several projects and engage in multiple Try-Its!

### Learning Outcomes:

- Describe three (3) assessment tools that can be used for students who are difficult to assess with standard tools
- Identify at least two (2) activities to support: Shared reading, emergent writing, self-selected story listening, alphabet learning, and phonemic awareness.
- Describe at least 3 light tech tools, and tell how you would use them interactively to support literacy learning.

### PRESENTER: CAROLINE MUSSELWHITE

Dr. Caroline Musselwhite is an assistive technology specialist with more than 30 years of experience working with children and adolescents with severe disabilities, in a variety of settings, including Head Start, developmental day programs, and the public schools. She has also taught courses at several universities, including West Virginia University, and Western Carolina University.

Dr. Musselwhite has authored a number of textbooks and “how-to” books on a range of topics, including Emergent Literacy Success, Communication Programming for Persons with Severe Handicaps, and Reading Activities Project for Older Students (R.A.P.S.). She has also authored a number of software programs (Write to Talk, Social Scripts) and books (Learning to Work) for youth with disabilities. She has presented thousands of workshops throughout the world, and is a founding member of the Board of Directors for the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC).

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2022 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

**IN-PERSON LOCATION**  
**5416 SOUTH RIVERA WAY**  
**AURORA, CO 80015**

**Click Here  
To Register**

- Clock Hours will be provided.
- Confirmation and materials list will be sent to participants who are accepted.
- Travel resources are not available (e.g. mileage, hotel)

# THE BLIND OF COLORADO LIVING THE LIVES WE WANT!

## THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO

### 68<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION October 27 through October 30

The 68th Annual State Convention will kick off with a BANG on Thursday October 27 in Greeley, Colorado with an interactive and inspiring seminar on knowing our history and building our future and your chance to play in a mini goalball tournament.

**THE NFBCO CONVENTION HOTEL:** Our 2022 convention will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Greeley at Lincoln Park, located at 919 7th St., Greeley, Colorado, 80631.

**HOTEL ROOM RATES:** The NFBCO room rate is \$109 a night. There is no limit on room occupancy. Reservations MUST be made by Friday, September 23.

To reserve your room, call the hotel reservation line at 844-570-7816 and use group code "NFB". Please contact Lisa Bonderson, at 303-504-5979 if you have any issues making a reservation. [Click here to reserve your room online.](#)

#### **Pre-registration fees: BEFORE October 14**

\$20 registration	\$0.00 Friday reception
\$25 Friday luncheon	\$25 Saturday luncheon
\$40 Saturday banquet	\$0.00 Sunday breakfast

**Total: \$110.00**

#### **Registration fees: AFTER October 14**

\$25 registration	\$0.00 Friday reception
\$30 Friday luncheon	\$30 Saturday luncheon
\$50 Saturday banquet	\$0.00 Sunday breakfast

**Total: \$135.00. You save \$25 by pre-registering.**

#### **FOR MORE CONVENTION INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jessica Beecham via email at [jbbeecham@gmail.com](mailto:jbbeecham@gmail.com) or Lisa Bonderson by phone at (303) 504-5979.





# Orientation & Mobility

## SWOMA 2022- Together Again!!

The Southwest Orientation & Mobility Conference is back... IN PERSON!! This coming November, we will be at the Austin Marriott North in Round Rock, TX. ([Google Maps Link](#)) We can't wait for you to join us!!

We are excited to be moving back to our face-to-face conference this year, with timely and informative keynotes and breakout sessions as well as the opportunity to connect with exhibitors. Come join your colleagues at SWOMA 2022!

Over **13 hours** of CEU's (ACVREP and SBEC) are offered through SWOMA this year.

### Conference Dates:

November 6th: Optional Pre-Conference

November 7th - 8th: Main Conference

### Registration Fees:

Professionals - **\$150.00 (Early) & \$175.00 (Late)**

Univ. Students, Paras, & Family - **\$50.00**

Early registration ends on **October 1, 2022**. Don't delay; register today!

### [SWOMA registration](#)

For more information about the conference, please visit [swoma.org](http://swoma.org). For all conference related questions, you may also contact [Toni Ericson](#) at 512-206-9314.

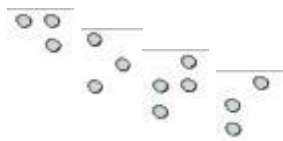
## O&M Live Binders

Chris Tabb, a past CDE O&M Seminar presenter, continues to put together content for his O&M Live Binders—there are oodles of resources across topics.

This should be a go-to resource for checklists, insurance, strategies, and a whole lot more.

<https://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1969587>





# 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>

Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor/mentor and Sarah Sonnier is the western region proctor/mentor for initial testing and renewal modules. Nancy Cozart, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein are metro proctors for the renewal modules. Brenda Shepard is our northern proctor for initial testing and 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).

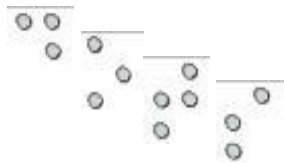
**For summer 2022 assistance, please be in touch with Tanni first to secure an available proctor / mentor.**

## Braillewriter Repair

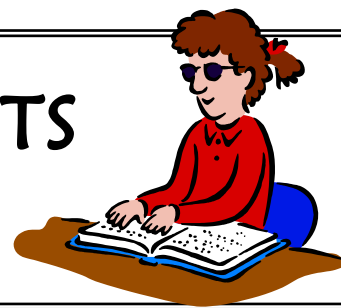
Mark Carpenter is available for braillewriter repair. His contact information is: 719-634-8720 (phone) and

Email: [carpdiane@yahoo.com](mailto:carpdiane@yahoo.com)





# CONNECTING THE DOTS



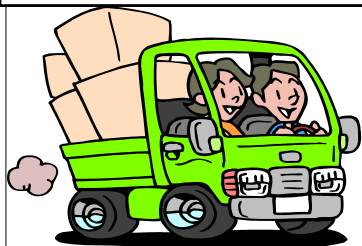
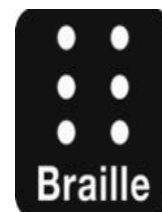
## Braille Class

Lisa Hebbert is teaching a Braille class in Aurora. It is called the Introduction to Braille A-Z. The class is open to paraeducators, parents, and anyone interested in learning braille. Braille alphabet. Explore aspects of the amazing technology advancements used to create braille for readers whom are blind. The class is on Wednesdays from 4-5:30 at the new Central Recreation Center in Aurora.

Click her to register: [Introduction to Braille A to Z Registration](#)

## UEB Technical Versus Nemeth Braille Codes

The Colorado Department of Education does not dictate a math code for students with visual impairment, including blindness. Two math codes are approved by the Braille Authority of North America. The decision about the math code is an individual student-by-student or IEP decision. Both codes are viable for instruction and state testing. For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).



## TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

### Parent Center Resources on Transition to Adulthood

#### [Planning Your Future: A Guide to Transition](#)

The transition to life after high school can be an uncertain time for students with learning disabilities. This guide from NCLD is a tool that students, families, and educators can use to navigate information and prepare for what's next.

#### [Transportation: Knowing the Options](#)

VR professionals know that most job seekers with disabilities would prefer to travel as independently as possible. If owning and driving a vehicle is not an option, what alternatives exist?

### Job Seekers Toolkit

Attention, students and job seekers who are blind or low vision! Are you ready to hone your career exploration and job-seeking skills? The APH [ConnectCenter](#) and [NSITE](#) have partnered to update the long-loved [Job Seeker's Toolkit](#), an accessible, self-paced, free online training course featuring five modules: Self-Awareness; Career Exploration: Methods & Resources; Finding Employment; The Interview; and Maintaining Employment- Advancing Your Career!

Visit their online interactive Job Seekers Toolkit by visiting

<https://communities.nonprofitleadershipalliance.org/nsitecommunity/home>



# just for PARENTS

## A Bill of Rights for All Children with Visual Impairment and their Families

Preamble: In addition to numerous educational principles that have been proven to be beneficial for children with visual impairment, all the provisions of what constitutes a "Free and Appropriate Public Education" under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 shall be assumed along with this bill of rights.

1. Children with all levels of visual impairment (including those with multiple disabilities and those who are DeafBlind) have a right to early intervention/instruction provided by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment and certified orientation and mobility specialists, that is timely, ambitious, and results in the highest possible achievement for each child.
2. Children with visual impairment have the right to a functional vision evaluation and a learning media assessment by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment to determine appropriate services following the initial clinical eye exam.
3. Parents/guardians of children with visual impairment have the right to assistance in interpreting the educational implications of the diagnosed visual impairment that is provided by highly trained and qualified teachers of students with visual impairment and certified mobility specialists and the right to seek assistance from regional/national agencies (including consumer advocacy organizations) that can help them make informed decisions on behalf of their child.
4. As required in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act "in the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team must provide for instruction in braille and the use of braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille), that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate for the child." Appropriate reading and writing media are determined by conducting a learning media assessment.
5. Children and families have the right to be fully informed about the "Expanded Core Curriculum" of skills unique to students with visual impairment, which includes: compensatory skills, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills, and self-determination.
6. Children have the right to assessment and instruction, in school and in their communities, in every area of the Expanded Core Curriculum that is deemed appropriate by the educational team and includes the parents/guardians as the primary decision makers and includes the student when appropriate. The Expanded Core Curriculum is equal in importance to the standard academic curriculum and will not be overlooked in the educational plan.
7. Children have the right to receive school materials that are accessible, in the preferred format and at the same time as their sighted peers. Children have an absolute right to testing procedures and instruments that are fair and accessible, that take into consideration the results of the functional vision evaluation, and include all accommodations identified in the IEP.
8. It is the right of children and families for a full range of educational placement settings to be discussed at IEP meetings, including the variety of unique programs and options offered in specialized schools/services for children who are visually impaired. A specialized school may offer the best opportunity for achievement and be the "least restrictive environment" for some children.
9. All children with a visual impairment have the right to teams that enthusiastically assist them in preparing for transition to independence and adulthood.
10. Children with visual impairment, including those with multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness have the right to be perceived and treated as equal, active, and contributing members of their communities, classrooms, and schools. As with all children, their engagement through belonging increases the collective value of each setting within which they participate.

The rights listed in this document consist of a combination of legal rights, ethical rights, and human rights. This document exists as a resource for students, parents, and professionals. The authors hope that this resource will be widely distributed and endorsed (formally or informally) by interested individuals and organizations. It is not fully inclusive of all rights; it is a starting point for teams when planning individualized programs for children with visual impairments.

This resource is the result of a joint project between the leaders of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) and the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind (COSB).

# just for PARENTS

## National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFADB)

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.



## Family Recharge Zone

Are you a family member of a child or adult who is blind, visually impaired, or deafblind? The Texas School for the Blind/Visually Impaired offers virtual trainings that you might be interested in attending. Stay connected by completing the Family Events & Training Sign-up Form. You will receive emails about events and training just for families... including the [Family Recharge Zone!](#)

The American Printing House for the Blind ConnectCenter includes FamilyConnect, CareerConnect, and VisionAware – a hub of websites that offer curated advice and resources to assist children, parents, adults, job seekers who are blind or visually impaired, and their associated professionals, leading to greater independence and success in their lives.

**Wednesdays, October 19<sup>th</sup>, November 16<sup>th</sup>, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. EST**

**Navigating and Negotiating Successful IEP and 504 Outcomes** - In this a 5-part webinar we will share how to navigate the process of getting your child the appropriate support at school. This will cover the evaluation, present levels, annual IEP goals, accommodations and supplements and the service deliver model.

[Register Here for Navigating and Negotiating Successful IEP and 504 Outcomes](#)

**Wednesdays, October 26<sup>th</sup>, November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. EST**

**Ask the Advocate** - Answering questions families have to better understand the processes, procedures and parent rights in a 504/IEP. When parents are better informed they will be better equipped to navigate and negotiate successful student outcomes.

[Register Here for Ask the Advocate](#)

**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 not be available.

[Register Here for ParentConnect](#)

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

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

Their status as a division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), an important organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. NFB provides its members information about the societal, legislative, and technological issues that affect blind people. One of their most exciting activities is their annual conference. Every year since it was established, the NOPBC has conducted an annual conference for parents and teachers of blind children as part of the national convention of the NFB. The program has grown to include five exciting days of workshops, training sessions, activities for all family members, including sighted siblings, and countless opportunities to meet blind adults and other families and children from around the country. Most states have an NOPBC affiliate chapter. Colorado has one! For more information, call the Colorado Center for the Blind at (303) 778-1130.



# NATIONAL FAMILY ASSOCIATION FOR DEAF-BLIND

Empowering Families with Individuals who are Deaf-Blind

Presents

## Its 3rd Annual Webinar Fundraiser

### My Family's Journey: Connection, Advocacy, Empowerment

Thursday October 27, 2022

4:30pm PT • 5:30pm MT • 6:30pm CT • 7:30pm ET (90 minutes)



## FEATURING

- Families & Caregivers attend free of charge.
- Donations accepted to further the family advocacy and empowerment efforts of NFADB.
- Friends and Professionals \$100 per person suggested.
- Rhonda Bryce, OK, Grandparent
- Brandi Hitzelberger, KY, mom to 19 yr. old son
- Ginger Knowles, HI, mom to 4 yr. old son
- Faye Manaster, IL, mom to 41 yr. old daughter
- Donia Shirley, FL, mom to 6 yr. old son
- Ricky Teed, IA, dad to 12 yr. old daughter (First photo)
- Karonica Mikell, MS, mom to 9 yr. old daughter (Second photo)

Thank you to our event partners: National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB); State Deaf-Blind Projects DE, GA, IL, KY, SC and TN

[Register at: www.nfadb.org/event-4866489](http://www.nfadb.org/event-4866489)

[Donate at: www.nfadb.org/donate](http://www.nfadb.org/donate)



## ASOCIACIÓN NACIONAL DE FAMILIAS PARA SORDOCIEGOS (NFADB)

Empoderando a Familias con personas sordociegas

Presenta

### 3er Webinar Anual de NFADB para recaudar fondos El viaje de mi familia: Conexión, Defensa, Empoderamiento

Jueves 27 de octubre de 2022

4:30pm PT- 5:30pm MT- 6:30pm CT- 7:30pm ET (90 minutos)



## PRESENTANDO A

- Las familias y los proveedores de cuidado asisten gratis.
- Se aceptan donaciones para promover la defensa de la familia y esfuerzos de empoderamiento de NFADB.
- Amigos y profesionales \$100 por persona.
- Rhonda Bryce, OK, Abuela
- Brandi Hitzelberger, KY, madre de un hijo de 19 años
- Ginger Knowles, HI, madre de un hijo de 4 años
- Faye Manaster, IL, madre de una hija de 41 años
- Donia Shirley, FL, madre de un hijo de 4 años
- Ricky Teed, IA, padre de una hija de 12 años (1ª foto)
- Karonica Mikell, MS, madre de una hija de 9 años (2ª foto)

Gracias a nuestros colaboradores del evento: Centro Nacional de Sordoceguers (NCDB); Y los Proyectos Estateles de Sordoceguera DE, GA, IL, KY, SC y TN

**Inscríbete en: [www.nfadb.org/event-4866489](http://www.nfadb.org/event-4866489)**

**Done en: [www.nfadb.org/donate](http://www.nfadb.org/donate)**

# WE ARE SEEKING YOUR VOICE



## BIPOC

BIPOC is an acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

The Members of the Exceptional Student Services Unit want to hear from you! Join us for a virtual listening session to help us gain a better understanding of the needs of our BIPOC parents/families of students with exceptionalities.

The **purpose** of the listening session is to:

- Listen to and gain families' perspectives of what is going well and what needs improvement in special and gifted education.
- Build on what is going well and develop support to address identified needs.
- Better understand the needs of Colorado's BIPOC and bilingual families across the state to empower them to better support their child's individual needs.
- Form a partnership with Colorado's BIPOC and bilingual families to meet their unique needs by providing them with targeted guidance and support.

## EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Educational equity means that every student has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income.

The **objectives** of the listening session are to:

- Discuss students' and families' equitable, diverse, and inclusive experiences with special and gifted education identification and services.
- Understand families' knowledge regarding equitable, diverse, inclusive, special, and gifted education identification and services.
- Clarify families' needs and solicit input from Colorado's BIPOC and bilingual community.
- Use the information we have gathered to provide support and resources to this community.

## SESSION DATES/TIMES (all sessions will be held virtually)

- Session 1: Saturday, Sept. 10, 2022 (10 - 11 AM)
- Session 2: Thursday, Sept. 29, 2022 (5 - 6 PM)
- Session 3: Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2022 (Noon - 1 PM)
- Session 4: Friday, Nov. 11, 2022, for **SPANISH** speaking families/parents (1 - 2 PM)

## REGISTER HERE

REGISTRATION CLOSING TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT.

Questions regarding listening session content, please reach out to Michael Ramirez at [Ramirez\\_M@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Ramirez_M@cde.state.co.us).

Please reach out to Roberta Curtis with any registration questions at [curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:curtis_r@cde.state.co.us).

# QUEREMOS ESCUCHARLO

¡Los miembros de la Unidad de Servicios para Estudiantes con Características Excepcionales quieren conocer su opinión! Únase a nosotros en una sesión de escucha virtual para ayudarnos a comprender mejor las necesidades de nuestros padres y familias negras, indígenas y de color (Black, Indigenous and People of Color, BIPOC) de estudiantes con características excepcionales.



**COLORADO**

Department of Education

## BIPOC

BIPOC es un acrónimo que significa negros, indígenas y personas de color (Black, Indigenous and People of Color).

El **propósito** de la sesión de escucha es:

- Escuchar y conocer la opinión de las familias sobre lo que está funcionando bien y lo que hay que mejorar en la educación especial y para niños superdotados.
- Construir sobre los aspectos que funcionan y desarrollar apoyos para abordar las necesidades identificadas.
- Comprender mejor las necesidades de las familias BIPOC y bilingües en todo el estado de Colorado, para que puedan apoyar mejor las necesidades individuales de sus hijos.
- Formar una asociación con las familias BIPOC y bilingües de Colorado para satisfacer sus necesidades únicas, proporcionándoles orientación y apoyo específicos.

## EQUIDAD EDUCATIVA

La equidad educativa significa que todos los estudiantes tengan acceso a los recursos educativos y al rigor que necesitan en el momento adecuado de su educación, sin importar su raza, sexo, origen étnico, idioma, discapacidad, orientación sexual, entorno familiar o ingresos familiares.

Los **objetivos** de la sesión de escucha son:

- Conversar sobre las experiencias equitativas, diversas e inclusivas de los estudiantes y las familias, con la identificación y los servicios de educación especial y para superdotados.
- Comprender el conocimiento de las familias sobre la identificación y los servicios de educación equitativa, diversa e inclusiva, especial y para superdotados.
- Definir las necesidades de las familias y solicitar la opinión de la comunidad BIPOC y bilingüe de Colorado.
- Utilizar la información que hemos reunido para proporcionar apoyo y recursos a esta comunidad.

## FECHA Y HORA DE LAS SESIONES

(todas las sesiones se realizarán de manera virtual)

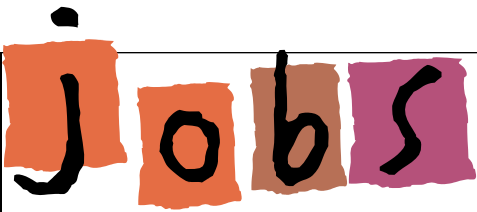
- Sesión 1: Sábado, 10 de septiembre de 2022 (10 - 11 a. m.)
- Sesión 2: Jueves, 29 de septiembre de 2022 (5 - 6 p. m.)
- Sesión 3: Miércoles, 19 de octubre de 2022 (mediodía - 1 p. m.)
- Sesión 4: Viernes, 11 de noviembre de 2022, para familias y padres que hablan ESPAÑOL (1 - 2 p. m.)

**INSCRÍBASE**  
**AQUÍ**

LAS INSCRIPCIONES FINALIZAN DOS SEMANAS ANTES DEL EVENTO.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el contenido de la sesión de escucha, comuníquese con Gina Herrera al correo electrónico [Herrera\\_G@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us).

Comuníquese con Roberta Curtis si tiene alguna pregunta sobre la inscripción en [curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:curtis_r@cde.state.co.us).



## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

Please be proactive with current vacancies for the current school year. Please keep in touch with Tanni about our 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. If you are looking for a job, please check out the listings below and also reach out to Tanni, who will have a current list of work across the state, including TVI and O&M Specialist contract work. Together, we can fill in the needed gaps to serve all of our students.

### Metro Region

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI (Home Visit focus)** - Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please reach out to Tammy Miller at [tmiller@anchorcenter.org](mailto:tmiller@anchorcenter.org)
- ◆ **Braillists**—if you are looking for work, contact Tanni as there are several AUs looking to hire in the metro and northern region. Contact [Tanni at Anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Tanni.at.Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist**—Jefferson County School District. Contact Liza Meier at [Liza.Meier@jeffco.k12.co.us](mailto:Liza.Meier@jeffco.k12.co.us)

### Northern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE or part-time TVI / O&M Specialist**—Windsor School District. Contact Jon Paul Burden at [jonpaul.burden@gmail.com](mailto:jonpaul.burden@gmail.com)

### Eastern Region

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

### Across Metro, Northern, 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).

**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).



# VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

September 22, 2022

**Persons in Attendance:** Tanni Anthony, Cheryl Austin, Nancy Cozart, Melissa French, Anahit LaBarre, Paula Landry, Tammy Miller, Erin Noe, Jim Olson, and Chloann Woolley

**Persons Absent:** Paula Conroy and Michele Reed

**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 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry  
Anchor Center for Blind Children – Tammy Miller  
Colorado AER Chapter – Paula Conroy  
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 – Cheryl Austin  
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 critical 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

- Welcome to Cheryl Austin, who is representing the CSDB Outreach Program.
- Welcome to Tammy Miller who is representing the Anchor Center for Blind Children.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### **Metro Region** (Nancy Cozart)

We will have our 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the school year on Thursday October 27<sup>th</sup>. Cherry Creek through TEAMS will virtually host it. Here is the link:

Microsoft Teams meeting / Meeting ID: 244 690 172 567 / Passcode: fy8Wca

Or call in (audio only) / +1 720-443-[6769,978341515](tel:6769978341515) United States, Denver

Phone Conference ID: 978 341 515#

Our agenda for our first meeting is as follows: Announcements (Vision Coalition, CIMC, and CAER: membership drive); Mike Hess Blind IT - apprenticeship for high schoolers and about the organization: 30-45 minutes; debrief about State Conference; Any statewide challenges and/or issues you would like to discuss.

### Future Dates for the 2022-23 School Year:

- Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> 3:30 to 5 p.m. hosted by Denver Public Schools (in-person and virtual options- hybrid)
- Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup> 3:30 to 5 p.m. hosted by Littleton Public Schools (in- person and virtual options- hybrid)
- Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> 3:30 to 5 p.m. host TBA

### *Discussion:*

- *There can be philosophical differences about serving learners with additional disabilities, are there AU policies on service responsibilities? Variables may be the strengths of local teams on understanding how to work with students with CVI / ocular impairments and additional information; training issues to support personnel with working with learners with VI and additional disabilities. Service should be based on the needs of the child and the personnel supporting these needs. There is value in modeling key strategies when the TVI is present in the classroom. Is this a workload challenge?*

How can we support TVI with authentic assessment / next step recommendations / modeling across CVI Phases? Anchor Center has CVI Characteristic Information Sheets with websites. <https://makeiteasiertosee.co.uk>

A “consideration list” may also be helpful. This might be a focus on the VC work this school year.

- *How to Work Together to Anticipate Children Coming from Part C to Part B? How can we support earlier notification systems that are respectful of personally identifiable information. The Anchor Center for the Blind staff are working on this issue so that it is an actual process. They have a new transition project that is well*

funded to work specifically on the process of transition. They will be reaching out to AU TVIs in the metro area to be a part of this project. It is a July 2022 through June 2023 project with the goal of processes in place by the end of the project. The goal will be to work in tandem with A Shared Vision and the CSDB BVI EI Program. The VC shared recommendations with Tammy and are excited about this project!

In addition, the Anchor Center is putting the AU of residence on the information sharing form that parent sign, so they have permission to contact the school district of the child.

In other areas of the state, the CCBs often will help be proactive with school district personnel. All the school districts in the southern region know about soon-to-be preschoolers. A recent EI Colorado Memo detailed "Specially, changes to notification timing will take effect on July 1, 2022. Starting at that point, timely notification by EI to AUs of potentially eligible children must occur not later than when a child is two years, six months of age. However, if the child has a low incidence diagnosis including, but not limited to, visual impairment (including blindness), hearing impairment (including deafness) or deaf-blind, timely notification is defined as two years and three months.

- *Communication with Eye Doctors:* Some medical offices have transparent systems of how they are communicating with EI agencies / school districts. We see great networking with our BVI entities, but less systemized networking with school districts. A Shared Vision is proactive with contacting the offices for periodic visits to help the eye doctor office staff understand their importance. There is a directory of optometrists that is huge, making it unfeasible to contact each of these providers. A question is there a blanket way to reach these professionals on referral practices. This would be a good question for Dr. Tom Theune or Dr. King. The southern region has done a blanket letter to area eye care specialists with information to reach out to the AU's Special Education Director if there is a need for a referral.

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

The Northern Colorado TVIs and O&Ms will have their first meeting Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will be meeting in person and virtually. Welcome to Hanna Waldman, who is the new TVI / O&M Specialist in Thompson. Carol Jordan and Kaitlin Lombardi are providing contract work in Johnstown Milliken.

#### *Discussion:*

- *What happens when adequate TVI/O&M staffing is not available? What are some ideas on how to manage this if it becomes a long-term situation?* Services on the IEP that cannot occur due to shortages should be discussed with the local special education director for the need for compensatory services. Compensatory services due to COVID-related circumstances are outlined in [https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/special\\_education\\_faqs#compensator](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/special_education_faqs#compensator)

A question was whether a student from another AU could attend CSDB's ESY. This is possible with the need to detail transportation / housing needs. Short Term Placements are also in discussion. The purpose for ESY is different than compensatory services, but this may well be an area of discussion between CSDB and the involved AUs.

- *Does every student need to have the MDB/FDB form filled out by the eye doctor and sent into CIMC?* The answer is NO. It is an optional form. It was designed to be helpful and has been recognized by other states as a model template! If it is helpful, use it! The eye report on file should verify legal blindness for a child to be eligible for the APH Quota Funds. The form helps flag a statement to support / confirm the definition of legal blindness. There is also a statement that notes that a child may need continued eye care.
- *Is there is consensus for service minutes and frequency for elementary students in phase 1 of CVI?* Services are individually determined based on student need.

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

The Western Slope TVI/COMS plan to meet virtually this school year. They typically discuss a variety of topics to brainstorm ideas and support one another. Some topics of discussion in the past have been how best to support younger braille readers, technology for older low vision students, and how service minutes are written. The TVI/O&M

Specialists have shared resource ideas with one another related to orientation and mobility assessments and where to find unique materials to use with students

Mesa Valley School District is hosting the Low Vision Clinic on September 23rd. Everyone is always excited and grateful for all the valuable information they get from collaborating with the team.

In staffing news, we welcome Tommi Sue Celli to Summit County, Dani Epperson to the Colorado River BOCES, and Eunice Canoy and Brittany Hodgson in Eagle School District. Brooke Miller has moved to the Rangely School District. The Western Region is looking good with some O&M contact needs.

#### *Discussion:*

- *Are other TVIs across the state getting vision therapy referrals? If so, how are they managing them?* Tanni stressed the importance of school-based TVIs be clear with their role as special educators and not vision specialists or vision therapists. As such, it is helpful not to describe your role as a “vision specialist.” The CDE license is for a special education teacher trained in blindness/visual impairment. Vision therapy is a recognized optometric therapy.

*Chloann shared this link to a product she wrote with an OT colleague: to differentiate the roles and terminology:*  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-XRwVuFL7A4m-CtRg9rcQXNASAKlguPKNi5oQID5u9c/edit?usp=sharing>

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

The Southern Region TVI-DVR meeting met virtually on September 20th for our first meeting of the year. Our agenda items will be to determine meeting dates/times, topics and introduce any new members to the group. The next Southern Region meetings are as follows and will be the last Tuesday of the month from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

- October 25 - in person meeting
- November 29 - make-n-take at CIMC
- January 31 - virtual meeting
- February 28 - in-person meeting
- April 25 - make-n-take at CIMC
- May meeting to be determined

The Southern Region has new teachers and specialists. Micah Scott supports D49, Karen Wood and Morgan Turner are part time at D11 in Colorado Springs; Robert Lee is a new TVI in Pueblo 60, Ruthie Brean is new to D20. However, there are still open positions for teachers and certified O&M Specialists in the following areas: Colorado Springs District 11, San Luis Valley, and Pikes Peak BOCES.

The first one-day CDE-CSDB Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic for the Southern Region is scheduled for Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at CSDB, Jones Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference/low vision room. Five students have been tentatively scheduled from CSDB, Fremont RE-2 (Canon City), El Paso 8 (Fountain/Fort Carson); El Paso 38 (Lewis Palmer); and Pueblo 60. 1 appointment remains available. The clinic paperwork deadline is Tuesday, 10/04/2022. Contact the Southern Region clinic coordinator, Debbie Haberkorn, at [dhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org); (719) 578-2197.

Some TVIs in the region reported that they had not known about IEPs scheduled for their students attending CSDB. Kathy Emter, Director of Special Education at CSDB, shared at last year’s southern region meeting that TVIs who wanted to be notified of CSDB’s IEPs for students residing within their school districts could share their contact information. CSDB would ensure they are notified of upcoming IEPs along with the regular notification procedure which goes to the Directors of Special Education for each district across the state. If you would like a Notice of Meeting to be copied to you for any of your students at CSDB, please send an email to Kathy Emter, [kemter@csdb.org](mailto:kemter@csdb.org) and let her know your email and what district you are from. A Notice of Meeting will be copied to you, and you will receive an outlook invite.

The discussion about IEP notifications continued to be a concern for TVIs in their own districts. As a state, many districts have their own “procedure” to their timeline of sending IEP notices and notifying the team members of upcoming evaluations and IEPs. TVIs reported that times they are not notified in a reasonable amount of time (sometimes less than a week) before an evaluation or IEP meeting. There was agreement that everyone’s processes

could be improved regarding both annuals and re-evals. It was stated at the meeting that team members have 60 days from parent consent signatures being obtained, to complete the re-evaluation and hold the IEP meeting. The group would like clarification of the state regulations about IEP timelines. Further discussion is planned to address this information.

*Discussion:*

- *What are people doing to address future needs for students with progressive vision loss, but who are currently able to access everything visually?* Examples of areas of SDI may include:
  - o Provide instruction for student at current level of visual functioning/need (addressing use of low vision tools/devices/accommodations, but not addressing future needs); not addressing braille until later in life and allowing DVR to address after high school
  - o Begin to introduce typing/keystrokes/screen readers
  - o Provide intensive braille instruction
  - o Provide braille instruction to develop tactual sense, but holding off on intensity to learn code until a later date
  - o O&M instruction with blindfold (if student is receptive) to address skills needed in the future

Further it is important to have both mediums in front of the student and then fading the visual media as the student loses vision. The School for the Blind is seeing more students with a progressive loss and who are in-between visual and tactual mediums. It helps to have peers who are blind to support the evolution to more tactile strategies. It is important to have continual conversations with parents. There can be a range of opinions from wait to let's do everything now. Progress monitoring is important. It is important to think about mental health supports for the student and the family to understand the loss and its emotional implications. TVIs may need to collaborate closely with the school counselor / school psychologist to frame the vision loss. Both student and adult role models can be helpful to both students and families. If there is a group of students with progressive loss, would it be helpful to have zoom connection opportunities. Jamie offered to set something up with Cara Johnson (their school psychologist) and the student, TVI, and/or family ... or what works. If you are interested, please reach out to Jamie. CCB Youth Programs would love to partner on this topic.

- *LMA Fidelity: What can be done to improve the standardization of how LMAs are completed, and reports are written?* We worked a bit on this topic in the past, clarifying what information should be inserted in the LMP form in the IEP. It was suggested to build out templates for LMPs. Chloann will post a Template A and Template B format on Google documents for VC members to review and edit between now and our next meeting. The intent is to provide a consistent / uniform methodology.

It is important to remember that Learning Media Assessments are to be completed by teachers of students with visual impairments. The IEP should contribute, but this is the ECEA assigned responsibility of the TVI. The TVI should be braille competent per ECEA rules.

- *What is the TVI/O&M Specialists' responsibilities for the IEP?* A TVI who is a member of the IEP team would have responsibilities across the IEP. There is not a section that a TVI would not contribute to as a means of building the program for a student with blindness, including visual impairment or deaf-blindness. The TVI must complete the section on the Learning Media Plan.

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

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 14 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 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. We were so excited to host our first in-person event since 2020 on September 17th. "A Horse, of Course!" featured our friends from McNicholas Miniatures. Our little ones and their families had the opportunity to meet and pet "Happy Times" and "Love Bug," explore a "Horse Sensory Station" and horse around with other fun activities.

Because virtual events are often easier for our families to attend, our "B/VI Mystery Party" is hosted quarterly by our teachers to support and educate parents of children with visual impairment. During the one-hour program, our teachers create a fun atmosphere of sharing and curiosity about B/VI for parents and caregivers.

Our Education Program builds the community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals who serve young children with blindness and visual impairments. Last spring, responsibilities for Early Intervention Services transferred from CDE to CDHS. At that time, EI Colorado contracted ASV to update the Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire that was developed by CDE, CDHS, and A Shared Vision at the start of the pandemic. Since August, we have provided sixteen trainings on conducting vision screening, scoring the parent questionnaire, and how to approach developmental assessments for children who are B/VI. We are also in the process of updating the objective testing portion of the vision screener to support the return to in-person evaluations.

With the success of the statewide vision screening training program during the past 2 years, we continue to experience record numbers of referrals. As the demand for our services has increased, we are experiencing a shortage of EI-TVIs and currently have a waiting list of over ten families in need of vision services. We are looking for collaborative, sensitive, licensed Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments who are interested in supporting families of little ones with blindness or visual impairment. We offer a flexible work schedule; you can support one or more families depending on your schedule. The visits can be done in the families' homes and community settings, or via telehealth. We support the training and mentoring to help you succeed in early intervention as it is much different than collaborating with school-age children! If interested, please send an email to [hr@asharedvision.org](mailto:hr@asharedvision.org) with your resume and a short paragraph on why you are interested in supporting families with children, birth to age three.

#### *Discussion:*

- *Wait List for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairment:* Families can attend in-person Anchor Center for the Blind Children. This works better for the metro-based families. The wait list locations change all the time. If there is a lack of services in each location, it might be a suggestion to reach out to the school-based TVI staff to see if someone could be available to work with the family. There are Part C training requirements to be a Part C provider. There can also be compensation issues.

#### **Anchor Center for Blind Children (Tammy Miller)**

*Staff Updates:* Over the summer, Melinda Carter stepped down as the Director of Children's Programs and Services to spend her last couple of years before retirement in the classrooms with students again. Tammy Miller replaced her, TSVI. Gina Higbie, OT, has replaced Tammy as the Coordinator of the Infants and Toddlers Program. There is an opening for a full time TVI to work at the Anchor Center for Blind Children.

*Program Updates:* We have twenty-six students (five classes) enrolled in our Preschool Program and 4-5 more on the wait list. Our Inclusion program (started last year) continues to be successful and a wonderful new asset to our program; we have three sighted peers enrolled this year and have had two families already ask to be on the list for next year.

Jennifer Parker, our Home Visit Coordinator, has been working closely with Lorraine from A Shared Vision to coordinate new referrals and collaborate creatively on how to meet the needs of families despite the need for more EI TSVIs.

Our Infant and Toddler program has started off well, with new families who were referred over the summer. Our staff is strong in all programs, which leads to high-quality programming every day!

In June, we were selected to be recipients of a Circle Grant from Early Milestones Colorado! We will be using the funds on a large Transition Project to help families understand all the transitions that happen in a child's early education years (from EI to preschool options to kindergarten and all the IFSP/Child Find/IEP meetings that go along with it all). We will be working closely with District TSVIs and CCBs to help streamline information to be shared with families. Our Transition Project Team is already working hard to create meaningful ways to reach all families to help them be better informed of options and what to expect through these important transitions.

Our Research Team, led by Cathy Smyth is doing amazing things and we have many research projects underway! Our NAVEG research project (newborn screenings for brain-based visual impairments) finished its first phase in the NICU of Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children in March and will begin phase II at Children's Hospital in the next few weeks. The results of Phase I are very promising for the future of newborn vision screenings! The NAVEG team (Cathy Smyth, Tammy Miller, and Elise Darrow) continues to have requests for training on the screening from TSVIs and early interventionists across the country. They have trained in five other states and have 3-4 more in progress/scheduled over the next few months. The response has been highly successful!

The CVI Initiative, headed by Melody Furze and Elise Darrow, is working on exciting projects with students who have brain-based visual impairments, including case studies and other research projects in our center-based programs. They continue to represent Anchor Center as presenters and attendees of both education and medical conferences nationwide and are collaborating with vision specialists in the UK on a new "Make it Easier" project with Anchor staff.

*Events:* Summer Camp was once again a huge success! We had full rosters for both the Anchor's Away Preschool Camp and the Summer Sprouts program for children under three.

We kicked off the school year in August with a celebration of Anchor Center's 40th Birthday with current students and alumni families! We had over 100 people in attendance for outdoor fun in our garden and grounds.

Family Services is planning upcoming Night Watch respite Nights and we will continue to have one per month starting in October. "Picnic and Popsicles"--a gathering with all current families took the place of respite night in September and was a great event!

Our 26<sup>th</sup> annual fundraising event, Sunset in the City, took place in September and was an overwhelming success and recording setting event. Given that Anchor Center is funded nearly in fully by charitable gifts, we are extremely grateful for the support of our sponsors and guests

### **Colorado AER Chapter (Paula Conroy)**

The CAER Board met on September 13th. We welcomed new Board Members, Jamie Lugo, and Wendy Unwin-Watson. We will be meeting on the third Wednesday of each month (generally). The dates will be in the newsletter and on the website/Facebook page. Guests are welcome and should contact a board member to get the meeting link.

A priority this year is recruiting new AER members. This will help build out new personnel on the CAER Board. While we also want new chapter members, several leadership positions have been held by the same people for a long time. We need "new blood" if our chapter is going to survive. Heather is in conversation with National AER investigating strategies for this recruitment. The current board members will bring recruitment ideas to every meeting this year for discussion.

We want to remind everyone that applications for mini grants are due November 1st. Now is the time for submission! We accept applications throughout the year but only review them once per year. The rules and descriptions are available on the CAER website.

Paula will send out the sticker options to the board. She and Nancy will discuss purchase options. This will be done by September 19<sup>th</sup> so we can have them available ASAP. This small-scale fundraiser may be our only one this year until we can grow the board.

## **Colorado DVR (Michele Reed)**

Josie Shea has left DVR (Colorado Springs office) her automated email response said her last day was August 26, 2022. If you are a person with an open case, please contact the counselor who has been assigned to your case. If you need contact information, please contact Laverne Dell at [laverne.dell@state.co.us](mailto:laverne.dell@state.co.us) or 720-697-0957. To submit a referral for services, please contact Audrey Wille at [audrey.wille@state.co.us](mailto:audrey.wille@state.co.us) or 720-908-2699.

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

*CCB/CSDB Mentoring Program:* We look forward to resuming our visits with students at CSDB this school year. In April, we visited a class of senior students and talked about financial literacy and various devices and techniques to identify, sort, and manage money. Additionally, we participated in a class discussion with middle schoolers, focusing on non-verbal language, interviewing skills and how to improve communication. The students were highly engaged and enjoyed the topic. We appreciate our collaboration with colleagues at CSDB, as well as the opportunity for our students to give back to blind youth.

*FAST Program (Fun Activities and Skills Training):* We wrapped up the school year in April with an incredibly fun session about planting and seed germination. Tactile artist Ann Cunningham created tactile representations of the seed germination process of a lima bean, giving examples of stages of development. Additionally, Arapahoe County Master Gardeners assisted each student to plant their own grape tomato seeds to take home. They were given instructions on how to care for the plant and we hope they enjoyed the fruits all through the Summer. ‘

*Family Support:* We held educational seminars for parents while their students were busy with FAST activities. In April, the Blind Parents Division of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado teamed up with their sighted peers in the kitchen to prepare lunch for their children while wearing learning shades. Our blind parents shared various non-visual techniques that could then be taught to or reinforced in blind youngsters at home, so parents would be able to have equal expectations for all their children. And to make it a truly family event, there were sighted siblings and children of blind parents involved in all the day’s activities, too.

*2022 Summer Programs:* This summer we held a three-week residential youth session in June, and a two-week session in July - our first residential summer programs since COVID. We had ten teenagers in June and another 7 in July, coming from places as close as Denver and as far afield as New Hampshire, California, Georgia, Wyoming and even one from Peru.

In addition to the Braille, Technology, Cane Travel, and Home Management classes every day, students played goal ball, had a special tech and work class, attended a chemistry/wood shop Saturday, participated in an employment/college readiness seminar, workshops of healthy boundaries with WEAVE, and took a field trip to the CU-Boulder campus and the Fiske Planetarium. Somehow, we managed to squeeze in rock climbing and a day kayaking at Chatfield Reservoir. It would be difficult to decide who, as we delivered the students to their parents or to the airport, was more tired, students or staff!

*BELL Program:* Nine students participated in our two-week-long BELL/Confidence Camp program in June. During the two-week program, students had opportunities to do arts and crafts, ride public transportation, plan menus, shop for ingredients and cook their own meals. They went swimming, worked on their orientation and mobility skills, and learned about guide dogs. Our participants got a chance to wear learning shades and do STEM activities taught by blind role models. A lot of braille was incorporated throughout the program, including formal learning, but also opportunities to learn through play. We had a student who was a homeschooler, and who mastered the braille alphabet during the two weeks of camp. He was so proud and excited. It is always fun to watch young children discover independence and make friends.

*Learning Box:* We are happy to share that our Learning Box program is thriving and growing consistently. In April, our Learning Box session was combined with Fast for the seed planting activity described above. In May, we dedicated a session to learning about how to identify and sort currency. Each student received a Money Reader device available

from the Colorado Talking Book Library and the NLS partnership with the Department of Treasury. Students and parents alike learned a lot and will have the devices on hand for future use.

*School District Partnerships:* We continue to partner with school districts to compliment the challenging work of the TVIs and provide additional hands-on experiences for students. The Denver Public School District visited CCB in May to celebrate the end of the school year. We had three workshops for the students, along with opportunities for the professionals. The breakout sessions were dedicated to communication and friendships, learning about personal space, and establishing and maintaining a safe online presence. The students were very engaged and participated actively. It was rewarding to see a very shy student reach out and connect with a peer at the end of the session on friendships.

*Upcoming events:* In September, the FAST program will go backstage at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts for a hands-on workshop on theater sound, lighting, costumes, and scenes. That will be followed by an hour workshop on communication through improv. In October, we will visit the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder to learn about weather patterns and the effects of climate change. In November, we are excited once again to celebrate Thanksgiving by preparing a feast. Learning Box plans are underway. We will partner with various districts to bring a series of educational activities to their locations to reach more students.

If there are transportation needs for a family, please let Anahit know so supports can be offered. The CCB has a volunteer driver program.

Anahit asked for how best to support learners who are being homeschooled. The CCB Youth Program would like to be of support to students who are not enrolled in their school district program.

At the upcoming Colorado NFB Convention, Paula Conroy will be discussing behavior strategies and Debbie Mendoza will address learners with giftedness.

For information on any of our Youth Programs, please contact Anahit LaBarre by emailing [alabarre@cocenter.org](mailto:alabarre@cocenter.org) or by calling (303) 778-1111, 130 Extension 223.

*Discussion:*

- *Sign Language Needs for ASL:* Tanni recommended checking with the Howard Fund to financially support interpreter services for learners who are deaf-blind.
- *Age Range for CCB Youth Program Activities:* The program will work with all age groups. It was suggested that age ranges be given for announced activities. There are times when an age group is detailed, such as “this program is not appropriate for children under the age of third grade.” It was suggested that “all ages welcome” might be noted if this is the case.

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

The CIMC is inviting (and strongly encouraging) every Administrative Unit (AU), school district, BOCES, and agency to a personalized Zoom meeting. CIMC staff can meet with you alone or with your entire team, including supervisors and Directors of Special Education. We can review services and procedures available from the CIMC to your district – at no cost to your district. We can review your registration database report, student by student. We can review your federal quota census. We can discuss anything you want; just let us know.

Here are reminders that have come from recent meetings:

- Please do not mail equipment back without any explanation. If possible, send us an email, tell us who you are, what you are returning and why you are returning it. Then, print that same email, insert it into the shipping box for us to see when we receive your package. For example, we received a braille from a district. No email. No note. We did not know if the student withdrew from their district, and they were done with it, and it was to be returned to the repository. After some email dialogue we discovered it needed to be repaired, but there was no repair slip. The TVI was not aware of the process. Then summer happened, TVIs changed districts and the incoming TVI arrives and has



no idea why their blind student does not have a brailier. We would be happy to review any of our processes with you. Please give us a call.

- The CIMC does provide music braille to districts. This includes braille transcription for All State Choir materials. Email [cimcbookorders@csdb.org](mailto:cimcbookorders@csdb.org) for more information.
- Try to keep up with your Registration Forms and Exit Forms monthly. This will save you a tremendous amount of work on the next annual count day, January 2, 2023.
- Our state count dropped by 175 students last year because there was not a signed Parent Consent Form. We lost about 40K of public-school quota dollars as over 90 students were quota-eligible.
- We need your Signed Parent Consent Form **BEFORE** you send us a Registration Form. The consent form allows you to share your student’s personally identifiable student information (PII) with us in the CIMC, the CSDB, CDE, and APH.
- The CIMC can run a current statewide student registration database report for any administrative unit, any day of the year.

The CIMC database rank orders the registrations by diagnosis. For example, one district had a parent ask if any other students in Colorado had a diagnosis of Stargardt’s Disease. Our database shows that eight other students have Stargardt’s listed as their primary cause of visual impairment. This report does not identify which administrative unit the students are in, it simply gives us a total number per diagnosis. We currently have 134 unique diagnoses listed.

Here is our current rank ordered list of the top 20:

**Rank: Diagnosis                      Total Active Students on 9/1/2022**

1. Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)	365
2 Optic Nerve Hypoplasia	142
3 Nystagmus	128
4 (tie) Myopia	54
4 (tie) Optic atrophy	54
5 Astigmatism	53
6 Retinopathy of Prematurity	49
7 Amblyopia	40
8 Septo Optic Dysplasia	35
9 Exotropia	33
10 Esotropia	31
11 Optic Nerve Atrophy	30
12 Strabismus	29
13 Albinism	26

\*ocular albinism (rank 16) is 20 students

\*oculocutaneous albinism (rank 23) is 14 students

If we were to combine all three categories into one larger “albinism” category, the total would be 60 (and the rank would jump to 4)

14 Retinitis Pigmentosa	23
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15 (tie)	Aphakia	21
15 (tie)	Glaucoma	21
16	Ocular Albinism	20
17	Leber's Congenital Amaurosis	18
18 (tie)	Coloboma	15
18 (tie)	Delayed Visual Maturation	15
18 (tie)	High Myopia	15

*Discussion:*

- *Primary Cause of Visual Impairment.* Tanni noted that nystagmus is NOT a primary cause unless it is motor nystagmus, which is rare. Sensory nystagmus is a symptom of early onset, bilateral ocular visual impairment caused by another diagnosis. As such, it is highly unlikely that nystagmus is our third leading cause of visual impairment in Colorado. We need to dig deeper on the eye reports. Tanni is wondering if the CIMC can go back to the districts who have reported nystagmus as the primary cause of visual impairment to review the accuracy of these reports. There is also concern about myopia, exotropia, and amblyopia being the organic cause of visual impairment, including blindness.
- ViewPlus® Technologies has released an update for Tiger Software Suite (TSS) Version 8. APH hosted a webinar, now archived on their YouTube channel which shares the new features around the ability for TVIs and transcribers to repurpose tactile graphics and braille content. The upgrade allows customization of UEB contraction tables and map colors to tactile patterns.

CIMC staff spent the summer checking in braille book returns from school districts while simultaneously preparing new book orders for the start of the 2022-23 school year. To date, we have received 359 textbook orders. 284 of those titles were delivered complete to the districts so their students had them for their first day of class. 75 titles are still in production.

*A Product Note:* At the start of every school year, we have an influx in requests for the Periodic Table of the Elements in braille. The version from APH is currently unavailable, we believe they are in the process of updating this product. After research with a few prison braille programs, it turns out the Periodic Table was updated in 2016 and four new elements were added! The CIMC does have 12 copies available in braille from 2008, but they will be missing the 4 newest elements. One prison braille program told us that their UEB with Nemeth and their UEB Math versions of the Periodic Table of the Elements does not include any additional information, just the Table. They advised us that their version is based on the 2014 Periodic Table of Elements. So, this version would also be out of date. We would never have thought to ask what Table had been transcribed, but it is a good reminder to check the materials you are using in your districts. If an updated version becomes available, we will let you know.

The CIMC will be providing APH instructional products for use by the presenter, Dr. Derrick Smith, at the CDE state conference on BVI on October 13-14, 2022.

*Discussion:*

- *CMAS and Braille:* The CIMC received a question from a district braille transcriber, that we believe will be of interest to all, regarding the reference sheet that comes with the CMAS tests. Students who read print are given access to this reference sheet throughout the year, so they are familiar with it during CMAS test administration. The braille copy of the CMAS was considered secure material and the TVI had to return it last year when their students were finished taking the CMAS test. The transcriber could braille from the print material (if that is allowed), but the concern is that it will not be formatted the exact same way as the reference sheet in braille that the braille readers are provided with during their CMAS tests. Is it possible to get an embossed, hard copy, version of the exact formatting for our students who read braille?

- *CIMC will Come to You:* Please reach out to Jim if you want the CIMC to meet with you as an AU or a region!

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

*School News:* Beginning of the year assessments started Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. Assessments include NWEA (MAP), ASL, StarMath, DRA-2, and PALS. Department Bulldog Huddles occur weekly where the principals recognize students and staff PRIDE efforts, share updates, review expectations, and spread joy. The CSDB P.R.I.D.E. store, the Bark Market, opened on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Staff and students in the Bridges to Life program did a phenomenal job getting the store ready. Students and staff were incredibly pleased and motivated with what they can earn. Social-emotional learning instruction continues Fridays for all students, Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Instructional staff are attending High Leverage Practice PLCs led by coaches and administrators during the first 6 weeks of school. Pre-IEP brainstorm meetings are being scheduled to give staff time to collaborate on IEP goals for the 2022-2023 school year. We welcomed 4 new students at the beginning of this school year, and 3 more started last week. Assistive technology and low vision devices were distributed to students. Students are working hard to learn new routes with their O&M Specialists.

*Upcoming Events in the School for the Blind:* Campus wide Field Trip to the North Pole on September 22. City Serve Day on CSDB's campus on September 30 Principals of Schools for the Blind Conference and American Printing House for the Blind Conference, October 3<sup>rd</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup>. National Federation for the Blind, Flight for Sight is landing at the COS Airport on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Kaiya Armstrong will be flying without sight from Phoenix to Washington DC. White Cane Day, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 10-11:30 a.m. at Acacia Park, Colorado Springs.

*Vacancies:* The School for the Blind will have an opening as of November 1st for a TVI. They also have a Literacy Coach position. People interested should reach out to Jamie. Jamie also detailed that it is difficult to find substitute teachers.

*Library:* The Lions Building now houses the library and assistance technology. These books are available for checking out. They are converting to a new library system. The library has information both for professionals and students. Jennifer Mathews is the library and can be reached at [jmathews@csdb.org](mailto:jmathews@csdb.org)

### **CSDB Outreach Services (Cheryl Austin)**

CSDB Outreach Programs' three itinerant, dual-certified Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMSs) are currently providing services to approximately 65 school-age students and 25 early intervention families through agreements with 14 districts/BOCES and 2 Community Centered Boards (CCBs) across the state of Colorado. They also fulfill additional assessment and training requests as the need arises and capacity allows. We continue to explore new programs and services, particularly for families with young children, after a successful summer integrating the two populations we serve through fun, informal events at local parks in the Colorado Springs area.

In addition, planning for the 2023 Denver Metro Braille Challenge is underway. The CSDB Outreach Department participated in the Braille Institute's (<https://brailleinstitute.org>) first planning meeting with regional coordinators on September 14th and 15th. Once again, CSDB Outreach is excited to partner with the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) in Littleton for an in-person event for school-age participants from across Colorado. As in the past, students who are unable to participate in person have the option to participate remotely. TSVIs can proctor the tests in-district and mail them back to the CIMC before the scoring day. For additional contest details, including Registration Forms, check the 2023 Denver Metro Braille Challenge section on the CIMC page of the CSDB website. The Braille Institute website has a Braille Challenge page with parent, student, and teacher resources available, including practice tests. The deadline to submit Registration Forms, signed by parents, is Friday, January 17, 2023. For more information, please contact Debbie Haberkorn at [dhaberkorn@csdb.org](mailto:dhaberkorn@csdb.org) or (719) 578-2197.

#### *Discussion:*

- *"Advertising" of opportunities for contractors:* Tanni maintains a list of private contractors for TVI / O&M Services. AUs in need can contact her with their needs and she will work to link AUs with these providers. With this said and with the services of CSDB Outreach, there are still vacancy needs.

## **UNC VI Program (Paula Conroy)**

Another semester has started at UNCO. There is another new Provost, Dr. Kirsten Fleming. She seems knowledgeable and supportive of special education, and we are optimistic about changes she might make.

Our program numbers remain strong. We are beginning our third O&M cohort with the University of Utah. We are beginning to prepare for reauthorization through CDE and program approval through AER.

## **Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)**

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are in the final 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. Both Wendy and Jessica provide onsite consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. Jessica has been involved with training and support to school-based interveners. 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:* We will be sending out the 2022-23 Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count forms to agency / AU contact personnel by mid to late October. 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 URL is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.as>

*Project Trainings:* We are offering a slate of 22-23 Deaf-Blind Webinar Series trainings starting in September!

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

*Sound Bites:* The BVI Office Hours have been transformed into Sound Bites or training / dialogue sessions based on identified topics of needs. If you have any topic suggestions, please reach out to Tanni. This is a great opportunity for once-a-month training and networking!

*CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:* We are funded for a new slate of clinics across the Western, Southern, Northern, and Metro regions. We thank Debbie Haberkorn for her overall clinic coordination leadership and our site coordinators: Angela Sims / Erin Noe, Debbie Haberkorn, Liz Wieder, and Karin Hensel. And of course, our great evaluation team of Dr. Tom Theune, Jim Olson, and Wendy Stoltman. Tanni will be doing an efficacy review of the clinics this year to determine their value for the 2022-23 budget consideration. We will be replacing two staff on the clinic team if they continue to be funded.

*CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment:* Dr. Derrick Smith is returning for a two-day training on *Tools and Techniques for Teaching Mathematics to Learners with Blindness/Visual Impairment*. This training will be held on the Lowry Campus on October 13-14, 2022. There is only an in-person option for this training. Participants must be Colorado TVIs with a priority for those working in Colorado school districts, as the content is based on school-age learners. EI and EC TVIs can apply, just know the content will not address emergent mathematics. School braillists are welcome, as there will be content on tactile graphics. Derrick is working with Jim Olson on highlighting APH equipment to support mathematics instruction.

*CDE O&M Seminar:* Tanni welcomes suggested speakers / topics for a Spring 2023 event.

*Recruitment and Retention:* We have TVI / O&M Specialist openings in Jefferson County SD, Denver Public School, Windsor Public School, Colorado Springs 11 School District, and several contract requests. Contract TVI and O&M staff are needed in several AUs. A Shared Vision and Anchor Center need more TVI / O&M Specialist support.

We are relieved / glad / ecstatic to see the following new hires: Ruthie Brean in Academy 20, Tommie Sue Celli in Summit / Mountain BOCES; Hanna Waldman in Thompson School District; Eunice Canoy and Brittany Hodgson in Eagle School District; Bob Lee in Pueblo 60 School District, and Dani Epperson in Colorado River BOCES.

Location changes include Brooke Miller, now in Rangeley School District; Bryan Moles in Cherry Creek School District; Jenna Martin in Poudre School District, Michael Wright in Fort Lupton and Hudson / Keenesburg School Districts and Micah Scott in Falcon 49 School District.

Also, happy to report retirees coming back to help: Karen Wood in Colorado Springs 11 School District, Carol Jordan in Johnstown Milliken / Elizabeth School Districts, and Loel Decker for East Central BOCES. Karen Jamison is assisting with Anchor Center for the Blind.

Please keep Tanni in the loop on anticipated and real vacancies. If you want to be on the CDE list of contractors, please reach out to Tanni.

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

*Parent Database:* We currently have about 226 parents registered on the CDE Parent Database. This is out of over 1,200 families across the state. The database is used to email out the *Keeping in Touch* newsletter link and, on rare occasion, mailing to families. 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:* 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 Colorado 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 Specialists 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. 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:* The August-September edition was distributed in late August and the October edition will be distributed by mid-October. There are four more editions to go (Nov-Dec, Jan- Feb, March-April, and May). Please be sure to share the email messages with the link with parents and para, 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.u to go through parents and key contact information.

*CMAS Updates:* Braille tests for CMAS are only available in fully contracted braille. DACs will be able to place the initial orders from January 9 – January 27. CDE will be hosting a Braille Review for CMAS content tests in December 2023. The Unique Accommodations for ACCESS for ELLs are due by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Unique Accommodations for CMAS are due by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Extended time must be documented in the IEP. If it is not specifically specified, extended time is considered as time and a half. If the student needs double time, this must be explicit. As with all other assessment accommodations, there must be evidence of extended time, in whatever increment, is an instructional need that is provided to the student.

### AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

CDE BVI Budget for 2022-23

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

- ⇒ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- ⇒ BVI Coach / Mentor Project
- ⇒ CDE O&M Seminar – goal is for in-person
- ⇒ CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual impairment
- ⇒ CIMC (Interagency Agreement with CSDB)
- ⇒ Vision Coalition
- ⇒ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- ⇒ Sound Bites (monthly virtual trainings) – Focus on Implementation



The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project may be able to fund a make and take session on FVA kits.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

**Recruitment Needs:** We must be creative and vigilant on bringing new people into the field.

It is important to:

- Determine how best to attract personnel to Colorado. The minimum requirement is a BA degree.
- Assist AUs with growing their own personnel by identifying and supporting candidates to become trained. This can and should include undergraduate students, individuals with blindness/visual impairment, parents of children with blindness/visual impairment, existing school personnel who have shown an interest in working with learners with blindness/visual impairment.
- Identify funding streams to support personnel to entering the field.
  - Rural Statewide Shortage Areas Funds
  - ? the Howard Fund
  - ? Lions Club
  - ◆ Other funding sources for districts

### Collaboration Gaps and Opportunities

- Anchor Center Transition Project.
- Potential summer programs with CSDB.
- Connecting students who would benefit from social counseling / focus is on topics and fun to get kids together and then let these conversations flow naturally or a book study about a person with a visual impairment (e.g., Squint).

### Workload Formula

We are overdue in finalizing this document. Tanni will post it on the google drive along with the Learning Media Plan templates for the team to review and pilot between now and our December meeting.

## Meeting Dates for the Vision Coalition

- December 14, 2022 – from 8:30 to 2:30 – virtual
- March 1, 2023, from 8:30 to 2:30 – virtual
- March 8, 2023, from 8:30 to 2:30 – virtual – BACK UP Meeting

Please keep in touch with your Vision Coalition representative about topics that are important to you!

## Baggie Activity

By Rich Walters



This starts my 22nd year of teaching middle school. Yesterday was quite possibly one of the most impactful days I have ever had. I tried a new activity called “The Baggie Activity”. I asked the kids what it meant to have baggage and they mostly said it was hurtful stuff you carry around on your shoulders.

I asked them to write down on a piece of paper what was bothering them, what was heavy on their heart, what was hurting them, etc. No names were to be on a paper. They wadded the paper up and threw it across the room. They picked up a piece of paper and took turns reading out loud what their classmate wrote. After a student read a paper, I asked who wrote that, and if they cared to share.

I’m here to tell you, I have never been so moved to tears as what these kids opened and about and shared with the class. Things like suicide, parents in prison, drugs in their family, being left by their parents, death, cancer, losing pets, and on and on.

The kids who read the papers would cry because what they were reading was tough. The person who shared (if they chose to tell us it was them) would cry sometimes too. It was an emotionally draining day, but I firmly believe my kids will judge a little less, love a little more, and forgive a little faster.

This bag hangs by my door to remind them that we all have baggage. We will leave it at the door. As they left, I told them, they are not alone, they are loved, and we have each other’s back.

I am honored to be their teacher.



**Enjoy the beautiful Autumn days  
as they last!**



# colorado connections

## Braille Competency News



Hats off to **Anne Belinger** for earning her CDE Initial Braille Certificate and **Erin Kerr** from Mesa Valley School District for earning her CDE Renewal Certificate. Kudos to **Dana McMullen** for completing braille renewal modules. Thanks for braille proctors **Chris Maynard** and **Brenda Shepard** for this work this past month.

## Congratulations

- ◆ Congrats to all who participated in the September NFB of Colorado 6 Dot Dash 5K Run/Walk! They had more than 120 runners and walkers. All the money raised goes to supporting the Colorado Center for the Blind braille literacy programs and college scholarships. Thanks to CCB for organizing and hosting this event. Photo shows two of the participants – **Wendy Unwin Watson** and **Erin Kerr** from Aurora School District.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Sarah Goodfellow** and **Steve Sandersen** on the birth of their daughter Lucelia Jane who was born on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, weighing in at six pounds and 10 ounces and 19 inches long. So happy for your family and all who already love Lucelia!



## Corn Mothers Award

We are so thrilled to announce that **Jo Elizabeth Pinto** will be in the 2022 class of the long-running [Corn Mothers](#) project to be honored in a forthcoming [History Colorado](#) exhibition running from September through September 2023. An accompanying book of the 22 inductees will be released October 6 at an opening reception.

Now in its 14th year, the project is an act of narrative preservation, celebrating the voices of women of the Southwest with award-winning photojournalism and storytelling, said Renee Fajardo of the Metropolitan State University of Denver Department of Chicana/o Studies, curator and artistic creator of the project.

“The Corn Mothers represent the continuation of the spirit, heart and soul, of what it means to be part and parcel of this land,” she said. “When you’re from this land, you always know it.”

The 22 inductees, including Jo, will join more than 50 other Corn Mothers in an ever-growing cadre of archiving, supporting, and engaging historically marginalized and underrepresented communities via oral tradition.

For 2022 Return of the Corn Mother book preorders, [click here](#). For more information on the project, contact Renee Fajardo at [efajard3@msudenver.edu](mailto:efajard3@msudenver.edu), 303-615-1179 (office) or 720-329-0869 (cell).





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## Professional Development

- ◆ Thanks to the people who attended the October Deaf-Blind webinar series on the identification of children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss.
- ◆ Thanks to all who attended the 2022 CDE Conference on Blindness / Visual Impairment. It was so great to see people in person! Thanks to our presenter **Dr. Derrick Smith** for sharing so much good information. Also a huge thank you to **Jim Olson** who brought all the APH Math goods to bringing the content to life.

## In Memoriam

Val Smith was a Brailist Assistant for Aurora Public Schools for 9 years (2012-2021). She retired in May of 2021 with hope of many years of camping, traveling and spending time with her husband, kids, as well as their dogs. Unfortunately, she had a heart attack in April while hiking with her husband in Utah. It was a miracle that she survived the event which ultimately gave her a little extra time. One of the biggest blessings is that she was able to travel to California to be part of her son's wedding in June. On August 24th at 8:24 am she passed away as the damage to her heart was too great. Val was an organ donor and they were able to donate her corneas which is a fitting way for her legacy to live on. Always giving, always hopeful and always making a difference. *We extend our condolences to the Smith family and all who knew and worked with Val.*





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