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KEEPING IN TOUCH!

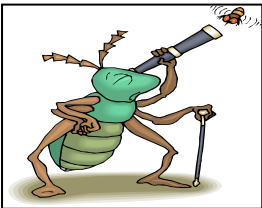
A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness
November—December 2022

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

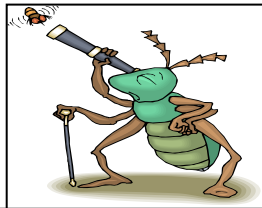
To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent
people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest
critics and endure the betrayal of false
friends; To appreciate beauty, to find
the best in others; To leave the world
a bit better, whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch or a redeemed social
condition; To know even one life has
breathed easier because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded.

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LOW VISION NEWS



Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule

Clinic	Clinic Date	Due Date for Paperwork	Site Coordinator
Metro LVE Clinic	February 22-24, 2023	Tuesday, February 7, 2023	Karin Hensel

Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic

By Debbie Haberkorn

The *Northern Region Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic* was held November 10th and 11th at Enight Skills Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. Ten students from five administrative units (Boulder County District RE1-J, Boulder County District RE-2, Centennial BOCES, Larimer County District R-1, and Larimer County District R2J) received evaluations. Eight parents and six TVIs attended the evaluation with their students.

The Clinic team would like to thank the Enight Skills Center for hosting the event, Samantha Thuis, Liz Wieder, Paula Conroy, Danielle Burden, Jeanine Holmes, and Hanna Waldman for bringing students.

Thank you, Liz Wieder, for coordinating the clinic this year. We appreciate your amazing organizational skills!

Low Vision Evaluation Clinics—What is Your Opinion?

The Low Vision Evaluation Clinics evolved over 25 years ago thanks to a committed group of stakeholders who researched models from other states. The group determined a plan for a regional model with an optometrist who specialized in low vision, two low vision therapists, a statewide clinic coordinator, and volunteer site coordinators. The goal was four clinics a year across the state. And we have been doing it every since with Dr. Tom Theune and Jim Olson as our consistent team members. Past low vision therapists included Jan Barron, Debbie McCune, Nancy Knight, and Wendy Stoltman. Debbie Haberkorn was the second statewide clinic coordinator. The site coordinators have changed through the years—and all have been fantastic. Over the years, hundreds of our students have benefits from the care of these wonderful colleagues.

The clinics have been funded largely from the IDEA funds flowed to the Colorado Department of Education. CSDB has housed the clinic inventory, provided in-kind contributions of two CIMC staff’s time, and provided the travel vehicle to clinics outside of Colorado Springs.

And now we are at a crossroads with the retirement of Dr. Theune and Wendy, and the new job role of Debbie Haberkorn at CSDB. And the question at hand is whether we have run out of stream. To gauge the need for the clinics to continue, Colorado public school TVIs are asked to complete a survey at the following link to complete the survey no later than January 6, 2023: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LVEC>

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

Project Purpose and Staff

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



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

The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. We have five CDE employees (**Tanni Anthony, Gina Herrera, Roberta Curtis, Jessica Meisel, and Wendy Stoltman**) and one specialized Family Specialist contractor (**Cindy Colwell**) on board with the project.

Be in the know about our 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

The December 1, 2022 Child Count Forms have been sent out to key contact personnel in early December 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) or Gina Herrera (herrera_g@cde.state.co.us) to complete the Child Count Form at any time of the calendar year. We count on you!

2022-23 Webinar Series

We are already half way through this school year's webinars. The last ones of the school year will be offered from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. January 24, February 7, 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. Check out the Calendar of Events for more details.



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.

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



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. You can also call Gina at 303-866-6605. Or fill out our new Google Form for Technical Assistance located at <https://forms.gle/FAWsSVo2itikrtLR6>

New Resource on Deaf-Blindness for School Administrators



School administrators play an important role in supporting the identification and referral of children who are deaf-blind. **Identification of Children with Deaf-Blindness: Resources for School Administrators**, by Deborah A. Ziegler, provides information to help school administrators increase their knowledge of deaf-blindness and strategies they can use to ensure that children with deaf-blindness are identified, referred, and receive appropriate services.

SAVE the DATE



COLORADO
Department of Education

2022 - 2023 DEAF-BLIND WEBINAR SERIES

The Colorado Deaf-Blind Project is pleased to announce a series of webinars that will be offered once a month throughout the 2022-2023 school year. **Time for all webinars: 3:30 -5:30 p.m.**

- **January 24, 2023** Topic Setting for the Early Communicator with Megan Mogan
- **February 8, 2023** Student-Led IEPs with Donna Carpenter
- **February 22, 2023** Tactile Strategies
- **March 29, 2023** Tactile Sign Language with Linda Alsop

Participants:

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

Training Expectations:

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

For questions regarding registration, please contact Roberta Curtis at curtis_r@cde.state.co.us 

- **January 25, 2023**
- **February 8, 2023**
- **February 22, 2023**
- **March 29, 2023**

REGISTER
NOW!!

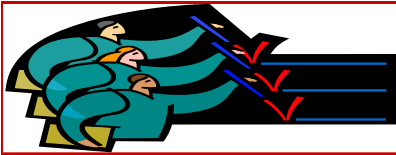
Please be aware that:

- It is a policy in the Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) that all training registrations must be closed 2 weeks prior to the event. This is deadline is in place to allow proper time to meet all the conference/meeting logistical needs.

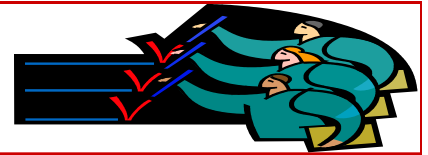
For any questions regarding content/topics, please reach out to :

 Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

 Gina Herrera at herrera_g@cde.state.co.us



CHECK IT OUT!



IDEA

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act



New Documents Regarding Personnel Qualifications under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) recognizes that states are facing many challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including worsening the impact it has had on the shortage of special education teachers and related services providers across the country. They also understand that to address these challenges, some states have policies and procedures in place that may not be consistent with IDEA requirements. OSEP believes it is critical to ensure that state educational agencies (SEAs) are fully aware of the IDEA requirements related to personnel qualifications and alternate certifications. The attached memo describes these requirements and provides information about resources available to support states' efforts in meeting them

Memorandum: OSEP 22-01 — Personnel Qualifications under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Oct. 4, 2022

Developing A National Research Agenda for STEM Education for Students with BVI

A group of researchers have launched a plan for developing a national research agency for STEM education for students with blindness/visual impairment. Two past Colorado presenters are involved – Dr. Derrick Smith and Dr. Tiffany Wild. They, along with their partners, Stacy Kelly and Danene Fast, have created a plan for this topic. The plan represents a very important and overdue approach to solving the challenge of the provision of appropriate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education for students who are blind/visually impaired. It reviews a thorough-going plan which we can use to prepare students with blindness/visual impairments to meet the educational requirements of a future in which our culture depends in an increasingly greater degree on the contribution of well-trained individuals who have acquired the necessary knowledge and skill for functioning in a world where increasing importance will be placed on the ability to master the intricacies of STEM fields of all varieties.

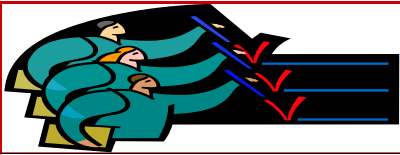
You can read the plan at:

<https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/3/104519/files/2022/04/National-Research-Agenda-for-STEM-for-Students-with-Visual-Impairments.pdf>

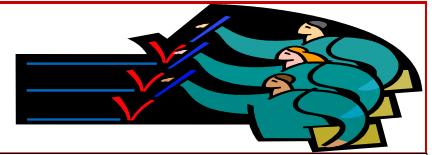
For more information about this project, go to:

<https://u.osu.edu/nationalresearchstemvisualimpairment/>





CHECK IT OUT!



STEM Storytelling through Podcasts (SSP) Project

SSP is an NSF-funded project involving the use and creation of podcasts in the classroom. We are attempting to broaden participation for blind and visually impaired and sighted upper-elementary students through engaging with podcast technology to tell stories about scientists, including those who are Blind and Visually Impaired. We would like to invite you to consider being a part of our teacher testing group.

About the Teacher Testing Group

For this project, we want to make sure to include a range of teachers' voices, expertise, and experience. We will use our teacher advisors' feedback in designing and modifying our podcasts and resources developed as part of this project. We are looking to recruit 25 teachers from classrooms with sighted students and those with blind and visually impaired students, who teach STEM courses in grades 3-5, and are working in a variety of schools and conditions across the country.

Our teacher advisors will help review our material throughout the year, providing feedback via short questionnaires and focus group discussions with other teachers. They will also help by testing some of our resources in their education setting with their kids. We expect that involvement with the advisory board will take roughly 10 hours over this academic year. Duties will involve:

- Reviewing materials 2-3 times throughout the year
- 1-hour focus group discussions at 2 times throughout the year
- Completing 2-3 short questionnaires throughout the year that take roughly 15 minutes each
- As appropriate and reasonable, testing resources in your teaching

Teachers who are selected as a teacher advisor for this project will receive a \$500 stipend for the year. They will also receive recognition as a teacher in a national project, as well as early access to podcast resources and professional learning opportunities. There will be an opportunity for teachers to continue in years 2 and 3 of the project, as well.

If you are interested, please go to the [teacher interest form](#)

Loan Forgiveness Available for Colorado Educators

The Colorado Department of Higher Education is offering loan repayment assistance on qualified loans for Colorado educators, mainly those who serve in rural and hard-to-fill positions such as math and special education. Teachers, administrators, and special service providers who currently work in a public school, including BOCES and facility schools, may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 towards their federal loan repayment per year for the program.

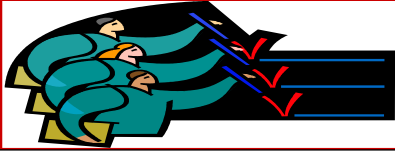
The 2022 program application will close on Sunday, Jan. 15. [For background information, qualifications, instructions to apply, FAQs and contact information, visit the Colorado Educator Loan Forgiveness webpage on the CDHE website.](#)

Federal teacher loan forgiveness and loan cancellation programs

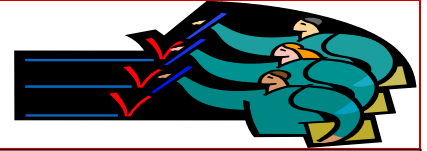
Teacher Loan Forgiveness is an opportunity to have loans forgiven for teachers with Direct Subsidized Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans and Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans. To qualify for the program, teachers must be teaching full-time for five complete consecutive years at an [eligible school](#), and at least one of those years must have been after the 1997-98 school year.

Additionally, teachers can have their Federal Perkins Loans canceled. A teacher may qualify for cancellation of up to 100% of a Federal Perkins Loan if they have taught for one full academic year in a public or non-public elementary or secondary school.

For more information, visit [CDE's federal loan forgiveness program webpage](#) or reference the information provided in the ESEA Office Hours [recording](#). For questions, contact Karen Bixler at bixler_k@cde.co.state.us.



CHECK IT OUT!



OSEP-Funded TA Centers

OSERS' technical assistance centers are ready to address your questions regarding the IDEA and best practices and alternate models for providing special education and related services, including through distance instruction. The National Center for Systemic Improvement is the primary source for technical assistance resources during the COVID-19 national emergency for IDEA Part B programs. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center is the primary source for IDEA Part C programs. For questions pertaining to Part C of IDEA, States should contact their [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center State Contact](#). For Part B of IDEA, states should contact the [National Center for Systemic Improvement](#).

** Early Childhood

The [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#) is providing State Part C and Part B, Section 619 programs with the [latest information](#) on funding and guidance.



** NCSI

The [National Center for Systemic Improvement's](#) website has a wealth of information to support educators and outcomes for children with disabilities.



** Proficient Communicators Who Are Deaf-Blind

The [National Center on Deaf-Blindness](#) has compiled and organized [Resources for Providing Technical Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). It covers OSEP guidance, distance TA, resources for families and service providers, and online learning for proficient communicators who are deaf-blind. The page is being regularly updated with input from state deaf-blind projects and national partners.



** Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

[TIES Center](#) has launched a distance-learning series that provides a framework for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to get through these new transitions, engage fully in academics online, and interact with their teachers and peers, a critical component of well-being. TIES Center is regularly adding resources to the distance learning series that offer the following recommendations to support the inclusion and engagement of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Current resources include:

- [TIES Distance Learning #1: Morning Meetings](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #2: A Collaborative Start to Behavioral Supports](#)
- [TIES Distance Learning #3: Effective Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\) Within the Distance Learning Environment: What in the World Does That Look Like?](#)



** Accessible Materials and Technologies

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

CVI Literacy App - Bubbly

Anitha Muthukumaran (Douglas County SD and UNC doctoral program), Diane Brauner (Paths to Technology), and Emily Cantillon (TVI from Perkins School for the Blind) have developed a literacy app for our students with CVI with App Team Carolina. The developers of the app are Computer Science students from the University of Northern Carolina. The app *Bubbly - CVI Literacy* has officially been released to the App Store! The app is super simple and free for our learners to engage and learn! As of now, Bubbly is available for download on iPads with iOS 14.0 or later. If you have trouble searching it up, here is the link to Bubbly's page on the App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/app/bubbly-cvi-literacy/id1616368300> - Click on this link on the iPad and you can download it for free.

Details about how the app works along with a video demo (very soon, the video will be audio described or a text version will be available) is in <https://appteamcarolina.com/bubbly/> How exciting and a big shout out to our very own Anitha!!! So proud of you!

TEACH Colorado Resource Guides

Do you know a future educator? Over the past year, TEACH Colorado has expanded its list of comprehensive guides to help aspiring educators explore licensure options, prepare for content exams, find financial aid and more. Be sure to share these resources with future educators in your community!

Visit [TEACH Colorado's Reports and How-To Guides webpage](#) for more information.



Wishing you a relaxing break ahead. Thanks for a great 2022!



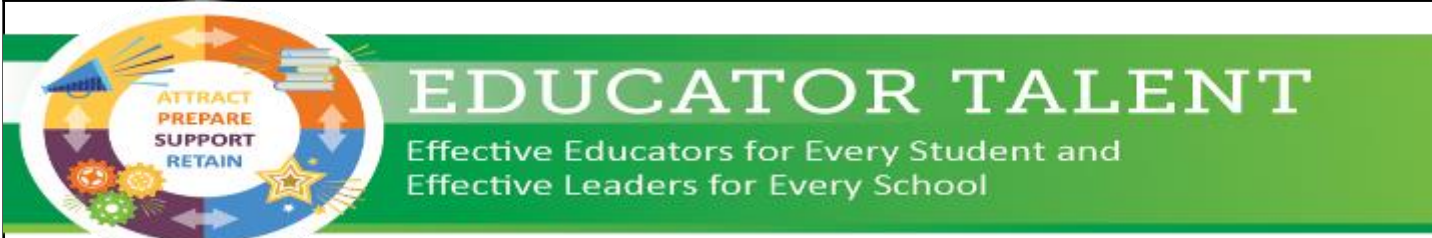
Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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

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

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

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



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

For information about Colorado licensing requirements in the area of Special Education Specialist: Visual Impairment and/or School O&M Specialist, please refer to the information contained within Educator Licensing’s Endorsement Requirements page at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/endorsementrequirements>.

Initial CDE Braille Competency Testing Requirements

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

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

Renewal CDE Braille Competency Certificate

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

For more information about Colorado’s braille competency requirements, please go to:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

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You can do it !



Early Learning & School Readiness

Universal Preschool begins July 1, 2023

The Universal Preschool Program will launch on July 1, 2023 at which time the Colorado Preschool Program will end. CDE will continue to administer preschool special education for children ages 3 through 5 in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Exceptional Children's Educational Act.

Questions about implementing the Colorado Preschool Program during the 2022-23 school year should be directed to CDE's Preschool Special Education staff.

Questions regarding ongoing implementation of IDEA requirements for preschoolers should be directed to CDE's Preschool Regional Specialists.

For information about preschool implementation effective on or after July 1, contact the Colorado Department of Early Childhood.

State Board of Education gives final approval to revised academic standards in social studies

At its November meeting, the Colorado State Board of Education voted to approve final revisions to the Colorado Academic Standards for social studies after adding the contributions of ethnic and religious groups as well as LGBTQ+ people in teaching about civil government.

Each school district and charter school will have until the beginning of the 2024-25 school year to transition to the revisions to the social studies standards. However, local education providers must incorporate

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 were due Thursday, December 1, 2022
CMAS UAR were 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



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 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)



Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities

and IDEA's Discipline Provisions

On July 19, 2022, the U.S. Department of Education announced the release of new guidance from its Office for Civil Rights (**OCR**) and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (**OSERS**) to help public elementary and secondary schools fulfill their responsibilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities and avoid the discriminatory use of student discipline.

These newly released resources are the most comprehensive guidance on the civil rights of students with disabilities concerning student discipline and build on the Department's continued efforts to support students and schools through pandemic recovery

New Module:

Inclusion of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Supports in the General Education Classroom



This module, developed in collaboration with the TIES Center, describes the benefits of including students with significant cognitive disabilities in general education classrooms.

It also offers information on how teachers can plan for and teach these students in inclusive classrooms

Check out the [Module here.](#)






Calendar of Events

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

December 20 **Tactile Art Club** - virtual 5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
 Contact: Rishika Kartik at <https://www.rishikastudio.com/contact>

Farewell to 2022!!

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** **First CIMC Friday (virtual meeting)** from 9:00 - 0:00 a.m. or 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
 Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@cldb.org
- January 9—27** **DACs Must Order Braille—Format CMAS Tests**
- January 12** **AER Town Hall**—7 pm EST
 For more information, <https://aerbvi.org/>
- January 18** **Sound Bites**— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Math Strategies with Dr. Derrick Smith
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- January 25** **CO Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series**— 3:30-5:30 p.m.—Settings for the Early Communicator
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at 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@cldb.org
- February 8** **CO Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series**—3:30-5:30 p.m. on Student-Led IEPs
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- February 15** **Sound Bites**— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. (CVI and ACC with Chris Russell)
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at 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
- February 22-24** **Metro LVE Clinic**— Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver
 Contact: Karin Hensel at 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@cldb.org
- March 15** **Sound Bites**— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Ask the Doctor / Last Visit with Dr. Theune
 Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us



Calendar of Events

2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023 2023

- March 29** **CO Deaf-Blind Project Webinar Series**— 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. on Tactile Sign Language
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- April 7** **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
- April 19** **Sound Bites**— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Dyslexia and Visual Impairment
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- May 5** **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
- May 17** **Sound Bites**— 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on Assessment of Students with BVI
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- June 5—6** **Conference for AT and Education (CATE)**—Denver
Contact: www.swaaac.org
- June 27—28** **Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness & Significant Support Needs**—Adams 12 Conference
Contact: Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
- July 1-6** **2023 National Federation of the Blind Convention** - Houston, Texas
Contact: nfb@nfb.org
- Nov 29 - Dec 2** **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference**— St. Pete’s Beach, FL
Contact: <https://www.gettingintouchwithliteracy.org/>

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.



Sound Bites

(Virtual Monthly Professional Learning / Conversations)

Sounds Bites are 2022-23 opportunities for personnel trained to work with learners with visual impairment, including blindness to gather once a month for professional learning and conversations on improving educational assessment and programmatic practices.

Some sessions will be restricted to teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs).

All participants must register no later than two weeks in advance for each training/conversation event.

The dates are as follows from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

November 16, 2022 - *Cortical Visual Impairment: Unique Considerations for Functional Vision Assessment & Learning Media Assessment* with Chris Russell

December 7, 2022 - *Cortical Visual Impairment: Approaches to Intervention and Educational Program Development* with Chris Russell

January 18, 2023 - *Tactical Math Strategies* with Dr. Derrick Smith

February 15, 2023 - *Cortical Visual Impairment: Considerations for Augmentative & Alternative Communication Development* with Chris Russell

March 15, 2023 - *Ask the Doc: Low Vision Evaluation, Tools, and Anything Else on Your Mind* with Dr. Tom Theune

April 19, 2023 - *Dyslexia and Visual Impairment* with Kelly Bevis and Amie Davenport

May 17, 2023 - *Assessment Considerations for Learners with Blindness/ Visual Impairment* with Cara Johnson and Tanni Anthony

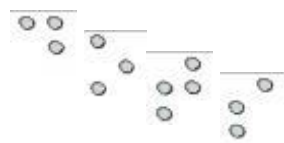


When registering, please indicate if you will require special aids, services, and or accommodations at least two weeks ahead of each training event. Once registered, the link and handouts will be sent two days ahead of the training.

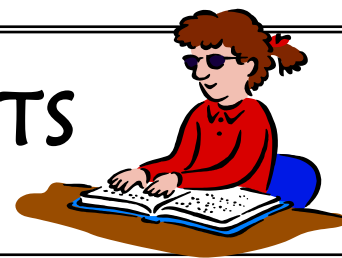


COLORADO
Department of Education

If you have any questions please contact Tanni Anthony (anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)



CONNECTING THE DOTS



Colorado Braille Competency Committee

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

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

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

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.

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

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.

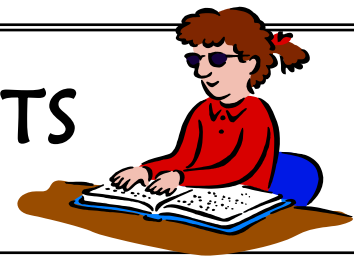
Braillewriter Repair

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





CONNECTING THE DOTS



Registration Open for Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest

It's time, once again, for the Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest, sponsored by the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults.

Encourage more Braille. Improve reading skills. Win prizes.

The National Federation of the Blind is proud to partner with the American Action Fund for this Braille literacy contest. Braille reading students and adults across the U.S. compete against other participants in similar contest categories for seven weeks. Participate in the Braille Readers Are Leaders contest.

- Register and log minutes read each day online using Beanstack
- Log the number of minutes read. Earn prizes and fun badges as you read.
- Read the most minutes in your category and receive a cash prize in addition to all other prizes earned.
- Earn entries into a drawing for a fabulous grand prize! The more minutes you read, the more entries you earn.

The contest will begin on **December 5, 2022 and run through January 23, 2023**. You can register now at actionfund.beanstack.org. Improve your Braille reading and speed, something that will last a lifetime! [A how-to-register video is also available.](#)

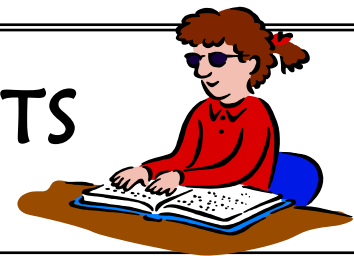
Register for the contest and log your first day of reading: Receive a contest T-Shirt. (This will be mailed to you as soon as possible so you can enjoy it while the contest is still in progress. The rest of the prizes will be mailed soon after the contest concludes.)

We are excited to offer Bean Stack as the means to register and log minutes for Braille Readers Are Leaders this year. Bean Stack will allow you, your child, or student to receive encouragement and prize reminders in real time as minutes are logged. As always however, the American Action Fund is committed to helping all those who are interested in participating in this contest. If you are unable to register or log minutes read online, please email BrailleReadingContest@actionfund.org for assistance.

Braille Book Resources

Expand your child's Braille library and toolbox. Check out the [Braille storybook resources webpage](#) for information on free books, lending libraries, and Braille book retailers.

CONNECTING THE DOTS



A Survey of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments on Braille Instruction

Getting In Touch With Literacy Invites You to Participate!

Getting In Touch With Literacy (GITWL) is pleased to support this research on braille instruction from Rice University and the University of British Columbia. In keeping with the GITWL goal of increasing our knowledge base of effective literacy instructional strategies specific to

people with visual impairments, the committee readily agreed to share this wonderful opportunity with the GITWL community. (A bonus is that you can receive a \$10.00 Amazon gift card!) Please take advantage of this opportunity to engage in this important research. We appreciate all those that have completed the survey!

The research committee plans to present the results of this research at the Getting In Touch With Literacy Conference, November 29 - December 2, 2023, in St. Pete Beach, Florida! This is your opportunity to be on the ground floor of this exciting research. See below for more information.



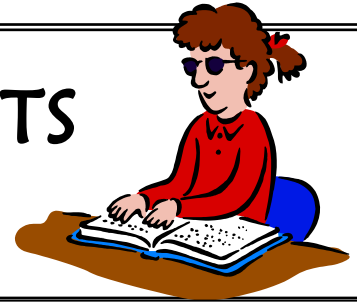
Dear Colleagues,

We are conducting a research study, with funding from the Institute of Education Sciences (Award #R324A190093), to explore the knowledge, skills, and strategies teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) need to effectively teach braille reading and writing. We are looking for qualified TVIs to take a survey that will take approximately 30 minutes. In the survey, we will ask you questions about your TVI training program and inservice experience and about your attitudes and beliefs about braille. You will also respond to several scenarios in which you imagine interacting with a hypothetical student.

We hope that your participation in the study will result in a deeper understanding of how braille is read and taught with potential benefits to the community of braille readers as a whole. We know that 30 minutes is not an insignificant amount of time, and if you provide your email address on the survey you will receive a \$10 Amazon Gift Card for your participation. To complete the survey, please follow this link:

https://riceuniversity.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5suV7cevrkINshw

CONNECTING THE DOTS

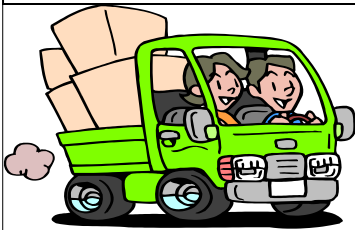


Braille Scanner App

Thanks to Mike Plansker for sharing this resource who got it from a SWAAAC webinar.

Convert Braille documents using the [Braille Scanner app](#). Braille Scanner can show English letters above the Braille. The matched text can be copied for use in other applications, or spoken via Text-To-Speech.

Learn more at <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/braille-scanner/id1517369095>.



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Life after High School: A Guide for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families of Youth with Disabilities

This guide is offered in nine languages: English, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Wow, eh? From Open Doors for Multicultural Families. Go to: <https://www.multiculturalfamilies.org/programs-services/youth-transition-program/transition-guide-download/>

DVR Training on Personal Adjustment

The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Personal Adjustment Training Unit offers specialized training programs to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired in becoming independent at home, in the community, and in employment. Training is tailored to each individual's unique needs, experiences, and employment goals and is provided in the home and local community. Services are available at no cost to eligible individuals. Center-based training options are also available. Training may include the following instructional areas: Adaptive Communications, Assistive Technology, Daily Living Skills, Low Vision, and Orientation & Mobility.

Please check out our informational videos that will provide you with an overview of the training we can provide to individuals who are blind or visually impaired: [Blind and Low Vision Services -- Personal Adjustment Training](#)

Training is available statewide to active DVR clients with a vision impairment. Referrals for training are made by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. To get started, contact a local DVR office.

Please share this letter with anyone you think will benefit from our services.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

Thank you!

Bryan Baldwin
Assistive Technology Specialist
Blind and Low Vision Services

Please check out our [informational videos](#) that will provide you with an overview of our services.



COLORADO

**Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation**

Department of Labor and Employment



TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

Scholarship Program

The National Federation of the Blind's annual scholarship program is the largest of its kind in the nation. Every year, we award more than \$250,000 in cash and prizes to blind scholars across the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico in recognition of their achievements and professional aspirations.



Thanks to our generous partners, there are thirty \$8,000 merit-based scholarships currently available. All scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence, community service, and leadership. The finalists are announced every spring. They then attend our national convention in July when the winners of each individual scholarship are selected. Scholarship winners have gone on to succeed in careers ranging from computer science and engineering to civil rights law and international diplomacy.

New in 2022: \$8,000 Awards & More

Read the latest news release: [National Federation of the Blind Enhances Largest Scholarship Program for Blind Scholars.](#)

How to Apply

Please complete the application in full by March 31, 2023.

[Online Application](#)

Eligibility

The following requirements apply to all applicants:

Must be [legally blind \(PDF\)](#) in both eyes.

- Must be residing in the United States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico.
- Must be 18 years of age by July 1, 2023.
- Must be pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time, post-secondary course of study in a degree program at a U.S. institution in the fall of the year of application (one scholarship may be given to a person employed full-time while attending school part-time).
- Must participate in person in the entire NFB National Convention and in all of its scheduled scholarship program activities (finalists will receive assistance to attend the national convention).
- For more information regarding eligibility, we strongly encourage you to review our [scholarship program FAQs](#).

4 Jim Halladay HumanWare/NFB Scholarship Opportunities

The National Federation of the Blind and HumanWare have proudly collaborated over the years to offer HumanWare/NFB STEM development opportunities to students. For 2023, the newly renamed Jim Halladay HumanWare/NFB scholarship has doubled the opportunities offered and will award 4 scholarships instead of 2! This year, HumanWare is offering to each of the four winning candidates one Brailiant BI40 braille display and \$1000 to be used towards tuition fees to help winning students complete their studies and be ready to take on the world! To apply for these awards, NFB scholarship applicants will have an opportunity to select a checkbox which will give them access to the Humanware scholarship application questions as well. Please note: The selection process for these Humanware scholarships is entirely separate from the selection process for the 30 NFB scholarships. Those selected as Humanware/NFB scholarship winners will be notified separately by Humanware of their winner status. If NFB scholarship applicants do not wish to fill out the application questions for the Humanware/NFB scholarships, simply do not check the box within the NFB scholarship application and bypass the associated questions.

just for PARENTS

Addressing the Impacts of Parent and Caregiver Loss on Children

(Also available in Spanish: [Cómo afrontar el impacto de la pérdida de padres y cuidadores en los niños](#))

This *Dear Colleague* Letter from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) discusses the urgent need to support children and youth who've experienced the traumatic loss of a parent or caregiver. It also includes an astoundingly thorough list of programs and resources available to address the spectrum of needs a child or family might have, from economic supports to behavioral health, to kinship and family supports, and more.

English version: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/policy-guidance/addressing-impacts-parent-and-caregiver-loss-children>

Spanish version: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/DCL%20on%20caregiver%20loss-Spanish.pdf>

The APH ConnectCenter includes FamilyConnect, CareerConnect, and VisionAware – a hub of websites that offer curated advice and resources



CONNECTCENTER

Connecting people with useful information and resources

to assist children, parents, adults, job seekers who are blind or low vision, and their associated professionals, leading to greater independence and success in their lives.

Wednesdays December 28th, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 PM 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](#)

For more information about the APH ConnectCenter, including upcoming and previously recorded webinars, [visit the APH ConnectCenter webpage](#). The [ConnectCalendar](#) is where people or organizations can share and find information about events taking place across the country. Have an event related to blindness that you want people to know about? [Add it here!](#)

Children and the Holidays

Understanding that holidays and family get-togethers can be challenging for many children, the Child Mind Institute offers a series of articles (in English and in Spanish) that include such titles as: Enjoying the holidays more with mindfulness; How to take the stress out of family gatherings; Tips for traveling; How to handle holidays after a death in the family; and 4 ways to make the holidays better for kids.

[English version of the eNewsletter/landing page to the series](#)

[Spanish version of the same](#)

Family Engagement and Inclusive Technology Practices

The research is clear. Implementing strong, authentic family engagement practices has a positive impact across the board for educators, families, and learners themselves. Check out the Accessible Learning Experience Podcast's latest episode, *Family Engagement & Inclusive Technology Practices*, from CITES (Center on Inclusive Technology and Education Systems). Dive deeper in the links at the bottom of the page, too. This all can be found at:

<https://aem.cast.org/get-started/resources/accessible-learning-experience/s02-ep03-family-engagement-inclusive-technology-practices>

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 Signup 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, , December 21st, 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, December 28th, 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

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

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

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

just for PARENTS

Looking for Parents of High School Students with IEPs

Are you a parent or legal guardian of a high school student who has an IEP and is about two years away from finishing high school? We are looking for a few such parents/guardians to read and answer some simple questions about a short description of a research project and a participation consent form. The purpose is to help us ensure that the project description and consent form are clear and easy to read. This is part of a study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) as a partner.

We will arrange a day and time to meet virtually with each selected parent individually, sometime in December. During this virtual session, we will share and discuss the document, which is about 3 pages long. The session will take approximately one hour.

If you are interested, [please complete this short form](#). Parents who are selected and who complete the activity will be given a \$50 gift card. We may not be able to select every interested parent.

Questions may be directed to bsterrett@air.org

**"YOU WILL TEACH THEM TO FLY, BUT THEY
WILL NOT FLY YOUR FLIGHT. YOU WILL TEACH
THEM TO DREAM, BUT THEY WILL NOT DREAM
YOUR DREAM. YOU WILL TEACH THEM TO
LIVE, BUT THEY WILL NOT LIVE YOUR LIFE.
NEVERTHELESS, IN EVERY FLIGHT, IN EVERY
LIFE, IN EVERY DREAM, THE PRINT OF THE
WAY YOU TAUGHT THEM WILL REMAIN."**

- Mother Teresa-

jobs

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** Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please reach out to Tammy Miller at 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

Southern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Position**—Colorado Springs District 11. For more information, please contact Nancy Melo Maresh at nancy.mereshmelo@d11.org or (719) 520-2153.

Northern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE or part-time TVI / O&M Specialist**—Windsor School District. Contact Jennifer Sedaghat at Jennifer.sedaghat@weldre4.org.

Eastern Region

- ◆ **TVI and O&M Specialist Contract Work**—East Central BOCES—Contact Beverly Bragg at (719) 740-0544 or 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.

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.



VISION COALITION MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting - December 14, 2022

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Cheryl Austin, Paula Conroy, Nancy Cozart, Chaz Davis, Melissa French, Paula Landry, Jamie Lugo, Tammy Miller, Erin Noe, Jim Olson, Michelle Reed, and Chloann Woolley

Person Absent: Michelle 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 – Chaz Davis
- 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 Chaz Davis, who is representing the Colorado Center for the Blind's Youth Program

PROGRAM UPDATES

Metro Region (Nancy Cozart)

Our most recent meeting was held virtually on December 8, 2022. Thanks to Denver area staff for hosting a great meeting! Cathy Smyth presented on the Boehm-3 assessment. It is so nice to have a tool for students with visual impairment that can provide ongoing assessment for some of our youngest learners specific to understanding of concepts and learning media. The Boehm-3 comes in three binders in either the Big Picture Format or the Tactile version. In addition, there is a Getting Ready Binder that can be used to assist students in gaining experience with the assessment materials.

The Denver Metro Regional Meeting Dates for 2nd semester are:

- February 9, 2023, from 3:30-5:00 hosted by Littleton Public Schools. The meeting will be presented virtually. We are considering an in-person option as well. However, a final decision will be made closer to the meeting date.
- April 6, 2023, from 3:30-5:00

Denver Area Braille Challenge (in person) will be at the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) on Friday February 10th. Be sure to complete paperwork on time in order to have students participate!

Denver Area Low Vision Clinic is February 22-24, 2022. Be on top of paperwork to meet deadlines!

Discussion:

- *What are the updates from OSEP for eligibility?* Tanni shared that the BVI eligibility criteria update is going to public comment in early 2024.
- *ACVREP district requirements for O&M Specialists:* This is a requirement of initial licensure with CDE. Whether districts require this as an ongoing expectation is varied, most likely it is not a district requirement.
- *OTR certification as VRTs?* This is allowable through ACVREP. The rationale is to support a field shortage of rehabilitation counselors. There has been national discussion on this issue.
- *Updating the Caseload Formula?* This is on the docket for our March Vision Coalition meeting.
- *Medicaid \$ for O&M services.* O&M services are no longer in Medicaid as a reimbursable service.
- *How can we plan for changes in IEP systems to not lose preferred tools in drop down boxes, etc.?* Tanni will ask CDE if we can model any new feature suggestions. Otherwise, this is an area for AU collaboration to bring to their IEP platform entities. Tanni suggested that Nancy lead a listserv discussion on needed common areas that might be highlighted with a unified field voice.
- *Brailnote Technology- lack of control with firewalls; state vs regional desire to have a Q&A with Humanware regarding general issues for users.* This might be a topic discussion for the next Metro meeting and the meeting would be open to the state through a virtual meeting platform and/or listserv conversations.

Northern Region (Melissa French)

The Northern region met on September 23, 2022, in person and virtually for our first meeting of the year. Our agenda included presenters Jim Olson and Teresa Kilbury from CIMC. Jim and Teresa shared resources, and APH updates with our group. Our next meeting will be in the Spring of 2023.

The Northern Low Vision Evaluation was on November 10th and 11th in Fort Collins at Ensign Skills Center. With a full schedule our region continues to be grateful for all the valuable resources we get from working with this team of professionals.

Western Region (Erin Noe)

The Western Slope TVI/COMS met virtually in October and November. In October we met some new TVI/COMS who have recently started working in the Western Slope. We discussed CVI, vision therapy and upcoming virtual trainings. Several of the TVIs expressed an interest in receiving training/materials for FVA and LMAs. They liked the idea of building their assessment kits and getting fresh ideas for what to use. In November, we met and supported one another with questions about IEP development, appropriate goals for high school students, and the importance of consulting with staff and administration at each of our schools.

The TVIs in Mesa Valley School District have been really enjoying the Sound Bites professional learning conversations on CVI by Chris Russell. He is a wealth of information on this topic, and we are learning a lot through his presentations we can immediately apply to students.

Discussion:

- *Are braillists across the state utilizing the brailist list serve? Do braillists post questions or respond to questions to support one another? What is the exact email address to post a question?* The listserv has been updated via TVIs and braillists sending in names of current braillists in Colorado School Districts. Tanni will send out an email by the beginning of the year to get the ball rolling. This is an interactive listserv, so emails can be generated from CDE and the field if braillists have an announcement or a question about UEB, Nemeth, etc.

Southern Region (Chloann Woolley)

The Southern Region TVI-DVR met on September 20th virtually and October 24th in-person this quarter. Our November Make-n-Take was postponed due to weather. Our next scheduled meeting is virtually on January 31st 3:30-4:30 to hear from our esteemed Vocational Rehabilitation Personnel. The September meeting was a time to set-up dates and agenda topics, say hello to old friends and greet new people to our field and area. In the October meeting we reviewed the math strategies and materials presented by Dr. Derrick Smith at the State CDE/VBI Conference. Individuals asked questions and reviewed the APH math products.

Our November meeting was scheduled with our guest presenter/coach Cara Johnson, School Psychologist. Last year Cara provided information on supporting student Executive Functioning through tactile schedules. We were hoping to continue to create tactile schedules for our students with a Make-N-Take. However, we continue to be denied the opportunity to work together to be creative. Cara shared her handout and example slides to the southern region. See link for handouts: [Using tactile schedules to support executive functioning; examples of tactile schedule](#). Many of our colleagues in the state participated in the training around the book: *Calendars for Students with Multiple Impairments Including Deafblindness* (provided to each AU from the Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project. We hope to continue to implement strategies throughout the year.

Colorado Springs 11 is looking to fill their TVI(s) positions for this next year. There are also needs for O&M services in the Colorado Springs school districts. CSDB will be hiring as well with one opening specific to Social Studies.

Continued Discussions from last meeting:

1. Learning Media Plans:
 - a. An initial student into your school should have a thorough Learning Media Assessment, including, as appropriate, a Functional Vision Assessment. These assessments will build the content of the Learning Media Plan. The LMP is led by the TVI with input from others, including the student.
 - i. **Review of medical records**, including eye exam reports and other pertinent medical information (e.g., side effects of continued medications that may influence sensory functioning / behavior)
 - ii. **Parent Interview** specific to the student's diagnosis and functioning at home and in the community. See interview form from APH / TSBVI products.

- iii. **Student Interview** specific to specific sensory tasks, preferences, what helps / what hinders (e.g., when do you get tired, do you wear glasses). Also, student feedback during assessment tasks. See interview forms from APH / TSBVI products.
 - iv. **Teacher interview** specific to other school personnel who observe and interact with the student, including gathering a body of evidence of the student’s work products.
 - v. **Student observation** in at least 2 environments / different times of day
 - vi. **FVA Assessment:** Eye Appearance, Dynamic and Static Fields, Color, Contrast, Light, Distance/Near Acuity
 - vii. **Reading/Writing** near and far
 - viii. **Expanded Core Curriculum Needs as appropriate for the LMP**, with established protocols.
With this said, an ECC assessment will inform other aspects of the IEP.
- b. The FVA should be reviewed at least yearly or anytime there is an eye exam with new information and/or an observational change in the student’s vision is noticed.
 - c. All students should have current eye reports on file, when possible (at least document how often student participates in an eye exam)
There have been no comments on the LMP Forms A/B:

LMP Template A: Information for Learning Media Plan

1. **Selected Learning and Literacy Mode(s)**
 - a. Current Learning and Literacy Mode(s)
 - i. Primary: make selection
 - ii. Secondary: make selection
 - b. Recommended Learning and Literacy Modes
 - i. Primary: make selection
 - ii. Secondary: make selection
2. **Justification of primary and secondary learning and literacy modes**
 - a. Include: student diagnosis / prognosis and sensory functioning. Reference most recent FVLMA with date and findings (visual learner, tactual learner, dual media learner, etc.) Summarize how student access materials using selected mode(s).
3. **How will learning and literacy modes be implemented?**
 - a. Summarize how materials will be accessed using chosen literacy mode(s). Include statement similar to: Learning and literacy mode(s) with needed accommodation(s) will be provided throughout the school day with the support of consult by a teacher of students with visual impairments.
4. **How student’s instruction will be integrated**
 - a. Include statements similar to: Support across learning environments with adapted materials and access to tools and devices.
5. **State level of competency expected in each selected modes**
 - a. Include statement similar to: “See IEP goals.” Can also note “Student is expected to achieve his/her/their IEP goals with implementation of noted sensory-based accommodations, material adaptation, and tools and devices.”
6. List the dates for instruction to commence
 - a. IEP Dates. Include statement similar to: “See goals and objectives and service delivery page.”
7. Has the TVI demonstrated braille competency?
 - a. Yes. (If not, what should be written? "No, but under supervision of a TVI.")

LMP Example B: Information for Learning Media Plan (this provides an example of hypothetical student)

1. Selected Learning and Literacy Mode
 - a. Current Learning and Literacy Mode
 - i. Primary: print enlargement or visual mode with optical enhancement
 - ii. Secondary: auditory
 - b. Recommended Learning and Literacy Modes
 - i. Primary: print enlargement or visual mode with optical enhancement
 - ii. Secondary: auditory

2. Justification of primary and secondary learning and literacy modes
 - a. The student has a diagnosis of oculocutaneous albinism, myopia, astigmatism, and nystagmus. A Functional Vision/Learning Media Assessment was completed in May 2018. The student was found to be a visual learner. He visually accesses materials through a combination of enlarged materials and routine materials magnified through use of a low vision tool and/or device, supplemented with audio versions of books using a tablet.
3. How will learning and literacy modes be implemented?
 - a. Materials will be bold, low clutter, and of high contrast. Materials will be provided enlarged or regular print with access to a low vision tool and/or device. Tools and devices include an electronic handheld magnifier, portable video magnifier with near and distance capabilities, a monocular, and a tablet. Learning and literacy modes with accommodation and/or modification will be provided throughout the school day with the support of consult by a teacher of the visually impaired.
4. How student's instruction will be integrated
 - a. Support across learning environments with modified materials and access to tools and devices.
5. State level of competency expected in each selected mode
 - a. See IEP goals. The student is expected to achieve his IEP goals with implementation of visual accommodations, material modifications, and low vision tools and devices.
6. List the dates for instruction to commence
 - a. 04/25/2019-04/24/2020. See goals and objectives and service delivery page.
7. Has the TVI demonstrated braille competency?
 - a. Yes.

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

A Shared Vision continues to be Colorado's leading provider of early intervention vision services for children birth to age three who are blind or visually impaired. Through the Early Intervention Vision Services Program, our team of 15 teachers provide direct early intervention home-based vision services to families and young children in 55 counties across Colorado. Through November of this year, we have supported 193 children across Colorado with 1,400 education visits in their homes or via telehealth.

To meet the growing demand for vision services statewide, we are coordinating our new referrals in Denver metro with the Anchor Center. We are also adding a couple new members to our team, including Julie King from Frisco, CO, and Kerry Auld, who has come out of retirement to help us with our first-visit program.

The Education Program builds the community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals who serve very young children with blindness/visual impairments. We are wrapping up the first phase of vision screening trainings for EI Eligibility Assessment Teams (aka Child Find for 0-3). We have conducted 27 Zoom-based trainings for 245 professionals. We will soon be scheduling Objective Testing trainings for the Spring of 2023.

The Family Support Program provides education, community connections, and support for families of children with visual impairments through group activities, the newsletter, and other communications. We are so thankful for volunteers! For their Silver Award, Girl Scout Troop #60035 made 10 sensory boards, 10 toy bars, and 11 book bags and presented them to A Shared Vision's families during the troop's December 4th meeting in Aurora. Janet Anderson and Maggie Tutt attended the presentation.

Our virtual "Mystery Party" events are growing in popularity, especially for our rural families. During the one-hour program, our teachers create a fun atmosphere of sharing and curiosity for parents and caregivers. This fall, Kimala Rein and Janet Anderson led a program on preparing for preschool, and then Kimala and Paula Landry taught families how to make an "All About Me" snapshot about their child.

Paula Landry and Steve Lindauer are actively involved with planning for the upcoming Western Regional Early Intervention Conference in June 2023. WREIC supports professionals working with, and families of, children birth to five years old who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, or deafblind. WREIC has been in place for over 30

years, making it one of the longest ongoing early intervention conferences in the country. The conference will be held in Cheyene, WY.

Finally, Steve was greatly honored to have joined the Board of Trustees at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind this fall.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Tammy Miller)

It has been a great couple of months for Anchor! We have had several new referrals for new families, and it is always wonderful to see them begin to connect with other families in our programs. We have been having lots of fun these past few weeks, including adaptive yoga, field trips, community days, and our annual family Holiday Celebration...complete with carriage rides, family photos, and of course, Santa and Ms. Claus!

Our Transition Project, funded by Early Milestones Colorado's CIRCLE grant, continues to gain traction to create meaningful ways to reach all families to help them be better informed of options and what to expect through the many important transitions happening in the early childhood years (from early intervention to preschool options to kindergarten and all the IFSP/Child Find/IEP meetings that go along with it all).

Headquartered in Denver for 40 years, Anchor Center for Blind Children specializes in serving children with visual impairments or combined vision and hearing loss during their most formative years of development, ages birth to five years. Staffed by a transdisciplinary team of highly trained teachers of students with visual impairments, early childhood special educators, therapists, and a pediatric ophthalmologist, Anchor Center's vision services are customized to meet each child's unique needs and strengths. Families also receive support, guidance, practical knowledge, and connections to other important resources. Anchor Center's primary programming includes: vision assessments and pediatric ophthalmology exams; early intervention home-based services (for children, ages birth to 3 years); center-based programming for infants (newborn – 18 months), toddlers (18 months – 3 years), and preschoolers (3 – 5 years); occupational, physical, and speech/language therapies; recreational, music, and horticultural therapies; summer camps and family respite care; and family support, including programs for caregivers and siblings. Anchor Center charges a nominal tuition fee for toddler and preschool programs but does not charge for infant services. No child is ever denied access to services based on the family's inability to pay.

There are currently infants and toddlers who are on a wait list across our BVI EI entities.

Colorado AER Chapter (Paula Conroy)

The focus continues to be on recruiting members as well as board members. If we do not get new people for the board, we will need to pause our chapter. Ideas for doing this are welcome. There was one mini-grant awarded this year. The next meeting is in January.

Colorado Center for The Blind Youth Programs (Chaz Davis)

On September 10, we had our 5th annual 6 Dot Dash 5k hosted by the Colorado Center for the Blind and National Federation of the Blind of Colorado. At the event, we had more than 120 runners and walkers on the first cool fall day of 2022! All the money raised went to supporting our Braille literacy programs for youth and our college scholarships. We also had a great expo, a bouncy house for the kids, and an awesome food truck. Many of our local youth/adolescent blind students attended the event.

For October's Fun Activities and Skills Training, several blind students, parents of blind students, and mentors attended a trip to the National Center for Atmospheric Research [NCAR]. Students were able to understand the composition of a cloud, learn about different weather patterns and explore an interactive trail around the center's complex. We even had a student and her father attend the trip from Wyoming.

For our virtual learning box activity for October, students received a model of the brain, ultimately understanding the anatomy and physiology of each part of the brain too. Students really enjoyed working with the models and remarked that they do not always have opportunities to fully grasp a scientific concept, but this experience allowed for that.

At our National Federation of the Blind of Colorado Convention in October, we held a seminar for parents of blind students. Presenters covered the following areas:

- *Supporting Gifted Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired* presented by Debbie Mendoza, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, certified in gifted and talented education, Adams 12 Five Star Schools. Giftedness is all around us, but it can easily get lost in the day-to-day challenges of making the world accessible. Parents learned how to spot signs of giftedness in their students, how to evaluate for giftedness when visual impairment is present, and tips for how to talk with district's gifted and talented team to ensure that the student's needs are being met.
- *Behavior and Visual Impairment* presented by Dr. Paula Conroy, Professor, School of Special Education, Coordinator, Visual Impairment and O&M Programs University of Northern Colorado. This presentation covered multiple topics focusing on issues for students with visual impairments who have behavioral challenges associated with autism and sensory loss. The role and responsibilities of the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments was discussed.

On November 19, CCB held our annual Thanksgiving meal to be prepared by young blind students with the assistance of blind mentors from our community. This year, parents (using learning shades) and young blind people prepared staple Thanksgiving desserts like apple crisp, pumpkin pie, and pecan pie. All participants were tasked with peeling and slicing apples, following a recipe, combining ingredients, and handling a hot oven to complete the baking process.

In December, CCB held our annual holiday party that included activities like cookie decorating, homemade ornament making, fun, active games and socializing with blind students from Colorado Springs to the Denver area. A few younger students independently traveled by bus and light rail using cane travel skills to attend the holiday party.

Lastly, the learning box activity for December focused on understanding the density of water, and how certain materials can influence/change the density, causing some objects to float that would otherwise sink in fresh water. Students understood the concepts of independent variables, dependent variables, and controls in an experiment. We all await a packed 2023 Calendar of Events for our blind youth at the Colorado Center for the Blind.

Colorado Instructional Material Center (Jim Olson)

Count Day: Monday, January 2, 2023, is the date used for both of the CDE counts managed by the CIMC. The first count is our "Statewide student registration database" count. Districts have submitted their first-round edits and updated reports have been returned to district designated CIMC contacts. New reports will be emailed one more time on, or near, Monday January 2, for districts to use in preparing their official count paperwork. Contact CIMC staff if you would like a Zoom meeting for your vision department staff.

Second Count: Federal Quota Census. The first Monday in January is always the day used for the federal quota census program. Paperwork due dates are listed at the top of our CIMC website page.

Staff: The CIMC currently has two vacant positions. Both jobs should be posted to the state's website this week (maybe even before the Vision Coalition meeting). The Administrative Assistant I position is primarily responsible for shipping and receiving tasks, including processing of APH and technology orders. The Administrative Assistant III position is a primarily responsible for braille transcription and textbook/novel production. Library of Congress certification as a braille transcriber is preferred.

New APH Products: The CIMC is waiting to hear the release date for the new Polly product. It should be released near the beginning of 2023. The news tactile book partnership between APH and Les Doigts Qui Revent (LDQR) has been

released, "A Tail for Baby Lizard" Catalog Number: 6-77960-00, \$229.00. The CIMC hopes to be able to provide each TVI employed by a district one copy of this limited release book. As always, districts or individuals may order their own copies at www.aph.org

CSDB – School for The Blind (Jamie Lugo)

Blind Advisory Trainings are happening throughout the school year:

- We kicked off the school year with an on campus produced video featuring students and staff who are blind/low vision, sharing stories and experiences of everyday life. We ended the presentation with a live panel. The training was well received and appreciated by the whole campus.
- Robbin Clark visited our campus and presented on the Expanded Core Curriculum, focusing the most on independent living skills in October. She is always a dynamic, engaging presenter.
- Assistive Technology/Accessibility Training with Tim Richards in January
- O&M Training in February

Hands on Training with ILS tools and Assistive Technology scheduled for April.

- White Cane Day was celebrated on October 14th. Community members, students and staff came together at Acacia Park to celebrate independence and the importance of the white cane. We celebrated with live music from the Bulldog band, a guest speaker, student presentations, student artwork, and dancing! It was the most attended White Cane Day yet!
- Students from the Goalball team competed in a tournament in Texas in October and New Mexico in December.
- Younger students walked around campus for our fall parade dressed up in their Halloween costumes, while the older students and CSDB staff handed out treats and accessible toys. The transition students also put together a haunted house for evening celebrations and fun.
- Staff members and family members attended the USABA Breakfast for Champions at the Olympic and Paralympic Museum on Friday, October 28, 2022
- Blind and Deaf students participated in a basketball clinic hosted by the Denver Nuggets.
- Delta Gamma at Colorado College hosted a volleyball tournament and donated ½ of the proceeds to the blind program.
- The Fine Arts Center and CSDB are partnering to make the shows that the FAC puts on and the displays within the museum more inclusive. Our art teacher worked and the director of the FAC, applied for Gerald Erickson Trust Fund Grant and they won! This grant will fund an artist to visit CSDB's campus, once a month, to teach our students tactile art or music/theatre.
- The North Pole, Santa's Workshop amusement park, hosted both sides of our campus and families for a super fun day in the sun with lots of laughs and new experiences.
- Our Bulldog band auditioned and were selected to play at the Colorado Association of School Boards Convention held at the Broadmoor.
- The Mental Health Team has begun a school wide social emotional screening using a tool called the BASC BESS. Results from the screening tool will help inform leveled tiers of SEL support for students.
- Our Orientation and Mobility Specialists are hosting a practicum student from a local school district who is currently a TVI. Her completion of her COMS endorsement will help the critical shortage of O&M specialists in the public school district. She is receiving supervision hours at CSDB two days a week.
- The Colorado Center for the Blind has started visiting CSDB's campus again on a monthly basis.
- We held our first annual lighting ceremony. The facilities department decorated the campus with beautiful light displays and music. CSDB families visited campus, we lit the lights, and enjoyed hot cocoa and candy canes at the end of the tour of lights.
- First Foresight Ski Trip of the Year, December 11-13th. One of our students served by Outreach attended with a group of five CSDB 3rd-6th grade students!

Upcoming Events in the School for the Blind

- Abacus Level 1 and 2 Workshops for Parents in the second semester (offered virtually!)
- Braille Challenge, Thursday, February 23, 2023 (open to all who want to come to CSDB)

- Blind Advisory Team will be holding an assistive technology/accessibility training with Tim Richards for all staff.
- January 16th-21st Homecoming week at CSDB. We will host The New Mexico School for the Deaf and the Blind and Rocky Mountain Deaf School for basketball and goalball games. They will also come to our annual homecoming dance.
- Foresight Ski Trips, January 29-31st and February 12-14th.

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 (COMs) are currently providing services to approximately 54 school-age students and 21 early intervention families through agreements with 16 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 for families with young children as well as innovative new ways to serve school-age students in the summer.

In addition, planning for the 2023 Denver Metro Braille Challenge is underway. Once again, CSDB Outreach is excited to partner with the Colorado Center for the Blind (CCB) in Littleton for an in-person event on February 10, 2023, 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 13, 2023. For more information, please contact Debbie Haberkorn at dhaberkorn@csdb.org or (719) 578-2113.

UNC VI Program (Paula Conroy)

Another successful semester has ended. We have 10 graduates, four of whom live in CO: **Alyshia Shelton, Angela Kaltenbach-Brown, Melissa Rodriquez, and Hanna Waldman**. All are employed as TVI's in Colorado. Our VI grant concludes this year. To date we have helped fund 50 TVIs through the grant in five years. This is beyond the goal of forty-four. We are beginning to prepare for our reaccreditation in 2014.

On a separate note, Paula is working to support San Luis Valley BOCES. They need a part to a full-time person. Paula is able to do this with the support of the Bresnahan-Halstead Center. She is working there a few days a month. Paula would love to see this position filled.

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) 253-0451 or Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us
- *Annual Deaf-Blind Count:* The 2022-23 Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count forms have just been sent out to agency / AU contact personnel. There will be a DB Office Hours in mid-January for personnel completing the forms. 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 Deaf-Blind webpage URL is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>
- *Project Trainings:* We are offering a slate of 2022-23 Deaf-Blind Webinar Series trainings. The first three were held in September (identification of children with deaf-blindness), October (local, state, and national resources), and November (importance of routines). There are several more on the docket to check out!

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. Chris Russell has kicked us off with two back-to-back trainings on CVI for the November and December sessions. There sessions planned for January – April 2023.
- *CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:* The team has completed three out of the four LVE Clinics scheduled for this school year. The most recent ones have been in the Southern Region and the Northern Region. The remaining clinic will be held in February in the Metro Region. Our great evaluation team consists of Dr. Tom Theune, Jim Olson, and Wendy Stoltman. Debbie Haberkorn is our Statewide Clinic Coordinator. Tanni will be doing an efficacy review of the clinics this year to determine their value for the 23-24 budget consideration. We will be replacing three staff on the clinic team if they continue to be funded. Tanni will be sending out a survey to ascertain the need to continue the clinics.
- *CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual Impairment:* Dr. Derrick Smith returned for a two-day training on *Tools and Techniques for Teaching Mathematics to Learners with Blindness/Visual Impairment* on October 13-14, 2022. We thank Jim Olson and the CIMC crew for all of their work collecting and highlighting APH equipment to support mathematics instruction.
- *CDE O&M Seminar:* Tanni welcomes suggested speakers / topics for a Spring 2023 event.
- *Recruitment and Retention:* JeffCo School District recently hired a new TVI, Gena Francoeur-Anderson. Also, Berta Wiedemeyer is out of retirement to support the district. Morgan Turner and Karen Woods are working in Colorado Springs 11 while the district works to hire a new TVI. Anahit LaBarre has filled the TVI position vacated by Michelle Chacon when she was recently promoted to a supervisor. We have an opening in Windsor. Please share any expected vacancies with Tanni so we can be as proactive as possible with new recruits.
- 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. 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 two 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 brailleists. 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.
- *Keeping in Touch Newsletter:* The August-September and October 2022 editions have been posted. There are 4 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.us 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 1st. Unique Accommodations for CMAS are due by December 15th. 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

Proposed CDE BVI Budget for 2023-24

The following activities are on the docket to for requested funding.

- ◆ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- ◆ CDE O&M Seminar
- ◆ CDE State Conference on Blindness/Visual impairment – for late September with Chris Russell
- ◆ CIMC Interagency Agreement
- ◆ Vision Coalition (may not need any costs if we continue virtually)
- ◆ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics- to be determined
- ◆ Sound Bites (monthly virtual trainings) – Focus on Implementation
- ◆ FVA Make and Take (if approved a summer team will assist – Jamie, Erin, Tanni, and Chloann)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

VIB Eligibility: We are prepping to open the ECEA Rules and update the eligibility criteria. This may not be the final iteration that goes forward for the Colorado State Board of Education and public review process as it needs to be reviewed internally ahead of the final submission for SBE approval.

DRAFT

A child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness shall have an impairment in vision where, even with correction, he/she is prevented from receiving reasonable educational benefit from general education.

A determination that a child is an eligible child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness shall be based upon one or more of the following:

- i. The child is blind, has no vision, or has little potential for using vision;*
- ii. The child has low vision based on visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;*
- iii. The child has visual field restriction to 20 degrees or less; and/or*
- iv. the child has been diagnosed with a progressive condition that will most likely result in a visual impairment or no vision after best correction.*
- v. the child has an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.*

As a result of the Visual Impairment, Including Blindness, as set out above, the child requires specialized instruction.

Low Vision Survey: Tanni will be sending out a survey to TVIs specific to their low vision training, experiences with the Colorado LVE Clinics, and thoughts about continued funding for the clinics.

Vision Therapy: We reviewed a recent PATTEN document detailing the educational vision services and vision therapy. The general consensus is that it had helpful content and people asked if we could revise slightly for CDE use. If approved, Nancy, Erin, and Cheryl would be willing to help to frame out this content.

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

Workload Formula: We are overdue in finalizing this document. Tanni will send it out for review ahead of the March meeting for discussion on possible edits at this meeting. She will also note that it is "being reviewed" on the CDE website.

Meeting Dates

- March 8, 2023, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.— virtual



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Braille Competency News



Hats off to **Julie Novak Harrison** from CSDB for earning her CDE Initial Braille Certificate. Kudos to **Jennifer Caster, Vicki Chinski, Melissa French, and Jeanine Holmes** for completing braille renewal modules. Thanks for braille proctors **Chris Maynard** and **Brenda Shepard** for their work with our braille candidates.

Personnel: Farewell and Welcome Aboard!

- ◆ We say farewell to **Mary Kate McLaughlin** who has resigned her DPS position for some wonderful next steps in the travel world. We thank her for her time in Colorado and hope she will come back to us.
- ◆ Thank You to **Debbie Haberkorn** for 16 years of passion and dedication to the blind and low vision students of Colorado and their teachers. Her competence, caring, and great knowledge will be sorely missed. Debbie has accepted a position in the accounting department of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. She will finish out the school year as our Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Coordinator.
- ◆ We would like to recognize and thank **Teresa Kilbury** for her 5 ½ years of service to the Colorado Instructional Materials Center. She has helped every single TVI across the state and her customer service skills will be missed. Join us in wishing her well in her future endeavors.
- ◆ **Anahit LaBarre** is now on board with DPS as a TVI! Anahit is thrilled to join the Denver Public Schools as a TVI. She finished her master's degree while working at the Colorado Center for the Blind, as an instructor for the Program for Older Adults. She completed the practicum with Jeffco Public Schools, after which she spent a year directing the Youth Programs at the Colorado Center for the Blind. Anahit is so excited to be back in the classroom and working with students. She is very much looking forward to learning, growing as a teacher and being a strong and supportive team member.
- ◆ **Chaz Davis** is the new Director of Youth Services at the Colorado Center for the Blind. Chaz, a native of Massachusetts, lost his vision in 2014 because of a genetic condition known as Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy. Shortly after graduating college, Chaz completed the Independence Training Program at the Colorado Center for the Blind [CCB]. After losing his vision, Chaz found purpose in life again after working with a social worker and rehabilitation counselor. Motivated by this pivotal encounter, Chaz studied and obtained his Master's in Social Work from the University of Denver in 2019, subsequently working for 3 ½ years as an adjustment to vision loss mental health counselor for older blind adults. In the spring of 2022, Chaz came back to CCB and has assumed the role of Director of Youth Services. Chaz embraces an idea from one of his friends, Randy Pierce, "going blind can be hard, but being blind doesn't have to be." Chaz is a U.S. Paralympian and American record holder in the sport of track and field, competing in the 2016 Paralympic Games in Brazil. Chaz views running as a powerful social, emotional outlet and is passionate about improving accessibility in the world of endurance sport.
- ◆ **Genevieve Francouer-Anderson** is now on board with Jefferson County! Also, **Berta Wiedemeyer** came out of retirement to support the needs of BVI learners in Jefferson County School District.



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Professional Learning

- ◆ Thanks to **Debbie Mendoza** from Adams 12 for her presentation *Supporting Gifted Students who are Blind/Visually Impaired* and **Dr. Paula Conroy** from UNC for her presentation on *Behavior and Visual Impairment* at the recent Colorado Center for the Blind Seminar for Parents and Teachers on Additional Services for Blind/Visually Impaired Students.
- ◆ A special thanks to **Chris Russell** for his November 16 and December 7th Sound Bites presentations. His first session was on *Cortical Visual Impairment: Unique Considerations for Functional Vision Assessment & Learning Media Assessment* with 33 participants. The second session was on *Cortical Visual Impairment: Approaches to Intervention and Educational Program Development*. The great turn-out was impressive!!

Shout Outs!!

- ◆ Happy Graduation to the following CO TVIs who completed their UNC VI Programs with December commencement: **Alyshia Shelton, Angela Kaltenbach-Brown, Melissa Rodriguez, and Hanna Waldman**. Also congrats to **Vicki Chinski** for graduating with her ECSE credential! You all rock!!
- ◆ Thanks to much to **Anitha Muthukumaran, Kyle Berns, and Marty Rahn** for their recent work with reviewing the braille format CMAS Tests!
- ◆ “Woo hoo, well done, we are so proud” to the **DPS BVI Program crew** who worked with students to film an episode of **DIY Sci** with **Steve Spangler** (Ellen DeGeneres' science guy). Melinda Russell shares, “It was an amazing opportunity for all, and it just aired nationally on the FOX network. Now that it's out there, I'm able to share it all with you! I hope you enjoy it as much as we all enjoyed filming it :)”
Check out the [DIY Sci Inclusion Video](https://rotfeldproductions.wistia.com/medias/wsh215pidk)

(<https://rotfeldproductions.wistia.com/medias/wsh215pidk>)

- ◆ From The Jefferson County School District: “This week is **#SpecialEducationWeek** and we'd like to shout out one of our **#TeamJeffco** Special Education teachers of the Visually Impaired, **Jeff Hadala**, who was honored with an unseen hero's award at the Rare Sister's Gala. Thank you for you do for our students and community, Mr. Hadala! So proud of you, Jeff!!”

This is exciting and well deserved news—congratulations, Jeff!



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- ◆ Congratulations to **Elise** (Anchor Center for Blind Children) and **Joe Darrow** on the birth of their daughter, Lillian Joy Darrow who was born on November 19th at 10:45 p.m., weighing 8 pounds and 1.5 ounces. Welcome to the world, new little one!

In Memoriam

On Saturday, December 10th, Scott LaBarre passed away. He had many roles: husband and beloved partner to Anahit (formerly with the Colorado Center for the Blind as Youth Program Coordinator and now a TVI in Denver Public Schools), father to two children, friend, colleague, champion of blindness rights, and a man with a commitment to making the world a better place. And he did.

Scott served the Blindness and Disability Communities in many capacities:

- Owning his private law practice and advocating for the employment and other rights of person with blindness / disabilities
- Serving as national Council for the National Federation of the Blind
- Serving as President of the Colorado NFB Affiliate
- Advocating for international copyright police with the Marrakesh Treaty
- Holding leadership positions within the American Bar Association.
- Being Chairman of the Colorado Center for the Blind
- Leading the National Association of Blind Lawyers
- Helping to establish and guide the Jacobus ten Broek Law Symposium
- Being a mentor to many.



The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado presented a [Tribute to Scott](#) at the 2021 state convention that shares more about his story and enduring influence, and they will continue to celebrate his life and service.

We are grateful for all he represented, modeled, gave, and, rightfully, demanded. We are better for his example, advocacy, and accomplishments. Our thoughts to the LaBarre family as he is mourned and missed in all the days ahead. He will be dearly missed. His legacy will be lasting.



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