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# KEEPING IN TOUCH!

A Newsletter for Parents and Service Providers  
of Colorado Children with Visual Impairment, Including Blindness  
April—May 2024

“One child, one teacher,  
one book, one pen can  
change the world.”

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

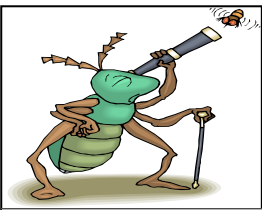


One family one TVI, one O&M Specialist, one brailist, one VI-Para, one braille writer, one braille notetaker , one magnifier, one screen-magnification program, one screen-reader, one uncluttered visual display, one APH tactile instructional material, one Expanded Core Curriculum and much more... can and does change the accessibility, engagement, learning trajectory, and outcomes for students, and can and does change the world one student at a time!

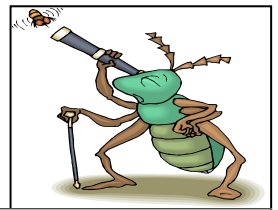
Thanks for another amazing year of being true change-makers for our students!

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# LOW VISION NEWS



## 2023-2024 Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Schedule

Clinic	Clinic Date(s)	Due Date for Paperwork	Site Coordinator
Western LVE Clinic	September 26-27, 2024	Thursday, September 12, 2024	Angela Sims and Erin Schroeder
Southern LVE Clinic	October 11, 2024	Friday, September 27, 2024	Jim Olson
Northern LVE Clinic	November 14-15, 2024	Thursday, October 31, 2024	Samantha Thuis
Metro LVE Clinic	TBD	TBD	Roberta Curtis

### Inherited Retinal Disease (IRD) webinar May 29th

The National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness will host an informative webinar, [Pathway to Diagnosis: Genetic Testing for Inherited Retinal Diseases](#), on Wednesday, May 29, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm ET. (12 – 1:30 MST). This webinar builds upon the inaugural webinar on Inherited Retinal Diseases held in 2023.

**Content:** In this 90-minute webinar, you will gain a deeper understanding of genetic testing as it contributes to diagnosis for an inherited retinal disease (IRD). Topics include when and how children may receive genetic testing; benefits of receiving results for diagnosis, registries, clinical trial participation, and treatment options; strategies for providing information and support to families and children; and patient testimonials about their IRD journey.

**Audience:** This webinar is tailored for families of children with inherited retinal diseases and visual impairment, patient support organizations, school nurses, early childhood program staff including Head Start, Early Intervention and special education professionals, teachers of students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility specialists, and healthcare providers.

Please watch the video of our inaugural webinar for vital background information and learn more at Inherited Retinal Diseases at Prevent Blindness.

[Registration for Register at Pathway to Diagnosis: Genetic Testing for Inherited Retinal Diseases](#) - National Center ([www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org))

This webinar is made possible with funding from Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine.

IRD-webinar Graphic • [Download the PATHWAY TO DIAGNOSIS Handout](#)



Hear from an ophthalmologist, optometrists, and patients with Inherited Retinal Diseases.

Free registration at:  
[PreventBlindness.org/ird-webinar-2024](http://PreventBlindness.org/ird-webinar-2024)



## 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 first year of its new federally-funded five-year grant cycle. The purpose of the project, awarded to every state and US territories 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 that include a new annual webinar series and the long-offered Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness, and provide tiered and customized technical assistance. The current project has three broad goals: (1) timely identification, (2) family networking, training, and TA support, and (3) professional training and TA support, and 4) intervener recruitment and training / support. 166 children and youth were reported, 13 new individuals identified and 13 were exited from the CO DB Child Count.



The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force. We have four CDE part-time employees (Tanni Anthony, Gina Herrera, Roberta Curtis, and Jessica Meisel) and our contracted Family Engagement Specialist Cindy Colwell is also on board with the project. For training and support documents and resources, please 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:** As you identify new children in Colorado with deaf-blindness, please reach out to Tanni Anthony ([anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)) or Gina Herrera ([herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)) to complete the Child Count Form at any time of the calendar year. We have just completed our formal December 1, 2023 Child Count process and have turned in the final report to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. Our thanks for all you do to ensure our learners with deaf-blindness are identified and supported.

### Colorado Deaf-Blind Project Offers Intervener Training

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project (aka the CO Deaf-Blind Project) offers intervener training and mentoring to provide support throughout the intervener certification process. Our current cohort began in January 2024, and a second cohort will begin August 2024. Please be proactive with identifying personnel who will thrive in this important role! 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 Colorado Deaf-Blind Project's Child Count. The program is designed to provide the background knowledge needed for working with students who are deafblind and leads to National Intervener Certification. For more information, please contact Jessica Meisel at [Meisel\\_j@cde.co.state.us](mailto:Meisel_j@cde.co.state.us)

### Videos Added to NCDB Early Intervention Module

New content has been added to the module "[Early Intervention for Children Who Are Deafblind](#)" in the "[Teaching Children Who Are Deafblind: Professional Development for Educators](#)" series. "[Parent Perspectives](#)" includes videos of mothers of children who are deafblind, who share their experiences during the critical years of early intervention and the teamwork with practitioners that's involved.



# Colorado Deaf-Blind Project News

## 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 our e-Technical Assistance Request Form located [here: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrgst](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/techassistrgst) Return this form as an email attachment to Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_G@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us).

You can also call Gina at 303-253-0451. Or fill out our new Google Form for Technical Assistance located at <https://forms.gle/FAWsSVo2itikrtLR6>



## National Center on Deafblindness

### IEP Team Intervener Discussion Guide – Spanish Version

The newly redesigned IEP team discussion guide, [Are Intervener Services Appropriate for Your Student Who Is Deafblind?](#) is now available in Spanish on NCDB’s website! The guide helps teams make informed decisions about a student’s access to information, communication, and more.

#### New Article: Everyone Has a Voice

In the *Exceptional Parent Magazine* article, [“Everyone has a Voice”](#), Nanci Bentley describes her journey of communication with her son who is deafblind. The article walks through how the family learned about their son's hearing loss and cortical visual impairment, and the strategies they used to encourage and support his communication.

Nanci is also a Family Engagement and Outreach Coordinator for the New York DeafBlind Collaborative.

**PARAPROFESSIONAL:**  
The heartfelt hero. Using their talents to help students discover their own. Dedicating their time and energy each day to the students in their care, and doing it all while meeting the individual needs of many.



#schoolheroes  
teresa kwant



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

# 2024 SUMMER INSTITUTE ON DEAF-BLINDNESS & SIGNIFICANT SUPPORTS NEEDS

No Cost  
ACVREP & UNC  
credits will be offered

**JOIN US AT**  
*Lowry Conference  
Center*



*1061 Akron Way  
Denver, CO 80230*

*Dates: June 24-25, 2024  
8:30 am - 4:30 pm both days*

## **From Interaction to Formal Language - Becoming the Excellent Observer and Thoughtful Communicator with Children who are Congenitally Deafblind**

### **Featured Speaker**



Chris Montgomery has worked in the field of deafblind education and visual impairment over 25 years. He has been a classroom teacher working with a wide range of students who are visually impaired, blind, and deafblind, from emerging language children to those transitioning to an independent adulthood. In 2006, he began work as a Deafblind Education Consultant with the Texas Deafblind

Project, at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI). Most recently, Chris served as the Director of Education for Deafblind Programs at Perkins School for the Blind, in Watertown, MA.

### **Credit**

The course will be offered for up to 15 CDE / ACVREP clock hours. One graduate level semester hour will be offered for those participants who attend the two full days and write an application paper. This is a two day training. All participants must attend both full days to receive the clock hour certificate.

**REGISTER NOW**

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

Participants will need to attend both days of the training. Priority will be given to team working with Colorado children and youth with deaf-blindness.

Registration is limited to Colorado residents.



## **Content:**

During this 2-day, interactive conference we will explore ideas and questions for the adult interaction partner of congenitally deafblind learners with emerging language. Human interaction begins in infancy. From when baby and mother share a moment's gaze. Human interaction is the basis for social exchange, the exchange of information, of ideas, of emotions. Human Interaction is conversation, both spoken and unspoken. Human interaction is the foundation for well-being and quality of life. How do we join the person who is deafblind in sharing their world, a world experienced through touch? How do we arouse curiosity? What is the path to bonding? Why must we recognize and affirm communication before a meaningful, mutually understood language can be co-created?

We all have an inner voice of "self-talk". What is this voice if you're congenitally deafblind and cannot easily access the visual, auditory world around you? Is your experience processed and recorded as internal tactile-bodily sensations? How do images, sounds and voices exist in your mind as thought and language? What if you don't have an empathetic partner who is attuned to your tactile-bodily experience of the world? A partner who you share with. A partner who helps you to make meaning of and put language to your experiences.

## **Who Should Attend:**

The first priority for this training will be Colorado Part C / Anchor Center for Blind Children / A Shared Vision / CHIP / CSDB EI BVI Program, a community intervener for 0-21 learners with deaf-blindness, and/ or school-based personnel who are working directly with a child with deaf-blindness. Teams are encouraged. This training is not open to out-of-state personnel or private practice providers due to limitations in space. Accepted attendees must be able to attend both days of the training.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is a requirement that participants attend both full days of training.

## **Lodging:**

We have limited funds for travel support. The registration form will query the need for travel support based on miles away from the training event. First priority will be participants coming from the farthest distances and who work for a CO school district in the capacity of a Service Providers to children who are deaf-blind. We will gather this information and confirm the availability of funding support for those requesting travel funding.

**REGISTER NOW**

Questions regarding content, please reach out to Tanni Anthony at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us)

*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: This training is not open to para-educators as the expectation is that the professionals attending the training bring content back to their districts for paraprofessional training.*

*Registration will close when the training is capped or no later than May 20, 2024*



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

### CAER Award Information

The Colorado AER Chapter awards professionals in our field to honor and celebrate their work in service to individuals with visual impairments and blindness. At the annual banquet, held on May 2 in Thornton, over 20 people attended to celebrate their colleagues. The following awards were given to well deserving individuals.

**President's Award:** This award recognizes outstanding leadership in service to people with visual disabilities. True to its name, the current President will select and present this award. The recipient of this award was **Heather Solberg** who was nominated by a CAER Board member. Heather has been a wonderful contributor to CAER holding many offices, including President—she has set a stare record for her years of consecutive service. Heather works for the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center as a certified Vision Rehabilitation Specialist. Photo to left is Chloann Woolley and Heather Solberg after receiving her award.



**Gary Schmidt Award:** This award honors an AER member who works directly with students/clients. No one was nominated for the Gary Schmidt Award this year.

**Connections Award:** This award recognizes cooperative efforts that cross organizational lines, perhaps even groups working collaboratively to benefit our field. The CAER Board considers these nominations. This recipient of this award is **Dr. Kara Hanson** who was nominated by a TVI, Client, and a Veterans Administration Specialist. Dr. Hanson is an optometrist with UC Health at the Sue Anschutz-Rodgers Eye Center. Dr. Hanson is also a low vision specialist and has worked with the Anchor Center for Blind Children and the CDE Low Vision Evaluation Clinics to support proactive and informed low vision services for Colorado children and youth.

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** This award is presented to individuals who have given of themselves to students/clients throughout their career and are preparing for retirement. Two people received this award. The first person was **Michelle Robinson** was nominated by a VRT colleague. Michele is a certified vocational therapist and O&M specialist with the Rocky Mountain VA Center. She has been an important contributor to the CAER Board. Photo to the left is Heather Solberg and Michelle Robinson



The second recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Weekend was **Nancy Cozart** was nominated by three TVIs, two parents, and a past student.

Nancy is a TVI and O&M Specialist with Littleton Public Schools, a member of the Vision Coalition, past CAER President and long term board member in other roles, and a CDE employee as a Braille Proctor and Mentor. Top left photo is Heather presenting the award to Michelle Robinson. Bottom left is Chloann presenting the award to Nancy Cozart.

Photo on right is Chloann Woolley and Nancy Cozart.



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

**Ken Neve Award:** This award is to recognize an AER professional in the area specific to orientation and mobility. The CAER Board considers the nominations.

The Ken Neve Award was given to **Michele Reed**, who was nominated by a TVI/O&M Specialist and a client. Michele works with the Colorado DVR and has a long history of important service in this capacity. She is also a member of the Vision Coalition. Photo to left is Michele Reed and Chloann Woolley.



Congratulations to Heather, Kara, Michelle, Nancy, and Michele on these well deserved awards.

We are Colorado proud of all you have contributed to our learners, families, professionals, and field. We are better because of each of you!

Photo to left is of Michelle Robinson, Michele Reed, Nancy Cozart, and Heather Solberg.

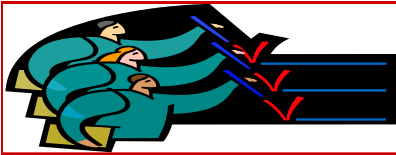
A huge thank you to our CAER Board Officers and members who keep our chapter going. Thank you to **Chloann Woolley, Heather Solberg, Jeannie Lei, Jamie Lugo, Bryan Moles, Michelle Robinson and Ellie Carlson**. Their work to keep our CO AER Chapter alive and well is commendable. We are grateful to each of you—thank you for your service

Photo on the left is of attendees of the CAER Award Banquet. We thank CAER for hosting and providing a delicious meal and a meaningful banquet.

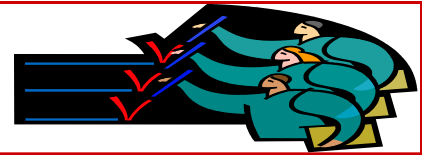
A special thanks to CAER President Chloann Woolley for all of her organization and grace in overseeing the banquet activities. Thanks to Barb Galgano for sharing her photos!







## CHECK IT OUT!



### Survey Request—Specific to TVIs and O&M Specialists

My name is Katie Ericson, and I'm a PhD student in the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. We're writing to invite you to participate in a research study exploring the job responsibilities and workload of itinerant teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs) and orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists.

The study aims to better understand the responsibilities and duties that make up a TSVI's or O&M Specialist's workload. We also hope to gain further insight regarding what constitutes a manageable or unmanageable workload. This may lead to better workload analysis and planning for itinerant TSVIs and O&M Specialists. Information from this survey may also help university instructors better prepare students for positions as itinerant TSVIs and O&M specialists.

To participate, you must currently be working as an itinerant TSVI or O&M specialist, serving children ages birth to 22.

The study involves one internet-based survey, which should take approximately 30-35 minutes and will be completed via Qualtrics. The survey first asks demographic questions and then asks how much time you spend on different responsibilities. There are no known risks involved in this research. Upon completion of the survey, you may choose to be entered into a raffle for a \$20 electronic gift card.

To take this survey, please click on this link: [https://unlcorexmuw.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ahpQH0G68W4WurA](https://unlcorexmuw.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ahpQH0G68W4WurA)

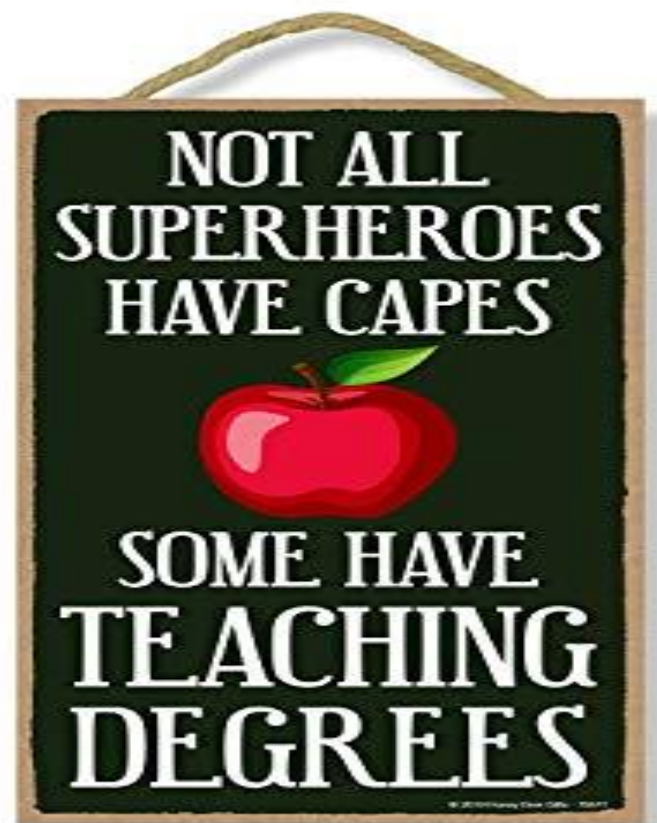
This research is being conducted by Katie Ericson, a Ph.D. student in Special Education at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. If you have any questions about the study, please contact either Katie Ericson or her advisor, Dr. Mackenzie Savaiano.

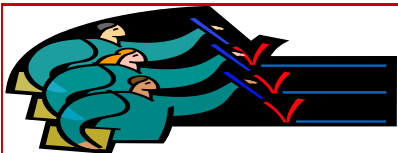
Katie Ericson

[kericson3@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:kericson3@huskers.unl.edu)

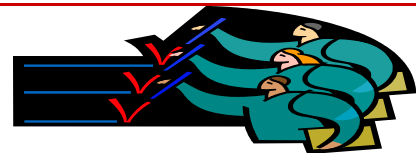
Dr. Mackenzie Savaiano

[msavaiano2@unl.edu](mailto:msavaiano2@unl.edu)





# CHECK IT OUT!



## **2024 AERBVI Conference Announcement**

The 2024 AER International Conference will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina. Their 40th Anniversary conference will be held at the Sheraton/Le Meridien Hotel in uptown Charlotte from July 24-28, 2024.

## **APH Professional Development for ACVREP Credit**

Please remember that if you are a Colorado COMS, you need to retain your ACVREP certification to renew your CDE O&M license. If you are looking for more educational opportunities, head over to APH Hive. Their FREE eLearning platform for educators and families can be accessed at any time to earn ACVREP credits from the comfort of your home and office. With a growing course catalog covering categories like Early Childhood, Expanded Core Curriculum and more, APH staff are compiling the resources you need to serve students. [Learn more and sign up today!](#)

## **The Buzz**

Calling all educators and professionals in the field of blindness and low vision! Head over to the American Printing House for the Blind Hive and check out their newest comprehensive online learning course, Unlocking the Foundations of Reading for Students with Visual Impairments. This course examines reading development for students who are blind or low vision, explores the foundation of typical reading development, illustrates instructional strategies for teaching reading, and much more! Currently available are the first 4 of 8 learning modules, with the expectancy of each month featuring a new module. Once all 8 modules are active in June, 10 hours of ACVREP credit will be available. [Enroll to The Buzz](#) now to gain the tools and knowledge needed to make an impact on the lives of your learners!

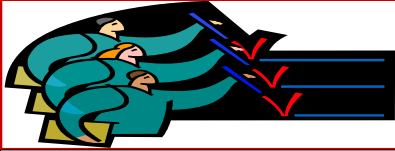


## **New Online Learning Course**

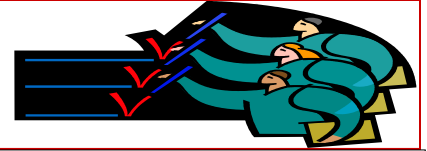
Calling all educators and professionals in the field of blindness and low vision! Head over to the Hive and check out the American Printing House for the Blind newest comprehensive online learning course, Unlocking the Foundations of Reading for Students with Visual Impairments. This course examines reading development for students who are blind or low vision, explores the foundation of typical reading development, illustrates instructional strategies for teaching reading, and much more! Currently available are the first 4 of 8 learning modules, with the expectancy of each month featuring a new module. Once all 8 modules are active in June, 10 hours of ACVREP credit will be available. Enroll (<https://aphhive.org/#/home>) now to gain the tools and knowledge needed to make an impact on the lives of your learners!

## **Southwest Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT) Program**

CATT offers complimentary training in Assistive Technology for Teachers, parents, and students. CATT's emphasis is on the "train the trainer" approach, with a special focus on products tailored for individuals with visual impairments or blindness. For more information or to book a training, visit <https://seeitourway.org/services/catt/> or call 602-337-8243. Our regional CATT contact is Niraj Parikh.



# CHECK IT OUT!



## Amazing Training Opportunities Coming Your Way!

### **The 2024 Virtual Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE)**

The Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering (CIDE) and the Colorado Department of Education are proud to announce open registration for the 2024 Conference for Assistive Technology and Education (CATE).

This training will be held on **June 6 - 7, 2024** and will feature sessions with nationally-renowned trainers addressing a wide variety of assistive technology topics related to the academic support needs of students with disabilities.

\*\* More information and event updates is posted on the [CATE webpage](#)

### **No Limits to Learning—CCB Youth Programs**

This is a 7-week program and will be offered June 21 through August 9 . This longer program will provide each student with additional instruction to cement their skills and confidence. Students enrolled in this seven-week program will have the opportunity to attend the National Convention of the NFB that will be held in Orlando Florida. They will learn about techniques of airport travel, how to navigate a large hotel, a wide array of technology, meet blind people, attend meetings to learn more about the NFB and much more. To participate in this program applicants must be 16 years of age or older. They are required to submit an essay discussing why they want to attend the national convention. Except for attending the National Convention, this shorter program will cover all elements listed above, including challenge recreation activities. Applicants for the 4-week program must be 15 or older. For more information, please reach out to Chaz Davis at [cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org)

### **Spring/Summer 2024: NFB STEM2U**

Did you know a spectroscopist ("spek-TRAH-ska-pist") uses the James Webb Telescope to study our universe? They can study things far away like stars, galaxies, and nebulae. This year at NFB STEM2U—in fifteen locations around the country—we will become spectroscopists. We'll build models of "the Webb", learn about the Earth's atmosphere, discover why the Webb was sent to space, and explore how it studies space. We invite blind and low-vision students to [learn more and register](#).

**Early Childhood Programs**—The National Federation of the Blind early childhood programs provide young blind children and their families with support and guidance to master the fundamental skills of literacy and independent travel. [Learn more about our early childhood initiatives](#).

### **Colorado Local Food Program Guidebook**

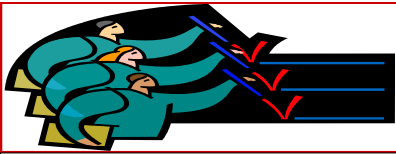
[Nourish Colorado published the Colorado Local Food Program Guidebook which is a comprehensive farm to school resource](#). This resource guides sponsors through purchasing, preparing and promoting local foods. It also includes community resources on student engagement, building school gardens, food safety and much more.

[Visit the Nourish Colorado webpage for more information](#).

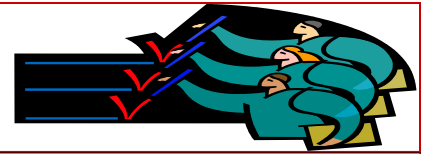
### **Colorado Educator Support**

Need some support? This is a platform dedicated to supporting Colorado's educational workforce. Explore their collection of FREE mental health resources designed to assist you in navigating the challenges of the school year. Proudly affiliated with the University of Colorado Anschutz Department of Psychiatry.

[Colorado Educator Support – Colorado Educator Support – We Can Help](#)



# CHECK IT OUT!



## Teachers of Tomorrow Program

Teachers of Tomorrow is an immersive professional development program connecting teachers of blind and low-vision students with the lived experiences of blind people. This National Federation for the Blind Program equips participants with knowledge about the skills and attitudes that help blind students thrive academically and beyond. Applications for the 2024-2025 cohort are opening soon! [Learn more here.](#)

## MYTHS AND FACTS SURROUNDING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES AND SERVICES

The U.S. Department of Education has [released guidance](#) in support of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities who may require assistive technology (AT) devices and services. The Offices of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Educational Technology (OET) provided the guidance “to increase understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act’s (IDEA’s) requirements regarding AT devices and services, and dispel common misconceptions regarding AT, while also providing examples of the use of AT devices and services for children with disabilities,” according to a Dear Colleague Letter accompanying the AT guidance.

The guidance, Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services, highlights 28 myths and facts related to AT devices and services. The guidance provides additional information and resources to support children with disabilities and identifies related requirements addressed in the IDEA.

The department wrote the guidance to support a range of individuals including parents, early intervention service providers, special educators, general educators, related services personnel, school and district administrators, technology specialists and directors, and employees at state lead agencies and educational agencies.

Additionally, both the Dear Colleague Letter and the AT guidance are available in Spanish.

## APH Field Test Opportunity for Grid and Go

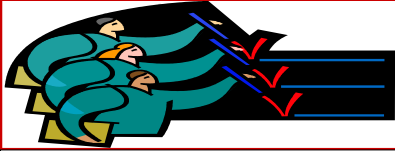
The American Printing House for the Braille (APH) is currently seeking field-test evaluators for **GRID AND GO**. This product offers a variety of ready-to-use grids in different configurations (10 x 10, 5 x 5, 3 x 3, and individual frames), colors (red, yellow, and white), and two thicknesses. The foam grids can be positioned onto hook-receptive platforms such as APH's Picture Maker Board, All-in-One Board, and Tri-fold Board. The wide assortment of grids can support



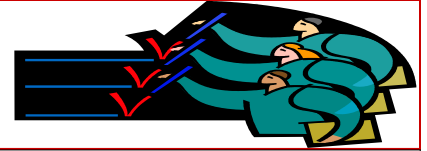
activities and games related to orientation and mobility, math and science, spatial skills development, literacy skills, and recreation as created and determined by the teacher, parent, or student. The accompanying activity guide offers many starter ideas. [Note: Hook-receptive board(s) are not included with the **GRID AND GO** kit.] Evaluators will then complete an online product evaluation form at the end of the testing period. Field-test sites will be selected based on location, available number of students, and type of instructional setting. The number of available field-test prototypes is limited.

If you are interested in possibly serving as a field evaluator of **GRID AND GO**, please complete this survey by **August 15, 2024**. You may also contact Karen Poppe, Braille and Tactile Literacy Product Manager, at [kpoppe@aph.org](mailto:kpoppe@aph.org), 502-899-2322 or 800-223-1839, ext. 322 if you have related questions about this field-test activity.

**Field testing will begin in SEPTEMBER 2024. Completed field evaluation forms will be due by NOVEMBER 30, 2024.**



# CHECK IT OUT!



## About Developmental Pathways

Developmental Pathways (DP) supports individuals with disabilities in Arapahoe, Douglas, and Elbert counties through various programs, services, and community resources. We collaborate with community partners to provide expertise, assistance, and advocacy to help individuals pursue their most meaningful lives. We work with individuals with co-occurring needs from birth to aging, from various backgrounds, and with wide-ranging support needs.

We are a designated Case Management Agency (CMA) for long-term care services and are one of Colorado's Community Centered Boards (CCB), connecting people to federal, state, county, and private funding. Additionally, DP is Colorado's largest Early Intervention (EI) provider, connecting young children to essential resources.



## Developmental Pathways

DP primarily focuses on coordinating care for individuals and families navigating the complex world of disability services. We provide three key program areas: **Early Intervention** for babies and toddlers with developmental delays and their families, **Case Management** for children and adults with any disabilities requiring long-term care services, and **I/DD Local Programming** for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and their families.

For more information or to connect with the [Developmental Pathways website](#) or call 303-360-6600.

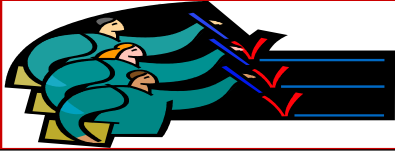
To find your county's designated check out the [Case Management Agency website](#).

## Elderly, Blind, and Disabled Waiver

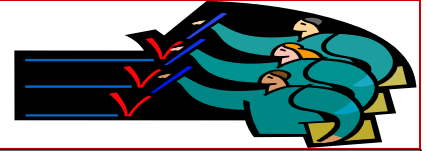
Individuals receiving Long-Term Care Case Management in Colorado may be eligible for the Elderly, Blind, and/or Disabled (EBD) waiver, which provides assistance to people ages 65 and older who have a functional impairment or are blind or to people ages 18-64 who are physically disabled or have a diagnosis of HIV or AIDS, and require long-term supports and services in order to remain in a community setting.

You will receive regular Health First Colorado benefits if enrolled in the EBD waiver. Additionally, you may be able to receive the following services specific to the EBD waiver: Adult Day Services, Complementary and Integrative Health Services (Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Massage Therapy), Home Delivered Meals, Home Modification, Homemaker Services (with Remote Supports options), In-Home Support Services (IHSS), Life Skills Training, Medication Reminder, Non-Medical Transportation, Peer Mentorship, Personal Care (with Remote Supports options), Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS), Respite Care, and Transition Set Up.

Please visit the [Developmental Pathways Elderly, Blind, and Disabled Waiver webpage](#) for more information.



# 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

Browse APH ConnectCenter's latest content:

[Stroke and Its Vision Complications](#)

[Changing Perceptions About People with Disabilities While Working in a Fulfilling Career](#)

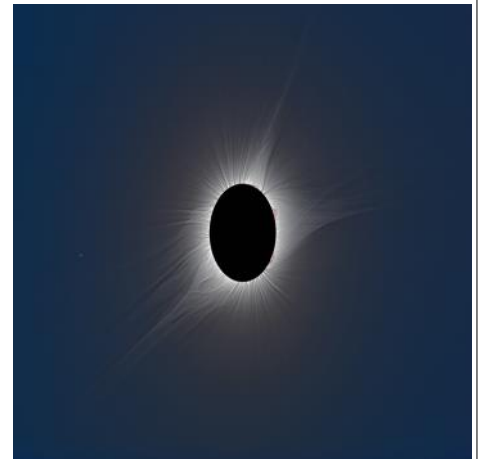
[CVI \(Cortical Visual Impairment\) and LOVE](#)



**APH ConnectCenter VisionAware seeks feedback:** They are updating their Getting Started Guide in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#) and need your input to enhance it! Please review the guide and share your thoughts by completing the survey. Thank you for helping shape the future of this free resource. [Access the Getting Started Guide Survey here.](#)

## Harvard Team Makes Solar Eclipse Accessible

As many turn their eyes to the skies to watch the solar eclipse, some with vision impairment are turning their ears to a new gadget. The LightSound is a 3D-printed device, about the size of a cell phone, which can register the changing brightness of light. It then turns that information into a variety of sounds using a process known as sonification. "Sonification is just taking data and converting it into sound," says Allyson Bieryla, an astronomer at Harvard University. Bieryla came up with the idea for the LightSound ahead of the 2017 solar eclipse, alongside Wanda Díaz-Merced, an astronomer and sonification researcher who is blind. Bieryla says the LightSound represents an effort to use sonification to make astronomy more accessible to those with physical differences.



To do this, the LightSound emits a range of sounds based on the amount of light it receives, Bieryla tells ABC Audio. "We have this Midi synthesizer board on the device that basically allows us to map different instruments to the data values." A flute, for example, represents bright light. When it gets darker, Bieryla says "the midrange goes to a clarinet, and then in totality, or like a dark room or something, you might hear a clicking." The LightSound's clicking slows down the darker its environment becomes. "For totality, we really didn't want to distract with a lot of sound, so we chose, like, the absence of light, the absence of sound," says Bieryla. She says that's because totality - the brief moment when the moon completely obscures the sun - brings with it other environmental changes. "Since 2017, Bieryla and her team have distributed hundreds of LightSound devices around the world. They say they've donated more than 200 devices in the lead-up to the 2024 eclipse, and feature instructions on their website that detail how to build a LightSound device at home. We don't want people to make a profit off of it," says Bieryla. "We want to give it to the community."

As for what's next, Bieryla says they're looking into ways to add haptics to the LightSound, which would vibrate the device based on the amount of light it receives. It's intended, she says, to bring the eclipse experience to those who are deaf-blind.

[Harvard team makes solar eclipse accessible to visually impaired article.](#)

# Resources and Materials

## New Guides from FamilyConnect

APH FamilyConnect has two new guides *Getting Started: A Guide for Families New to Blindness and Low Vision*. One is for [birth to 3rd grade](#) and one for [4th to 12th grade](#). They provide information about visual development, education, eye care providers, adapting the home, and more.



## Reach the APH ConnectCenter via the Be My Eyes App!

Thanks to a partnership with Be My Eyes, people in the US can contact the APH ConnectCenter Information and Referral Line through the Be My Eyes App. Reaching the APH ConnectCenter is easy: open the Be My Eyes app, activate the "Browse Specialized Help" button, and select "Blindness Organizations." Tap on APH ConnectCenter, and you will be connected in seconds! Visit [www.bemyeyes.com](http://www.bemyeyes.com) and [APH ConnectCenter and Be My Eyes Partner to Provide a Broader Array of Assistance](#) to learn more about the help and support available in the free app.

## OSEP Fast Facts

The OSEP Fast Facts are an ongoing effort to display data from the [12 data collections](#) authorized under IDEA Section 618 into graphic, visual representations with the intent to present 618 data quickly and clearly.

Visit the [OSEP Fast Facts page](#) for existing and future Fast Facts.

## Assistive Technology Track

The Assistive Technology and Inclusive Engineering graduate certificate provides an in-depth introduction to the area of inclusive and assistive technologies for individuals aspiring to either work in the field of technology, disability, and/or aging into disability; and/or to sit for the national RESNA credentialing examination for one of two certifications to recognize assistive technology service providers who have met a national standard of job-based knowledge and experience.

Learn more about this certificate at [CU Bioengineering Certificate Programs](#).

In addition to the link above, check out more course information listed on the [Academic Programs and Degrees webpage](#).

A photograph of a white surface with Braille dots. The text is written in a black, serif font, appearing as if it were being read by someone with a white cane. The quote is: "There is a wonder in reading in Braille that the sighted will never know: to touch words and have them touch you back."

"There is a wonder  
in reading in  
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words and have  
them touch you  
back."

-Jim Fiebig





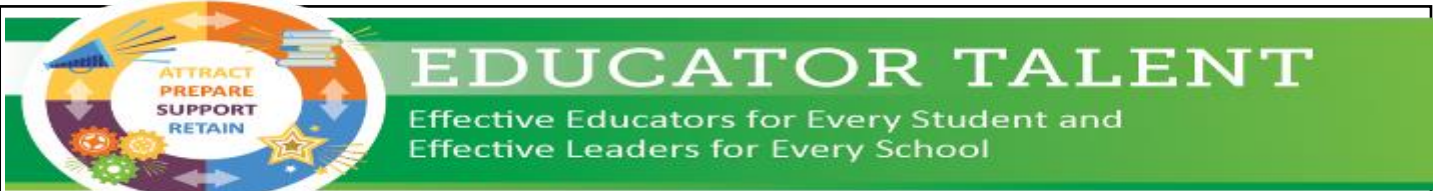
## Initial Licensure and Endorsement Specific to Special Education Specialist: VI

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

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

<p><b>School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bachelor’s degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution.</li> <li>✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists.</li> <li>✓ Completion of practicum or internship, which must be in a school setting and equivalent to a minimum of 350 hours, full-time, under the supervision of an Academy of Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) licensed orientation and mobility specialist.</li> <li>✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam.</li> <li>✓ Hold a current and valid ACVREP Certified O&amp;M Specialist certificate (<b>for initial and renewal licenses</b>). <b>Do not let your ACVREP Certification expire.</b></li> </ul>
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### Educator Talent Website

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

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



## College Board PSAT / SAT Assessments

As of this year, College Board PSAT/SAT assessments are stage-adaptive online assessments. There are AT forms that can access screen readers and adaptive keyboards. A braille-ready option for students who need the paper-based braille form is also available. The paper-based braille form is not stage-adaptive. The paper-based assessments have not changed. Students will have the same testing experience they have had in previous years.

## Educators May Add Licenses and Certifications to myColorado App

CDE has partnered with the [myColorado app](#) to provide certified educators access to digital versions of their credentials. Download the myColorado app, create an account and download certificates into the myColorado wallet. [To learn more about myColorado and the Educator Certificates, visit the myColorado FAQ page.](#)

For more information contact Colleen O'Neil at [oneil\\_c@cde.state.co.us](mailto:oneil_c@cde.state.co.us)

## Updated READ Act Requirement Chart and FAQs for Educator Preparation Programs

To further clarify understanding of requirements for the READ Act teacher training requirements that both ensure program completers earn the READ Act Teacher Training Designation as well as the licensure requirements for teachers, the Educator Preparation and Licensure teams have created [a webpage with information and updated frequently asked questions](#).

Contact the [educator preparation team](#) with questions.

## Colorado Educator Loan Forgiveness Program Opens March 15

Colorado educators can apply for student loan forgiveness beginning Friday, March 15. The program is designed for Colorado educators who are later in their career. Disbursement of payments will begin in July. This program is limited and not all who apply can be awarded. First preference will be given to applicants in approved rural schools/districts, followed by applicants in content-shortage area in non-rural schools/districts. Learn more about program qualifications on the [Colorado Department of Higher Education website](#). For more information contact April Gonzalez at [April.Gonzales@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:April.Gonzales@dhe.state.co.us).

## Monthly Literacy Conversation on the Colorado Framework for Writing Instruction

[Register for monthly virtual conversations](#) on the Colorado Framework for Writing Instruction led by the reading, writing and communicating content specialist in CDE's Office of Standards and Instructional Support. Conversations will examine beliefs around writing and teaching writing. For more information contact Olivia Gillespie at [gillespie\\_o@cde.state.co.us](mailto:gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us) or 720-930-1298. For more information contact Olivia Gillespie at [gillespie\\_o@cde.state.co.us](mailto:gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us) or 720-930-1298.

## Monthly Literacy conversation—Students who Remain on READ Plans Beyond Third Grade

The Reading, Writing, and Communicating Content Specialist in the Office of Standards and Instructional Support will host a monthly virtual conversation examining the guidance to support secondary students who remain on READ plans in fourth through 12th grade. The conversations will focus on writing READ plans, goal setting and progress monitoring, types of effective assessments, collecting a body of evidence to exit a student from a READ plan, multilingual students and students with disabilities. [Register for the session via Zoom](#).

For more information contact Olivia Gillespie at [gillespie\\_o@cde.state.co.us](mailto:gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us) or 720-930-1298.



## Updated READ Act Advisory List of Instructional Programming

The READ Act Advisory List of Instructional Programming has been updated to include core, supplemental and intervention reading programs that were approved during the 2023-24 review cycle. The advisory list includes K-3 reading programs that are approved for purchase with READ Act funds. The review of online reading programs that were submitted for the 2023-24 review will be conducted at a later date.

For more information, visit the [Advisory List of Instructional Programming webpage](#) or email [READAct@cde.state.co.us](mailto:READAct@cde.state.co.us).

## Nominate an Exceptional Teacher for the 2025 Colorado Teacher of the Year

Do you know an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled K-12 teacher? [Nominate him or her to apply for the 2025 Colorado Teacher of the Year award](#) by Tuesday, May 28.

The selected teacher will represent the entire profession in the state and automatically become Colorado's nominee for the National Teacher of the Year Program. For more information contact Patty Gleason at [gleason\\_p@cde.state.co.us](mailto:gleason_p@cde.state.co.us) or 303-910-5721.

## English Learner Professional Development Requirement for License Renewal

All educators holding an elementary, English language arts, math, science or social studies (or any middle-level) endorsement on a professional teacher license that expires on or after Sept. 1, 2025 must complete English Learner Professional Development (ELPD) prior to renewing their license or they will be unable to renew until they have done so. The ELPD training requirement for these endorsement areas was adopted by the State Board of Education in 2018, allowing teachers time to complete the training until their next full renewal period.

Anyone who holds an ELPD designation on their credential already meets this requirement.

Important note: This requirement is based solely on the endorsement(s) held; it is not based on the content area the educator is presently teaching or if they are teaching at all. For example, a teacher who also holds both a science and a music endorsement will be required to complete ELPD even if only teaching music. Individuals who are serving in other positions (as a principal, for example) or not presently employed in education and who still wish to renew their teacher license with one of the identified endorsements must meet this requirement.

The ELPD designation requires 45 hours of training focused on the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Educators may fulfill the requirement via a [pre-approved program](#) or [individual learning that aligns with the ELPD standards](#). District leaders with [COOL access](#) can download a report of their educators who have attained the designation.

More details for educators needing to complete the ELPD requirement can be found on the [ELPD for Educators webpage](#). Email [educator\\_development@cde.state.co.us](mailto:educator_development@cde.state.co.us) with questions.



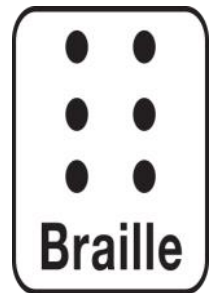
## Licensure Requirements for TVIs and Orientation and Mobility Specialists Colorado Initial Licensure in the Endorsement Area of Visual Impairment

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. This certificate expires five years from its initial issue from CDE.



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.

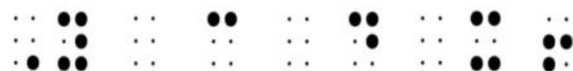
The initial CDE Braille Competency Certificate expires five years from its date of issue.

### Renewal CDE Braille Competency Certificate

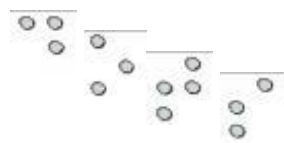
There is a one time expectation to renew the initial CDE certificate five years after its initial issue. This is accomplished by completing 15 renewal modules across the five year renewal period. These modules must be taken with one of the CDE Braille Proctors. Candidates who are in the renewal process should plan on completed three braille renewal modules during each of the five year renewal requirement.

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

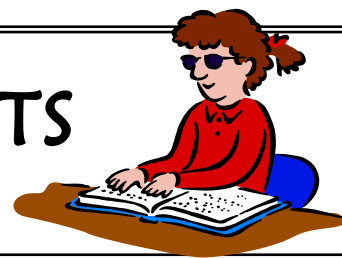
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision\\_guidedocs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs)



You can do it !



# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## Colorado Braille Competency Committee

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

The committee consists currently of the following individuals:

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

Christine Maynard is our southern region proctor/mentor 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. If there is a testing need on the western slope, please contact Tanni.

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

**Thanks for being a steward of braille competency—our students are counting on your expertise for their specially designed instruction and instructional materials.**

## UEB Technical Versus Nemeth Braille Codes

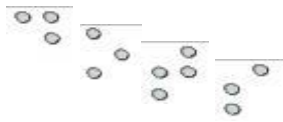
The Colorado Department of Education does not dictate a math code for students with visual impairment, including blindness. Two math codes are approved by the Braille Authority of North America. The decision about the math code is an individual student-by-student or an IEP decision. Both codes are viable for instruction and state testing.

For more information, contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 503-4647 or [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).

## Braillewriter Repair

- Kirk McCall (303) 875-4527 (phone) and email [km2320@msn.com](mailto:km2320@msn.com)
- Mark Carpenter (719) 634-8720 (phone) and email [carpdiane@yahoo.com](mailto:carpdiane@yahoo.com)





# CONNECTING THE DOTS



## Seedlings

ATTENTION: EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS! Have you heard of our Braille for Beginners (B4B) program? Through B4B, we send free braille books to Early Intervention Programs who serve toddlers and preschoolers, ages birth to 3 with vision loss. Hundreds of print-braille-and-picture books have been sent to Early Intervention Programs across the U.S. to share with the families they serve.

If you are an Early Intervention Program interested in receiving free braille books through B4B, please contact Kari, our B4B Program Coordinator at: <mailto:seedlink2@ameritech.net>

## BANA Publication Announcement

***Chemical Notation Using The Nemeth Braille Code 2023***

**Now Available on BANA Website!**

**April 15, 2024—For Immediate Release**

The Braille Authority of North America is excited to announce the publication of *Chemical Notation Using The Nemeth Braille Code 2023*! This revision is a valuable resource for all who are involved in reading, producing, and teaching braille. The purpose of this revision is to modernize the code and clarify the application of pre-existing as well as newly adopted rules for transcription of chemistry using chemical notation within the UEB code. This document replaces the 1997 edition, as well as any updates and provisional guidance previously published by BANA.



BANA is grateful to its Chemistry Committee for their diligent work in revising and updating this document. We would also like to thank the representatives from the Committee on Nomenclature, Terminology, and Symbols (NTS) of the American Chemical Society (ACS) for their valuable contributions to this effort. “ACS appreciates the opportunity for NTS to support this work,” says ACS CEO Albert G. Horvath. “It is a practical demonstration of both ACS’ core value of diversity, inclusion, equity, and respect, and its strategic goal to embrace and advance inclusion in chemistry.” BRF and PDF versions of this new publication are available without charge at <https://www.brailleauthority.org/nemeth-code>

## BANA Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics

BANA offers the *Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2022* publication as a printable PDF and a zipped BRF. An accessible PDF version will follow. The purpose of these guidelines and standards is to provide transcribers, educators, and producers with information about best practices, current methods, and design principles for the production of readable tactile graphics. In the 2022 edition, technical material is transcribed in Unified English Braille (UEB), as well as the Nemeth Code in UEB Contexts.

This edition also includes information on best practices currently in use since the 2010 version was published.

*Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics, 2022* is available on the BANA website at: <https://www.brailleauthority.org/guidelines-and-standards-tactile-graphics>

## Summer 2024: NFB BELL® Academy

The NFB Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning (NFB BELL®) Academy provides blind and low-vision children with Braille and nonvisual skills instruction through engaging activities. There is no virtual option this year—students will participate in day programs or residential settings around the country.

[Learn more about the NFB BELL Academy.](#)



# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)



## Rules are Approved!

By Alice Huyler, Senior Policy Advisor, OIT Rulemaking

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) adopted the final Rules Establishing Technology Accessibility Standards on February 23, 2024 ([Rules website](#) or [Rules Google doc](#)). These rules describe and clarify what is considered discrimination under [HB 21-1110](#) and [CRS 24-34-802](#) by defining the standards and compliance parameters for technology accessibility for state and local government entities in Colorado. Now that we have the rules, we can plan to apply them! OIT provides a [plain language guide to the rules](#) that contains explanations, examples, optional templates and help guides. Be on the lookout for more information as the TAP team continues to build up the resources to support compliance with the rules and this exciting new chapter in digital accessibility for Colorado.

## Training Specific to Multilingual Learners

Please consider registering to join us for the CDE's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual [Multilingual Learners: A Collaborative Approach to Success Conference \(MLACAS\)](#). Join us for a one-day in-person multi-disciplinary training event focusing on ensuring Multilingual Learners are equitably and appropriately referred for special education services and that they receive high-quality instruction specifically designed to meet their needs. This advanced training will focus on the evaluation of multilingual learners using dynamic assessment strategies, intervention practices that capitalize on multi-disciplinary service delivery of evidence-based practices for multilingual students, and opportunities to hear from experts in the field and action plan with your team for implementation of these concepts.

**Where:** Fort Collins High School, Fort Collins

**When:** June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

[Click here to register for MLACAS!](#)

## On-Demand Trainings—Indigenous Students with Exceptionalities

This is a four-part course comprised of an Introduction and three Modules. This work is the result of the collaborative efforts of the [Ute Mountain Ute](#) and [Southern Ute Tribes, Fort Lewis College](#), and the Colorado Department of Education. It is an open-source format designed to be accessible to anyone interested in learning more about best practices for providing culturally and linguistically relevant and sustaining education to the Native American learners, families, and Tribal communities with whom we work. There is a note catcher that corresponds to each course component for you to capture your learning. Additionally, you will find support documents and websites to further your learning. If you choose to take the quizzes at the end of each course component, you will be eligible for up to 4 hours of recertification credit. [Access the Indigenous Students with Exceptionalities Course](#)

## Speech-Language Interventions for Multilingual Learners

This Speech Language Interventions for Multilingual Learners course was created by Dr. Sandy Frey and designed to provide you with a general overview of best practices for approaching family engagement, and intervention for multilingual students with speech-language disorders. The course consists of 4 videos and 1 quiz. Upon successful completion of the course, you will be eligible to receive a certificate of completion from the CDE which will grant you 1 hour of recertification credit. [Access the Speech-Language Interventions for Multilingual Learners Course](#)

## UPDATED [CDE Multilingual Learners Identified With or Suspected of Having Educational Disabilities Webpage](#)

### Highlights:

- Multilingual Learners 2023-2024 Webinar Series Recordings and Handouts
- [Welcoming and Understanding Indigenous Students and Those with Exceptionalities Online Course](#)
- [Speech-Language Interventions for Multilingual Learners Online Course](#)

### Guidance Documents:

- [Students who are Newcomers: Considerations for Special Education](#)
- [Multilingual Learners: Enrollment Scenarios](#)



## Summer Programs at the Colorado Center for the Blind

This summer the Colorado Center for the blind will again offer its No Limits to Learning program for blind teens. In addition to the 4-week program we offered in 2023, we will also offer a 7-week program that will include attending the National Federation of the Blind convention in Orlando, Florida.

We believe blind people can do anything. Every day, we encourage and challenge each student—and they come to understand their potential as they build the skills and confidence to live the life they want. Because when you believe in yourself and experience a thriving community of positive blind people, nothing can hold you back from pursuing your dreams. This is what our summer programs offers – a positive community of thriving blind people that teach effective nonvisual skills and foster confidence in blind teens.

### **Summer for Success—7-week program: Dates: June 21 through August 9, 2024**

This longer program will provide each student with additional instruction to cement their skills and confidence. Students enrolled in this seven-week program will attend the National Convention of the National Federation of the Blind held in Orlando Florida from July 3 to July 8. They will learn about techniques for airport travel, how to navigate a large hotel, a wide array of technology, meet blind people, attend meetings to learn more about the NFB and much more. To participate in this program applicants must be 16 years of age or older. They are required to submit an essay discussing why they want to attend the national convention.

### **No Limits to Learning—4-week program: Dates: July 12 through August 9, 2024**

This program is open to applicants who are 15 years old and up. Except for attending the NFB Convention, this shorter program will cover all elements listed above, including challenge recreation activities.

The Colorado Center for the blind is located in Littleton Colorado. We place a strong emphasis on safety and security and follow the Youth protection policy established by the National Federation of the blind. All staff receive extensive training prior to the students' arrival. Students live with a counselor and will be supervised.

[Read our full Youth Participant Protection Policy.](#)

**What is the process?** First, students, their parents, TVI, or VR counselor completes the [Summer Youth Application](#) form. Once they have the student's application, all potential students are interviewed along with their parent by our director of Youth Services, Chaz Davis to help determine if our programs will be a good fit for that applicant. After talking with Chaz and if all agree the program and the student are a good fit, families will be asked to provide additional information, such as medications, food or other allergies, etc. Funding is typically available through vocational Rehabilitation in each state under the Pre-ETS, or transition programs. Chaz will also provide information about how to apply to VR in their state and to have VR fund their summer program. For students applying for the Summer for Success program, Chaz will ask them to submit an essay to him.





## Summer Programs at the Colorado Center for the Blind (continued)

Here are the elements that have made our summer programs vibrant and life changing for so many teens

- Students receive instruction from positive blind role models.
- Students live with a counselor and a roommate in their own apartment to build their skills in all areas of cooking and cleaning.
- Each student gains belief and confidence in themselves as blind individuals.
- All students are required to use a long white cane.
- Students develop nonvisual techniques by using learning shades in all classes.
- Students take the following core classes: Cane Travel, Braille, Technology, and Home Management.
- Students learn about the world of work through job seeking skills class, job shadows, and work experiences.
- Students who will be attending college participate in a college readiness class.
- Students learn about methods that they can use to succeed in STEM fields through hands-on seminars.
- Students participate in challenge recreational activities including rock climbing, canoeing, self-defense, ice skating, rafting, and more.
- Discussion groups are held several times each week. Topics covered include taking charge of school and life as a blind person, dating, taking responsibility, educating the public, images of blindness, and more.
- A seminar held for family members provides them with support and encouragement to have high expectations for their blind teen.

### What do Students gain?

- Life-long friendships with blind peers.
- Belief in their abilities.
- Pride in being blind.
- Skills in all class areas.
- Connections with other blind people through the National Federation of the Blind in their state.
- Leadership skills.
- 

### About Chaz Davis, Director of Youth Programs

Chaz has his master's degree in social work. He is blind, a marathon runner and the father of a two-year-old. This is his third summer with the Colorado Center for the Blind.

### [Complete the Summer Youth Application](#)

For more information please contact: Chaz Davis Director of Youth programs at [303-778-1130](tel:303-778-1130) or email him at [cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org). Go to our website at [www.cocenter.org](http://www.cocenter.org)




# Calendar of Events

2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024 2024

<b>May 14</b>	<b>Southern Region Meeting:</b> Host/Location: Ute Pass BOCES from 2:30—4:30 PM <u>Contact:</u> Chloann Woolley at <a href="mailto:cwoolley@upboces.org">cwoolley@upboces.org</a>
<b>June 6-7</b>	<b>Colorado AT Conference—virtual</b> <a href="http://www.swaaac.org/conference-for-assistive-technology-and-education-cate">http://www.swaaac.org/conference-for-assistive-technology-and-education-cate</a>
<b>June 17-19</b>	<b>Foresight Summer Camp for Blind Youth—Vail, CO</b> <u>Contact:</u> Christine Holmberg at <a href="mailto:christine@foresightskiguide.org">christine@foresightskiguide.org</a>
<b>June 17-21</b>	<b>STEM Exploration Lab / 3D Printing and Astronomy Camp – CCB</b> <u>Registration:</u> <a href="https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e9idPoolE587702">https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e9idPoolE587702</a>
<b>June 25-25</b>	<b>Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness and Significant Support Needs—Denver</b> <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>June 21- Aug 9</b>	<b>No Limits Learning—Colorado Center for the Blind, Denver</b> <u>Contact:</u> Chaz Davis at <a href="mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org">cdavis@cocenter.org</a>
<b>July 24-28</b>	<b>AER Conference— Charlotte, NC</b> <u>Contact:</u> <a href="http://www.aerbvi.org">www.aerbvi.org</a>
<b>September 5</b>	<b>Vision Coalition—virtual</b> <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>Sept 26-27</b>	<b>Western Region Low Vision Evaluation Clinic—Grant Junction</b> <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>October 2-4</b>	<b>APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY</b> <u>Contact:</u> <a href="http://www.APH.org">www.APH.org</a>
<b>October 11</b>	<b>Southern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic—CSDB</b> <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>November 14-17</b>	<b>ICEVI World Conference—Ahmedabad, India</b>
<b>November 14-15</b>	<b>Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic—Fort Collins</b> <u>Contact:</u> Tanni Anthony at <a href="mailto:Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us">Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us</a>
<b>December 14</b>	<b>CAER Wreaths Across America – Fairmount Cemetery, Denver</b>



# Calendar of Events

2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025 2025

**Sept 23-24**      **Western Regional Early Intervention Conference – Albuquerque, NM**  
For more information: <http://www.wreic.org/>

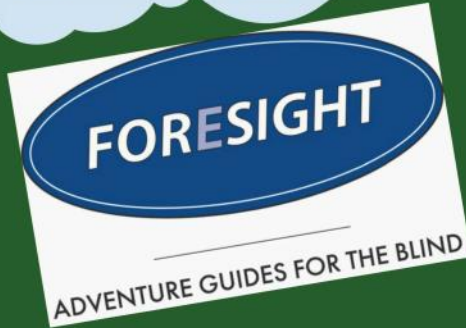
**October 15-17**      **APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY**  
Contact: [www.APH.org](http://www.APH.org)

**October 7-9**      **APH Annual Meeting – Louisville, KY**  
Contact: [www.APH.org](http://www.APH.org)

**November 5-8**      **Getting in Touch with Literacy Conference—Huntsville, AL**



The teachers in a school gave a balloon to every student, who had to inflate it, write their name on it and throw it in the hallway. The teachers then mixed all the balloons. The students were given five minutes to find their own balloon. Despite a hectic search, no one found their own balloon. At that point the teachers told the students to take the first balloon that they found and hand it to the person whose name was written on it. Within 5 minutes everyone had their own balloon. The teachers said to the students: "These balloons are like happiness. We will never find it if everyone is looking for their own. But if we care about other people's happiness....we'll find ours too."



# FORESIGHT'S SUMMER CAMP FOR BLIND YOUTH



June 17-19 and  
July 8-10, 2024  
\*Possible 4th day added at the end  
of each camp

## Activities :

- > Rock Climbing, Hiking
- > Horseback Riding
- > Stand up Paddleboarding
- > Vail Epic Discovery
- > Beep Kickball and more
- > Leadership Development
- > Possible Float Trip on Upper Colorado

## No-Cost Camp Includes:

- > Two Nights Lodging, All Activities
- > Daily Lunches & One BBQ Dinner
- > Local Transportation in the Vail Valley
- > Ages 10-21
- > Donations Accepted
- > Registration begins April 15

 303-506-3859 for more info  
 [www.foresightskiguide.org](http://www.foresightskiguide.org)





# STEM Career Exploration Lab 2024 3D Printing and Astronomy Camp



Calling all High School Students and Graduating Seniors!  
Thinking about planning your education and career journey?  
Interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)?

**Join a research study to help improve STEM for students with visual impairments**



**Funded by the National Science Foundation**



Principal Investigator Dr. Thomas Madura of San José State University

**As part of this study, use tactile models, sound, and hands-on activities designed for the visually impaired to:**

- *Build a 3D printer and make objects using 3D printers*
- *Learn about the universe from actual scientists*
- *Learn about Moon phases and the inside of the Sun*
- *Hear the Sun and use sound to understand light and waves*
- *Build a constellation in 3D and trace the life cycles of stars*
- *Discover the shape and structure of star clusters and galaxies*
- *Learn about the Big Bang and the structure of the universe*



**Complete surveys and interviews about your experience to help us improve the activities**

**Meet and talk to STEM professionals with blindness/visual impairments like:**

- *Kenneth Silberman of NASA, an Engineer, Programmer, and Patent Attorney*
- *Nicolas Bonne, an Astronomer and Project Lead for the Tactile Universe*

**Go on free field trips to local museums and STEM businesses!**

**Room and Board for participating students with visual impairments\***

**Twenty-four hour safety and supervision: camp assistants, social activities, and new friendships**

*\*Only for students with visual impairments*



**Space is limited, apply now!**



**When: June 17<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup> 2024**

**Where: Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton, CO**

**For Parental Consent Forms, Details, and to Register Visit:**

[https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_e9idPoolE587702](https://sjsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e9idPoolE587702)

# Visual Impairment, including Blindness

Thank you to all of people who took time to discuss, craft, and comment on the updated eligibility criteria of Visual Impairment, Including Blindness. Thank you also to the Colorado State Board of Education for their careful view and constructive feedback on the draft version and the ultimate final version, which was effective as of June 2023.

The updated eligibility criteria can be found in the [Rules for Administration of the Exceptional Children Education Act](#).

**2.08(11) A child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness has an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects the child’s educational performance and that requires specialized instruction. The term includes low vision, blindness and/or progressive vision loss.**

**2.08(11)(a) A determination that a child is an eligible child with a Visual Impairment, Including Blindness may include but not be limited to:**

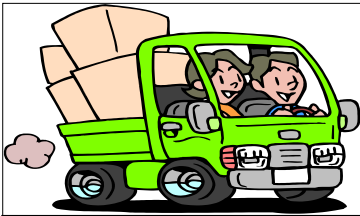
**2.08(11)(a)(i) Visual acuity of no better than 20/70 in the better eye after correction;**

**2.08(11)(a)(ii) Visual field restriction to 20 degrees or less; and/or**

**2.08(11)(a)(iii) A physical condition of visual system which cannot be medically corrected and, as such, affects visual functioning to the extent that specially designed instruction is needed.**

**These criteria are reserved for special situations such as, but not restricted to cortical visual impairment and/or a progressive visual loss where field and/or acuity deficits alone may not meet the aforementioned criteria.**





## TRANSITION INFORMATION ABOUT MOVING ON!

### Secondary School Student Substance Use Committee report

Per House Bill 23-1009, the Secondary School Student Substance Use Committee developed a report with a practice that secondary schools may implement to identify students who need substance use treatment, as well as interventions, resources and referrals. Learn more about the report on the [Secondary School Student Substance Use Committee webpage](#).

### Transition Planning to Prepare Our Youth for Success

OSERS released the [fourth blog](#) in its series on secondary transition and addressed the transition planning process to help ensure youth with disabilities and their families are empowered to experience successful post-high school outcomes.



### Transition Leadership Institute: June 9-11, 2024 (free)

Connectedness connects the dots, makes the link between the seen and unseen, builds bridges, and helps others see connections and purpose in everyday life. The Transition Leadership Institute is a jam-packed, two-day professional learning opportunity for school district teams, their partners, and parents to come together to learn evidence-based transition practices from national, state, and local experts. Sessions are designed to align with this year's theme of "*The Power of Connectedness*." The goal is to strengthen effective practices and grow in the following areas:

- increase knowledge of effective transition practices;
- use relevant data to reflect on current practices;
- update or develop interagency strategic plans;
- foster youth and parent engagement; and
- develop new and strengthen existing partnerships among educators, community partners, and families.

[More Transition Leadership Institute information here](#) and [TLI registration link here](#)

### Self-Advocacy Toolkits Make a Difference

The National Federation of the Blind is continuously working toward securing full integration, equality, independence, acceptance, and respect for all blind people. Our advocacy work has centered on issues related to education, employment, transportation, voting, and civil rights, and is directed by the [resolutions](#) that are passed every year during our [national convention](#). As the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind Americans, we are able to provide expert advice in these areas to blind people, their families, agencies for the blind, corporations, and the government. The NFB provides several [federal, state, and self-advocacy resources](#). A popular resource is our self-advocacy toolkits which empower people to advocate on their own behalf by gathering essential information together in one place based on subject matter. The Federation has five toolkits currently available:

[Self-Advocacy in Higher Education Toolkit](#)    [High-Stakes Testing Self-Advocacy Toolkit](#)  
[Self-Advocacy in Employment Toolkit](#)    [Reporting Inaccessibility Self-Advocacy Toolkit](#)  
[A Blind Parent's Essential Guide to Effective Communication from Public and Private Schools Toolkit](#)

Please check them out and share our toolkits with others.

# 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.



## National Organization of Parents of Blind Children

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

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

Their status as a division of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), an important organization of blind people in the world, provides many benefits. NFB provides its members information about the societal, legislative, and technological issues that affect blind people. One of their most exciting activities is their annual conference. Every year since it was established, the NOPBC has conducted an annual conference for parents and teachers of blind children as part of the national convention of the NFB.

The program has grown to include five exciting days of workshops, training sessions, activities for all family members, including sighted siblings, and countless opportunities to meet blind adults and other families and children from around the country. Most states have an NOPBC affiliate chapter. Colorado has one! For more information, call the Colorado Center for the Blind at (303) 778-1130.



## Exceptional Parent Magazine

Did you know subscriptions to [Exceptional Parent Magazine](#) are free? This award-winning publication focuses on serving the special needs community. [Sign up here](#) to receive a free monthly subscription.

In this month's issue, Ethan Morrobel describes his experiences growing up with Usher Syndrome in [An Uncomfortable Life](#).

## May 30-June 2: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Advocacy Academy

Do you want to learn more about IEPs and become an IEP advocate? At the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) IEP Advocacy Academy, you'll gain an understanding of education law, learn how to develop a thorough and robust IEP, acquire advocacy strategies to empower parents to advocate for students and families, assist in and create the strongest possible IEP's for blind students, and learn to train other advocates in their respective state.

[Learn more and apply](#)





## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

We are facing our first real shortage for Colorado TVIs (teachers of students with visual impairments) and Orientation and Mobility Specialists = orientation and mobility specialists. 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!.

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 for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Adams 12 School District. For more information, please contact Heater Greicius at [gre008602@adams12.org](mailto:gre008602@adams12.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI (or part time)** TVI at the Anchor Center for Blind Children. For more information, please reach out to Tammy Miller at [tmiller@anchorcenter.org](mailto:tmiller@anchorcenter.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI/O&M Specialist** in Cherry Creek School District. Please contact Amy Barr at [abarr2@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:abarr2@cherrycreekschools.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Denver Public Schools. Please contact Michelle Chacon at [michelle\\_chacon@dpsk12.net](mailto:michelle_chacon@dpsk12.net)
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist Position** in Littleton School District. Please contact Jennifer Templeton at [jtempleton@lps.k12.co.us](mailto:jtempleton@lps.k12.co.us)



### Northern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE or part-time TVI / O&M Specialist**—Windsor School District. For more information, please contact Jennifer Sedaghat at [Jennifer.sedaghat@weldre4.org](mailto:Jennifer.sedaghat@weldre4.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE for TVI / O&M Specialist** in Poudre School District. For more information, please contact Amy Villard at [avillard@psdschools.org](mailto:avillard@psdschools.org)
- ◆ **Contract TVI / O&M Specialist** work in Centennial BOCES. For more information, contact Jocelyn Aldridge at [jaldrige@cbooces.org](mailto:jaldrige@cbooces.org)



## IMPORTANT! We have JOB OPENINGS!!

### Southern Region

- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Position**—Colorado Springs District 11. For more information, please contact Nancy Melo Maresh at [nancy.mereshmelo@d11.org](mailto:nancy.mereshmelo@d11.org) or (719) 520-2158.
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Position** at CSDB. Please contact Jamie Lugo for more information at [jlugo@csdb.org](mailto:jlugo@csdb.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist** for CSDB Outreach. Please contact Ashley Renslow at [arensolow@csdb.org](mailto:arensolow@csdb.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE CSDB Short Term Placement Teacher**. Please contact Ashley Renslow at [arenslow@csdb.org](mailto:arenslow@csdb.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI Contract Work**—Widefield School District 3 for SY 2024-2025. For more information, contact Rachel Lake at [lakerachel@wsd3.org](mailto:lakerachel@wsd3.org)

### Western Region

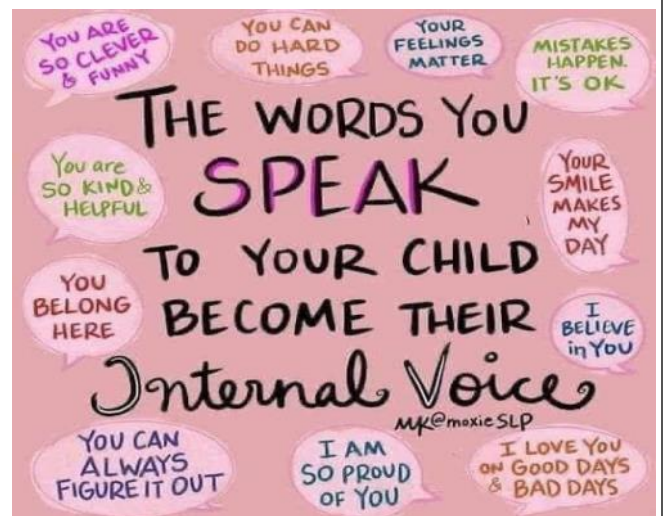
- ◆ **Contract work for an O&M Specialist**—Northwest BOCES. For more information, please contact Courtney Lincoln at [Courtney.Lincoln@nwboces.org](mailto:Courtney.Lincoln@nwboces.org)
- ◆ **1 FTE TVI/O&M Specialist** with Mountain BOCES and Summit School District. Please contact Susan Udenberg at [sudenberg@mtnboces.org](mailto:sudenberg@mtnboces.org) or Ellen Clark at [ellen.clark@summitk12.org](mailto:ellen.clark@summitk12.org).
- ◆ **.5 to 1 FTE TVI / O&M Specialist** with Ridgway School District. Please contact Jeff Butterbaugh at [Jbutterbaugh@ridway.k12.co.us](mailto:Jbutterbaugh@ridway.k12.co.us)

### Across Metro, Northern, and Western Regions

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

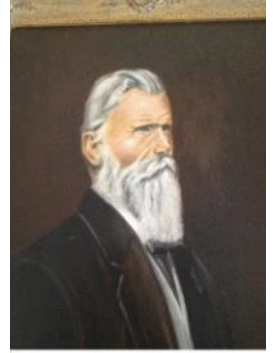
**TVIs and O&M Specialists**—If you are getting ready to retire, please do not let your CDE TVI and/or O&M licenses expire, as you are in a great position to keep contributing with part-time or substitute work. Please keep in touch with Tanni, if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement! 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 on the CDE's TVI and/or O&M Specialist contractor list, please be in touch with Tanni at [anthony\\_t@cde.state.co.us](mailto:anthony_t@cde.state.co.us).



## CSDB: Celebrating 150 Years!

On April 8, 1874, seven students sat in a classroom in a house in downtown Colorado Springs eagerly anticipating their first day at a new school, founded by Jonathan Kennedy. That year, the Colorado Territorial Assembly passed an act to start a school for students who were deaf in Colorado Springs. It was originally called the Institute for the Education of Mutes. The Colorado Springs Company, belonging to General Palmer, donated 10 acres of land on Kiowa Street, and the Territorial Assembly granted \$5,000 for a building.



Jonathan Kennedy

But everyone wanted classes to start right way, so a temporary school was set up in a rented house. By the end of the first year, there were 13 students and 3 staff members. That first year, Major Henry McAllister, a colleague of General Palmer, donated a printing press. This allowed students to learn the printing trade by creating a newspaper. The first issue of *The Deaf-Mute Index* was printed on January 30, 1875. Later, the name changed to the *Colorado Index*. This is how we've learned so much about the history of the school.



Students and staff around original building

In 1876, the new three-story building was ready. It had 12 rooms with coal stoves and kerosene lamps. There were 20 students and part of the middle floor was set aside for classrooms. The campus had vegetable gardens, as well as a cow and a flock of 50 chickens who provided all the milk and eggs for the school. In 1877, the name changed to "Institute for the Education of Mutes and Blind" and discussions began about how to recruit, teach, and house students who were blind as well as those who were deaf. When classes began on September 12, 1883, there were four new students who were blind, and shortly thereafter six more joined.



Paul Hubbard, first row, first man on the left

A momentous occasion for the school took place on June 4, 1889, when three students, who were deaf, David H. Wolpert, Grace E. Young, and Paul D. Hubbard became the first graduates. Shortly after graduation, Paul Hubbard went to the National Deaf College, later Gallaudet University. He joined the football team and as quarterback is believed to have been the creator of the football huddle. Paul got the idea when he noticed players from the opposing team could see him signing the next play to his teammates. To prevent this, he called the team into a tight circle to give instructions. This method was adopted by other teams and eventually became common practice.

While core subjects continued to be important, there was also an emphasis on students learning a trade. In 1893, carpentry, shoemaking, printing, cabinetmaking, broom-making, mattress-making, and chair seating were options for the boys. Girls could learn dressmaking, needlework, hammock weaving, knitting, beadwork, and baking.

Students who were deaf might also have art lessons, while music was an important skill taught to students who were blind.

For years, school leaders had requested a change in the name of the institute. It was important to them that it was clearly labeled a school, rather than an institution or asylum. The name officially became Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind in 1895.

A year later, Hugh McCabe, Thomas Kavanagh, and Henry Ralston became the first three students who were blind to graduate.

By 1903, students went to classes for five hours in the morning and worked in their trades for two hours every afternoon. New trades included gardening, dairying, painting, and rug weaving. All students studied standard school subjects. Students who were deaf had either manual or oral classes and students who were blind used the New York Point System,<sup>8</sup> a tactile reading and writing system created in the 1860s. Although braille was invented in 1824, it wasn't used here yet.



*Eclipse Coronet Boys Band-1890*



*Lottie, left, Mrs. Veditz, center, Ralph, right*

As evidence that CSDB was at the forefront in education, in 1904, 17-year-old Lottie Sullivan, the first student who was DeafBlind, Ralph Wooten, and their teacher, Bessie Veditz, participated in the St. Louis World's Fair. For over two months, they demonstrated teaching methods for DeafBlind students in the education building and won gold medals.

The famous silent horror film star Lon Chaney, the grandson of founder Jonathan Kennedy, was hearing and communicated with his deaf parents using sign language. This skill was credited with Chaney's acting talent. He went on to be known in Hollywood as "the man of a thousand faces." While Chaney is immortalized on film, his grandparents' legacy can be seen today atop Kiowa Street Hill.

In the 1940's, several new extracurricular activities were added including cheerleading and wrestling for students who were blind. Yearly gymnastics programs highlighted student skills, which they'd learned in gym class. Dr. Brown taught square dancing to students who were Deaf, while students who were blind played music for the dances.

On March 22, 1950, 18-year-old Juan Cruz was enjoying recess outside with other students who were blind when he saw smoke rising from the school building. Juan, along with a couple of other boys, set off the fire alarms and began alerting students. Alumnus Frank Cancino, a teenager at the time, remembers Juan banging a gong to alert everyone. Thanks to regular fire drills, students calmly exited the building, then lined up outside.

When they looked back, the building was on fire. Students remember several boys going back inside to rescue paintings from the building. In horror, students stood nearby to watch, until an explosion drove them further away. About a dozen fire trucks from across the city assisted, but the fire spread too quickly, and the building was lost. In addition, the school's braille library and musical instruments were all destroyed. Frank Cancino remembers seeing the organ crash from the third floor to the basement. "I remember it was heartbreaking, just so much destruction." It was later determined that an electrical short caused the blaze. Classes were held all around campus until the Gottlieb Building opened in 1952.



*Old School Building burns while firemen use water in hoses. Pikes Peak in the background*

In 1968, the first preschool for students who are Deaf began. The program was led by the Junior League of Colorado Springs two mornings a week, serving 10 students the first year. CSDB also began to offer multi-day workshops for preschool-age students and their parents during the summer and community ASL classes. At the start of the 1969 school year, the Adams Building opened. The new building for students who are blind had nine classrooms, a music room, an auditorium, and a library. Each desk had an outlet to plug in tape and record players, to play recordings of individual lessons.



In 1971, track, football, and basketball star Gary Washington competed in the junior Olympics in track. He was honored at the White House by President Nixon with the “Most Courageous Athlete” award. In 1973, Gary went to the Deaflympics in Sweden where he won three gold and one silver medal in track events. He went on to play football at CU Boulder. In his final game, he had a 72-yard run for a touchdown. He was carried off the field on his teammates’ shoulders with a standing ovation from fans. With Gary Washington as running back, the football team had been Black Forest League champions twice. It wasn’t until 1977, however, that they went to the State Championship. Tim Elstad, class of 1978, remembers playing football every afternoon with his friends long before he was old enough to

play for CSDB. By 1977, his senior year in high school, he was the quarterback for an undefeated team which went on to the State Championship game against Simla, which CSDB won, 22-16.

In 1990, the Outreach Program began serving families with students who were Deaf/Hard of Hearing or Blind/Low vision across the state who did not attend CSDB. The program helped school districts, provided opportunities to meet Deaf or blind role models, and offered diagnostic services, library items, adaptive technology, and social activities for young students and teens. Originally based in Denver, the Colorado Instructional Materials Center, which receives significant funding support from the Colorado Department of Education, moved to campus as part of the Outreach Program in 1991.

Goalball, a sport for the blind/visually impaired, was introduced to CSDB students in 1982, and became a school sport. Soon, CSDB was represented on Team USA in Paralympic Goalball. Team USA won the Silver Medal in Athens in 2004 and the Gold Medal in Beijing in 2008.

In 1997, thirteen students were the first to enroll in an on-campus transition program that included independent-living dorms, career development, and the opportunity to attend classes at Pikes Peak Community College. This later became the Bridges to Life Program.

The Deaf Academic Bowl began at Gallaudet University in 1996 as a regional competition. In 2004, the CSDB team qualified for the National Championship. Nine teams competed in the finals that year, and in colorful Hawaiian shirts CSDB came out victorious.

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused the school to close for a period and then remote learning began.



Staff helped deliver devices to students’ homes across the state and dorm staff and teachers created activity videos for students to follow. That fall, a hybrid learning model began with some students in-person and others tuning in via Zoom. Various social distancing and mask policies were in place for much of 2021, until later in the year when safety precautions were lifted.

Now, as CSDB celebrates 150 years and we look back on the resiliency, ingenuity, and legacy of those who came before us, it is our turn to write the next part of this story. **Happy 150 years to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind!!**

## Virtual Meeting – April 11, 2024

**Persons in Attendance:** Tanni Anthony, Nancy Cozart, Melissa French, Donna Keale, Paula Landry, Tammy Miller, Erin Schroeder, Jim Olson, Michelle Reed, and Chloann Woolley

**Persons Absent:** Paula Conroy, Chaz Davis, and Jamie Lugo

**Guest:** Jon Paul Burden, CDE Special Education Director Technical Assistance Specialist

**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 - 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 2023-24 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 – Donna Keale
- 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 Schroeder

**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.

## PROGRAM UPDATES

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

Our final meeting is Tuesday April 9 from 3:30-5:00. First is a review of info regarding preferred days/dates for next school year as well as topics, updates from CAER, CIMC, VC, etc.,

Tim Richards, from iSight Rehab, will provide a crash course in JAWS screen reading software. Tim Richards was the first CATIS (certified assistive technology instructional specialist) in Colorado. He started his career in the field of vision as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist but quickly saw a gap in technology access for many of his clients. Over the course of an hour, Tim covered: (a) explanation of different computer elements, (b) How a screen reader 'sees' the information; (c) 10 common hotkeys; (d) how to move through different menus or screens/basic navigation; (e) JAWS with google suite/google docs/drive; and (f) explanation of the 'focus'

- What happens after FS Reader (aka: troubleshooting that makes sense when it doesn't work the way it did in FS Reader)
- Explaining the difference between the keyboard and JAWS cursors; when you would turn them on/off
- How to determine if websites are accessible
- Laptop vs. desktop JAWS (there was some discussion about needing to hold 3 different keys to use the 'insert' on the laptop and despite using the caps lock as the JAWS key it was not functioning that way)

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

The Northern Colorado TVI/COMS met virtually on April 5, 2024, from 2:00-3:30 p.m. We had a great turnout as well as two incredible presentations. We welcomed Barry Rochford to our group; he will be working in Thompson School District and comes to us from the Western Slope. Attending members introduced themselves and shared years of experience in teaching and areas that we provide service to. Danielle Burden announced she will be moving to the Western Slope, Grand Junction area.

Adele Smolansky, the creator of AI Learners <https://ai-learners.com/compan>, presented her software for students with CVI and other impairments. Here is a 90 second vide about AI Learners. AI learners was designed with a priority for students with visual impairments.

AI-Learners is an EdTech platform that helps students with all abilities learn early math and literacy. I was inspired by my younger sister who has Rett Syndrome to make learning more accessible for students with disabilities and inclusive to all students. The platform supports students with varying needs and abilities including students with BVI, autism, and other learning differences. We align with state standards for grades PreK-2 and are compatible with desktop, iPad, and AT. You can watch a 1-minute demo vide here and explore the games for free on the website.

Aryn McNichol presented the Distance Vision Recognition Assessment (DVRA) for Orientation and Mobility from the VA. Our meeting ended with an open discussion, which included the following.

- Liz Wieder shared that the Northern Colorado Low Vision Clinic will be next November, so start thinking about students who you would like to take next school year. Talk to Liz if you have any question about Low Vision Clinic. She also announced if anyone was interested in coordinating Low Vision Clinic in Northern Colorado to reach out to her.

- Melissa French asked for any updates on vacancies for Vision Coalition and/or discussion questions.
- Discussion was presented on CVI ranges, assessments, and characteristics. CVI connect was mentioned as a good tool. Two members were going to send out resources for assessments and characteristics.

### **Western Region (Erin Schroeder)**

The Western Slope TVI/COMS met in January and March and have another virtual meeting planned for April 8<sup>th</sup>. We continue to support one another with questions around braille, embossers, tactual graphics, IEP minutes and eligibility criteria. We hope to plan an in-person meeting to teach one another about different tactual tools to use in math classes with braille readers.

Orchard Mesa and Fruita Lions Clubs presented Easter Egg-Venture for children with blindness and visual impairment and their siblings on March 30, 2024 at the Mesa County Fairgrounds. The event was sponsored by A Shared Vision and Center for Independence Low Vision/Blind Program. We had several families attend the fun event.

In staffing news, we are excited to welcome Danielle Burden to the Western Slope! She is a TVI/COMS contractor coming to us from the northern region of the state. Vacancies in the western region include Ridgway and Colorado River BOCES.

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

On February 13 - El Paso County District #20 (Air Academy- Melissa Shular, Deb Andrews, Ruthann Osborn) hosted a hands-on meeting. Our Southern regional members had some good laughs and learned some valuable reminders on how to interact with students with visual impairments. We were supported and encouraged to participate in a mobility lesson around the building and a multisensory art project using a variety of smells and textures.

The following two pictures are of Southern Region participants at a long table with sleep shades on and interacting with manipulatives.



We had discussions about what we learned and how we would have completed the assigned art task differently. We learned a great deal about good communication and how to make things stick - more glue!

Further discussion about shortages in the area, need for tech support and the new disability category definition for Visually Impaired, Including Blindness. Everyone was encouraged to join CAER!



May 14<sup>th</sup> will be our last meeting of the year hosted by Ute Pass BOCES. Please contact Chloann Woolley for location details. The agenda will include summer programs, training, and scheduling meeting dates and topics for the following year.

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

A Shared Vision is a 501(c)(3) and Colorado's only pediatric blindness organization dedicated to ensuring children receive exceptional, high-quality early intervention vision services. Our goal is that all families of children with visual impairments have access to and receive essential early intervention services from a community of highly skilled and collaborative professionals.

Kimala Rein (EI-TV1) with A Shared Vision recently participated in the second annual Western Colorado "Easter Egg-Venture" for children with blindness or visual impairment and their siblings in Grand Junction. Ten families enjoyed the fun-filled afternoon, which included finding beeping Easter eggs, creating their own braille/tactile books, musical egg activities, and horse and carriage rides.

#### Initiatives Updates:

- **Website Enhancements.** The Parent Resources section of A Shared Vision's website reflects new curated information and improved usability/ access specifically for families with children birth to age three who are visually impaired. Let's Play activities, Sensory Recipes, Learning Experiences, and digital resources for families. It's also a one-stop resource for families just beginning their journey into early intervention vision services. Check out the changes to our website at [www.asharedvision.org](http://www.asharedvision.org)
- **Multiplatform tool for Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire.** One of the key challenges we continue to hear regarding the Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire is that caregivers often do NOT complete it prior to an EI Evaluation or IFSP meeting. We recognize the downloadable PDF can be difficult to view and fill out using a cell phone which many of our families prefer. A Shared Vision is rolling out a new HIPAA-compliant tool to allow caregivers to easily open, view, and complete the Parent Questionnaire on any platform (e.g., cell phone, tablet, computer). The Parent Questionnaire is displayed beautifully on a cell phone and the simplified process should greatly improve the return rate prior to meetings.
- **On-Demand Learning Videos for Vision Screening Parent Questionnaire Trainings.** In addition, on-demand provider training for the Parent Questionnaire is now available and early reviews have been positive! Providers appreciate the convenience of taking it on their own time and the final quiz results have improved from those taken after live training sessions.
- **Vision Screening During Well-Child Visits for Children Birth to Age Three.** We are in the planning stages of a pilot program with primary care physicians to improve vision screening during well-child visits. The obvious goal is identifying children with vision concerns as soon as possible and connecting them with pediatric ophthalmologists or optometrists in their home community— especially those living in rural areas across our state.

Would you enjoy working part-time in early intervention supporting families with infants and toddlers who are blind or visually impaired? Contact Paula Landry at [plandry@asharedvision.org](mailto:plandry@asharedvision.org) if you're interested in learning more about A Shared Vision and joining our team.

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

Program Updates: We are getting ready to finish a fantastic school year, with twenty-seven students enrolled in Preschool, forty-four students in our Infant and Toddler Program, and thirty-four students in our Home Visit Program, with many new referrals for each program rolling in each month. There will be 18 graduates this Spring!

Preschoolers can enroll at Anchor Center, enroll in their district’s preschool, or do both! The new UPK funds go to the district if the child is dually enrolled, but tuition assistance is available to all families based on need. In order to access the UPK funding, all students need to have a Child Find evaluation, and if the family decides to enroll only in Anchor Center’s preschool, the family forgoes the IEP established by the school district for that year. We work closely with each family and District Child Find teams to give each family the info they need to make the best decision for their child, and we support them in any decision they make. We continue to work closely with District teams upon the transition to kindergarten once students “graduate” from Anchor Center’s Preschool program. Additionally, most CCBs are now funding the tuition for our Toddler program for those children receiving EI services.

Summer Camp: We are excited about our summer programming coming up in July. We will have a 5-day “Anchor’s Away” Camp July 8-12 and we will have our Infants & Toddlers “Summer Sprouts” Camps the last three Mondays in July.

Anchor Center’s Eye Clinic program has expanded this year! We now have Dr. Annie Steele, MD of Children’s Eye Physicians, and Drs. Lauren Mehner, MD, and Emily McCourt, MD of Children’s Hospital of Colorado seeing patients in our eye clinic a few days each month. These ophthalmologists feel that the opportunity to meet patients in a place where they’re already comfortable and have a TSVI available during appointments is a big reward for everyone. We are so grateful for our partnership with medical professionals such as these, and we appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from them each month.

Our Research Team, led by Dr. Cathy Smyth, continues to grow, and we have many research projects underway! Our NAVEG research project (newborn screenings for brain-based visual impairments), now in its second phase and showing promising results for the future of newborn vision screenings, is underway at Children’s Hospital of Colorado. The NAVEG team (Cathy Smyth, Tammy Miller, and Elise Darrow) continues to have requests for trainings on the screening from TSVIs and early interventionists across the country. They have trained EI professionals in ten states, hospital professionals in 3 states, and will be training vision professionals how to administer the NAVEG screening at the pre-conference day at the 2024 National AER Conference in July.

The CVI Initiative, headed by Elise Darrow, is working on exciting projects with students who have brain-based visual impairments, including case studies and other research projects in our center-based programs. She, along with Cathy Smyth, continue to represent Anchor Center as presenters and attendees of both education and medical conferences nationwide and are collaborating with vision specialists from around the world on CVI-related research.

Staffing: We are currently hiring Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments, either full- or part-time (flexible schedule). Contact Tammy Miller [tmiller@anchorcenter.org](mailto:tmiller@anchorcenter.org) to apply or for more info.

Events: We have Community Days planned for each month of the school year for all our students and their families, including swimming, playground visits, adaptive horseback riding, etc. Our Family Services team holds Night Watch respite events one night per month during the school year. Our 28<sup>th</sup> Annual ForeSight Golf Tournament will be held on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Given that the Anchor Center is funded nearly in full by charitable gifts, we are extremely grateful for the support of our sponsors and guests.

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. The 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.

### **Colorado AER Chapter** (Chloann Woolley)

**CAER Annual Awards:** Please send your nominations to Chloann Woolley by April 14th, 2024 to [caerboard@gmail.com](mailto:caerboard@gmail.com).

CAER Banquet will be held on May 2nd, 2024 to present awards.

Here are the awards and the criteria to be considered:

**President's Award:** This award recognizes outstanding leadership in service to people with visual disabilities. True to its name, *the current President will select and present this award.*

**Gary Schmidt Award:** This award honors an AER member who works directly with students/clients. Nomination criteria include; ethical standards, sense of humor, degree of excellence in job performance, and professionalism. The CAER Board reviews the nominations for this award.

**Connections Award:** This award recognizes cooperative efforts that cross organizational lines, perhaps even groups working collaboratively to benefit our field. The CAER Board considers the nominations.

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** This award is presented to professionals who have given themselves to students/clients throughout their career and are preparing for retirement.

**Ken Neve Award:** This award is to recognize an AER professional in the area specific to orientation and mobility. The CAER Board considers the nominations.

### **Colorado Center for The Blind Youth Programs** (Chaz Davis)

In February, 10 blind students from the Denver metro area took a trip to Eldora Mountain for an accessible day of snow shoeing, alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, and so much more. Through a partnership with Ignite Adaptive Sports and Colorado Center for the Blind, students were able to have a lesson, rentals, lift ticket, and transportation covered for only \$50. For many, this was a new experience, and students had a blast participating.

The following month, Metro State University of Denver and Colorado Center for the Blind organized a STEM day at the Auraria campus where professors volunteered their Saturday to teach 45-minute classes in genetics, environmental science, physics, astronomy, chemistry, and biology. A total of 16 students attended this science day from around the state. Each discipline was adapted with input from a legally blind former MSU student to ensure accessibility. Families were able to learn information regarding attending university as a blind student (best practices, navigating disability services, IEP vs letter of disclosure/verification letter/accommodations letter). CCB engaged with 3 new families that had not previously consumed our services.

The Colorado Center for the Blind played host to the Auraria Pioneers Annual Accessible Easter Egg Hunt the Saturday before Easter weekend. There were around 80 attendees with 35 children taking part in the hunt. The Auraria West Pioneers have been putting on this hunt for over 33 years.

This month, in partnership with "Inside the Orchestra", Colorado Center for the Blind will be hosting a musical experience grounded in emotional regulation. The event will feature a performance from a quartet with interactive activities occurring concurrently with the performance as well as a "instrument petting zoo"

to explore different instruments too. This event will be on April 27 between 10:00 and 11:30 at Colorado Center for the Blind (2233 W Shepperd Avenue, Littleton, CO 80120).

CCB is preparing for a family weekend retreat at YMCA of the Rockies from May 10-12. This weekend is designed to introduce skills essential to navigating life as a blind person, educating families (learning more about IEP and resources afforded to blind students), accessible sports, archery, hiking, and more! We are still looking for a few families with blind children over the age of 12 to participate. If you know of any potentially interested families, please email [cdavis@cocenter.org](mailto:cdavis@cocenter.org).

CCB has hired seven out of eight summer staff members for our seven- and four-week residential summer programs and will be finalizing the roster of summer students by the end of the month as well. We will have six students in our seven-week program and 12 students in our four-week program for a total of 18 students. Additionally, in collaboration with National Science Foundation, and several key individuals serving the blind community in Colorado, ten students will attend a 3D printing/Astronomy camp from June 17-21 at the Colorado Center for the Blind. The National Science Foundation will be facilitating this camp.

CCB will host our annual Confidence Camp for blind children between the ages of 5-11 at the center during that week as well.

CCB is able to offer programming in the science and outdoor recreation realm due in part to a grant through Colorado parks and Wildlife.

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

TVIs will be asked for four numbers on their annual registrations: (1) the number of students with blindness/visual impairment or deaf-blindness in the EI / EC agencies or administrative unit and (2) the number served. These may be two different numbers. The first number may include learners not on IEPs, but on a 504 Plan that the TVI serves or is aware of as being visually impaired, including blind (3) the number not yet registered (4) the total number of students who meet the eligibility requirement to be included in the Federal Quota census.

The names of students are not given unless there is parent consent form signed on file in the district and in the CIMC.

The Statewide Count includes all children and youth with blindness/visual impairment or deaf-blindness from ages birth through 21 years. Not all of these students will be on the second count managed by the CIMC, the Federal Quota Census Count (managed by APH). The latter count is inclusive of students who are legally blind.

Due to this year's new broadened eligibility criteria, we are anticipating an increase in quota-eligible learners. This total may be upward of 1,100 kids. The amount of allocated funds generated by the federal quota census will not change, so this means that they will generate less money-per-child than in previous years.

The first Monday in January is used as the 'effective date' for the Federal Quota Census.

This year's count day was January 1, 2024.

Federal Quota funds generated by the count day registrants are not available until the start of the next federal fiscal year: October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025.

Children registered after count day are immediately included in our statewide count, but not the federal quota census. If eligibility is verified, the children can be included in the next upcoming January 6, 2025 Federal Quota census (and can access their funds beginning October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026).

The CIMC works to assist registered students, no matter when they are registered, with items available in the repository. This is within reason.

Heads up – the CIMC does not provide braille paper unless it is an emergency and arrangements can be made to replace the paper once the district has ordered the paper.

The CIMC cannot provide all technology to all students. They have prioritized some technology – such as braille technology. This also does not mean that they can provide all braille technology or low vision technology to every child. TVIs are expected to work with their AUs to build a procurement budget.

The CIMC has asked and will continue to ask AU contacts / special education directors to confirm an understanding that if equipment is lost, broken, or stolen, they are fiscally responsible for the equipment. This is an important discussion with special education directors to understand possible costs.

Discussion: Equitable distribution of products/federal quota funds.

Low Vision Devices, specifically the APH Video Mag HD, Juno, and Jupiter desktop: the CIMC cannot be the repository for all low vision devices for students. The CIMC can provide some low vision devices available on quota-however, if a device benefits from having a prescription from a low vision specialist (eye doctor), the CIMC will be asking for a copy of the low vision evaluation/recommendation/prescription. TVIs should be aware that some of these tools should be supported through administrative unit funds.

Discussion: With broadened eligibility guidelines for the federal quota census, but without any increase in funding, how do we prepare for our anticipated decrease in allocation per registered student next year?

- a. Consumable items: currently the CIMC works to provide the first consumable item for a student and ask districts to purchase additional quantities.
- b. Do we get out of the braille business? Do braille and repair become the responsibility of the administrative unit?
- c. Do we get out of the technology business after our current inventory has been checked out?
- d. Do we prioritize the refreshable braille devices?
- e. What feedback do you have for us? Please share your ideas.

Please be aware that the CIMC cannot meet every need for every student. TVIs should be aware that some instructional materials should also be supported through administrative unit funds.

### **School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) School for The Blind (Jamie Lugo)**

Campus News:

- CSDB was a testing site for the new Monarch refreshable braille display. Seven students were involved in testing this device as well as numerous staff.
- Parent Braille Classes were well attended for the first 6 weeks and have been extended through the end of the school year due to parent request!
- The 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School was celebrated on Tuesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>. Students made bead necklaces with 100 beads, dressed like they were 100 years old, did 100 jumping jacks throughout the day, and anticipated raffles prizes.
- Seniors presented their Capstone projects in front of the judges. If students do not pass the first time, they are given feedback and one more opportunity before the end of the year to present to determine whether or not their Capstone fulfills graduation requirements
- The PE classes are learning about goalball. This includes reviewing and applying goalball rules, court overview and exploration, equipment overview and exploration, and practicing diving, throwing, and playing goalball in general.
- In art, students are learning about underglaze, glaze, and the rules required while glazing their windchimes. The younger students are working on self-portraits created with clay. The students all contributed to the 150<sup>th</sup> mural displayed just outside the gymnasium.

- Yolanda Avila, Colorado Springs City Council member, visited our Civics class to discuss public transportation, especially transportation for the blind, in Colorado Springs.
- The Braille Challenge was a success. All students participated in Braille Challenge Day as competitors, rookies, or helpers. We ended the day by celebrating our efforts and rocking out with three bands: The Bulldog Band, PRIDE Band, and Key of ECC (new staff band).

#### Staff News:

- Cara Johnson, School for the Blind School Psychologist, presented at a National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) national conference as a part of a statewide DEI committee. She has been asked to lead her team in national-level discussions about the importance of BVI programming and residential programming to be considered eligible students.

#### Student News:

- Three students sang the National Anthem at the State of the Region event at the ENT Center.
- One student represented CSDB at the Deaf.Blind.Limitless Conference by sitting on the panel about his life experiences. He did a beautiful job answering questions about his experience at CSDB and how technology has helped improve his life as a blind individual.
- Five of the CSDB students spent their Spring Break in California. They participated in the Enchanted Hills Camp and Lighthouse for the Blind Program based out of San Francisco. Students will be participating in sailing, learning about multiple modes of transportation, cooking, touring cultural centers in San Francisco, touring the Dog Guide school, and spending time with BVI mentors. Secondary students skied at Crested Butte with the adaptive sports center. In addition to learning how to ski, the students also prepared their own meals in the evening and focused on their social skills throughout the weekend experience.

CSDB celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The Mayor of Colorado Springs delivered an inspiring message to students and staff. The County Commissioner also shared an official proclamation. In addition to these speakers, students and staff contributed to a time capsule, students asked alumni questions during a panel, the 150<sup>th</sup> art mural was revealed, and cookies were enjoyed.

#### **Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) Outreach Services** (Donna Keale)

Outreach is excited to share that we partnered with the Anchor Center for the Blind for a toddler who is suspected of having CVI, but not diagnosed yet. The Anchor Center was recommended from an Occupational Therapist at Children's Hospital outpatient therapy. Elise Darrow and Tamara Miller were excellent partners to present CVI information to the family.

Outreach participated in the Beeper Egg Hunt on April 4<sup>th</sup>, we had 5 Early Intervention families, and 2 preschool families visit the school and participate in finding the Beeper Eggs. Eggs were then exchanged for plastic eggs and all Early Intervention families left with a basket of goodies to include a new book.

Outreach hosted a goalball event and that was attended by both outreach and CSDB students. We would like to thank all who traveled to participate in this event.

We are exploring the job description for the 3<sup>rd</sup> TVI in the department and hoping to post soon. CSDB is looking for someone who wants to join our travels around this beautiful state, to help support the district requests, and early intervention, as well as to help plan weekend, short term placements and summer programs.

## **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) (Michelle Reed)**

Staff Updates: Our current vacancies include a Field Instructor O&M/VRT for the Denver Metro area, and Field Instructor O&M/VRT for the western slope. We have a new vocational rehabilitation counselor, Pamela Ellis, in the Colorado Springs office.

The Personal Adjustment Training Unit continues to provide training in the community. We continue to discuss and examine ways to provide comprehensive services to the people we serve that include remote training, in-person training, and Zoom virtual group sessions (Reflections, Enrichment Hour, Women's Group, and two Braille Groups and a Men's Group). We are also going to begin discussions on how to reopen and offer in person training opportunities at the Denver Metro Regional Office. However, the Personal Adjustment Training Center based at the Denver Metro Regional Office will not be reopened. At present, DVR personal adjustment training will continue to be provided in the community and the field.

BLVS and DVR are looking at pre-employment transition services including training/job development support, collaborating with other youth with disabilities programs, collaborating with other states, and increasing vendors to provide more options and opportunities. Denver Metro TVIs and O&M Specialists are working with vocational rehabilitation counselors to apply for DVR services as they approach the end of their senior year. DVR is able to accept referrals for our youth program at the age of 15 and provide Pre-Employment Transition Services during the summer and school breaks.

Michele Reed, vocational rehabilitation counselor, will be presenting at the SWAP Statewide Conference on April 9 to provide information about the Blind and Low Vision Services, common worksite accommodations, range of occupations for individuals who are blind and low vision, unique workplace readiness skills, suggestions for career exploration without incidental learning.

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

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are closing the final year of our current project. A new grant award was made that will be effective from October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028. The project's mission is to provide 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 Staff: Tanni Anthony and Gina Herrera are Co-Directors on the grant project. Jessica Meisel is our Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists. Jessica provides onsite consultation and customized training to the educational teams of the children with deaf-blindness. She is also leading our training and support to school-based interveners. Cindy Colwell is the Family Specialist.
- To request FREE technical assistance, please contact Gina Herrera at [Herrera\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us)
- Annual Deaf-Blind Count: The December 1, 2023 Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count forms were disseminated to the field in early October and should be returned to CDE through a secure online portal. The forms for each Colorado administrative unit, Anchor Center for Blind Children, and A Shared Vision are sent to a designated contact who is a TVI. Please note that a child can be registered at any time in the calendar year. If you work with a learner with both vision and hearing loss, please be sure to work with Tanni to register the child. All learners identified as having combined vision and hearing loss are eligible for free technical assistance. This can be child-specific consultation and customized staff training.
- Project Webpage: The [CDE DeafBlind webpage](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp) URL is <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp>
- Project Trainings: Three webinars occurred from January – March with featured speakers Dr. Susan Bruce and Linda Alsop. Great content on self-determination and concept development for learners with deaf-blindness. If you have ideas for speakers and topics for the 2024-25 Series, let Tanni know.

**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 professional learning and technical assistance to the special education field serving children who are blind/visually impaired.

- **Sound Bites:** Sound Bites are monthly virtual training / dialogue sessions based on identified topics of needs. The seven Sound Bites that have already occurred have good attendance. Please let Tanni know if you have recommendations for speakers ./topics for the 2024-25 Sound Bites Series.
- **CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics:** Drs. David Simpson and Kara Hanson are filling the optometrist roles and Karin Hensel is the Low Vision Therapist who will serve the northern and metro regional clinics. Jim Olson is the Low Vision Therapist for the southern clinic. Roberta Curtis will be our statewide clinic coordinator. The team completed three clinics this year in the Southern, Northern, and Metros Regions of the state. No cancellations due to weather and successful clinics with our new team. Thanks to everyone!
- **CDE O&M Seminar:** The May 2-3 Seminar will focus on strategies specific to learners with deaf blindness with featured speakers Caroline Gonzales and Heather Withrow.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** We have openings in several parts of the state. Please share any expected vacancies with Tanni so we can be as proactive as possible with new recruits. 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.
- **Listsers:** The CDE ESSU maintains two separate listsers specific to personnel working in BVI programs in Colorado school districts. One is specific to Colorado TVIs and COMSs. The second one is specific to Colorado braillists. It is important to remind all users of these listsers that personally identifiable information (PII) on students and parents should never be posted in any listserv messages. If anyone has questions about the listsers, please be in touch with Tanni.
- **Parent Database:** We currently have about 250 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.
- **Staying Connected Newsletter:** The August-September, October, and November - December 2023; January – February, and March editions have been posted to the CDE BVI webpage. We have one final edition for this school year, the April-May edition. Please be sure to share the email messages with the link with parents and paras, as we are no longer mailing out the newsletter and do not have the email addresses of most parents who have signed up to receive the newsletter. A representative from each AU is encouraged to reach out to Roberta Curtis at [Curtis\\_r@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Curtis_r@cde.state.co.us) to go through parents and key contact information.



## AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### CDE BVI Budget for the 2024-25 Fiscal Year

The following activities are on the docket.

- ⇒ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- ⇒ CDE O&M Seminar
- ⇒ CDE State Conference on BVI (topics: Brain Based VI: Assessment and Strategy)
- ⇒ CIMC Interagency Agreement
- ⇒ Vision Coalition
- ⇒ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- ⇒ Sound Bites (monthly virtual trainings) (ECC follow-up, low vision, SDI, trauma)
- ⇒ FVA Make and Take

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 2023-24 CMAS Assessment for Students with VIB

The following issues were discussed:

- Why is time and a half not truly time and a half and why is double time not truly double time.
- There is confusion as to why the Visual Descriptors are in a separate booklet for the large print and print test but not the braille format tests. They are embedded in the braille tests.
- For braille readers who have an assessment accommodation that content not being tested can be read to the student, it is difficult to pull out the visual descriptors that are embedded in the braille test. Students are reading this information that is taking time away from what needs to be read in the test.
- Like the idea of a script for the test administrator specific to the Visual Descriptors. This would equalize practices.
- If there is a graph that goes over two pages, they must be facing pages. Also, this might include choices that correspond to a tactile graphic, if at all possible. This was observed not to be true in an ELA test and but was true in a math test.
- Helpful to know changes that are reflected in the practice test. The practice test need to have equivalent experiences such as all forward facing pages or not – what is depicted in the real tests.
- Practice test had less defined graphics but better graphics in the test. This is not the same for kids. Why are kids practicing poor graphics to get ready for a test that has better graphics?
- There have been noted inconsistencies in the print test and the braille test – not following the same text.
- Trouble getting the selected test based on the provided braille codes

### IEP Services

Jon Paul Burden is currently the ESSU Special Education Director TA Specialist. In his current role, he has worked with about a third of the AUs in the state and specifically with new or near-new directors. He has worked to have data literacy conversations with directors to highlight areas of further discussion. Paul has also served on the Special Education Fiscal Advisory (SEFAC) Committee, which prepares a legislative report on the current State of the Colorado funding and expenditures. There are two tiers of funding – Tier A is all students with an IEP and Tier B funding which includes high-cost populations, which includes students with visual impairment, including blindness and deaf-blindness. More students in Tier A means fewer dollars in

Tier B. Interestingly, we are seeing fewer learners without IEPs and more learners with IEPs. Here is the link to the most recent SEFAC Report: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sefaclegislativeportjanuary-2024>

When looking at learners across eligibility categories and their service minutes, it is important to understand that data are only as good as how it is entered. Specific to the 2022-23 eligibility category of visual impairment, including blindness, there are 115 students who received less than an hour of service a week. The allocation do not tell the whole story about the grade level, student/ parent desire for a child not to be pulled out of the classroom, etc. of the student and true SDI needs, but these data may assist in having conversations. We also see 76 learners with VIB who received 20 hours or more, which may include students in centered-based or full day/ residential programs. It may also factor in the braille production needs of a student regardless of educational placement. There are times when the minimum amount of service is noted on the IEP and this is not a full reflection of what indirect./ direct service hours are for any given student. Some AUs do support including prep / consulting time in addition to direct service hours. It is recommended that TVIs work with their home teams on (a) service minutes on the IEP and (b) how these are reviewed with the CDE data to discuss any insights / needs going forward.

### **Specially Designed Instruction**

Specially designed instruction goes beyond universal design for learning and differentiated instruction, the latter which are important for all students based on their individual learning styles. Specially designed instruction specifically targets and addresses the unique communication, learning, social emotional, behavioral, mobility, and transition needs that exist because of a student's disability. Specially designed instruction should be implemented in addition to, not in place of, universal design for learning, differentiated instruction, and/or high yield instructional strategies.

Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, to the needs of a child eligible for special education services and supports, content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that results from the child's disability, and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards adopted by the State. As such, SDI is individualized to each student receiving special education services.

The design and delivery of SDI is the core of special education. SDI is the vehicle to ensure students with disabilities receive accessible, high-quality instruction and services that will result in progress toward academic and functional standards, graduation, and meaningful postsecondary outcomes.

Discussion: The VC membership discussed a first round of SDI content for students who are blind/visually impaired or deaf-blind.

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**Content** - substance of the knowledge, skills and dispositions that is taught that is specific to the student with a disability; directly links to curriculum standards, and may be an underlying, prerequisite needed to meet the standards; answers what the student will learn through specially designed instruction. \_\_\_\_\_

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⇒ ECC content that extends beyond the general education curriculum that is necessary for the student to access information.

- ◇ Explicit instruction in braille codes
- ◇ Explicit instruction in how to approach and decipher tactile graphics
- ◇ Explicit instruction in the care and use of assistive technology (e.g., braille writer, braille note, screen readers, magnification tools)
- ◇ Explicit instruction in organizational tools.
- ◇ Explicit instruction in tactile symbols, sign language, or other communication symbols

- ◇ Explicit instruction in orientation and mobility tools and strategies within the classroom, school campus, home neighborhood, and community

⇒ ECC content that extends beyond the general education curriculum on functional content that is affected by reduced incidental learning

- ◇ Explicit instruction on visual / nonverbal social communication norms and appropriate social skills
- ◇ Explicit instruction on self-care / independent living techniques
- ◇ Explicit instruction on understanding one's own visual impairment / other disabilities and self-determination and self-advocacy skills
- ◇ Explicit instruction on recreation and leisure activities / adapted physical education
- ◇ Explicit instruction on career exploration and job skills

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**Methodology:** the instructional design of content using evidence-based practices matched to unique student needs resulting from the disability; answers **how** specially designed instruction is designed

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- Preteaching of vocabulary associated with academic / functional content
- Preteaching concepts associated with academic/ functional content
- Preteaching prerequisites of use of equipment, procedures associated with lessons
- Explicit verbal description or audio description
- Repeated instruction across people, materials and settings (generalization)
- Modeling how to use specialized materials or assistive technology
- Guided physical demonstration (working from behind student to feel needed actions)
- ◆ Hand under hand guidance for instructional / functioning learning

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**Delivery:** the instructional context or conditions, specific to the student with a disability, which results in access to, participation in, and progress in the curriculum. Answers **who, where, and when** the specially designed instruction will occur.

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- Classroom environment with a paraeducator, brailist, and/or a TVI
- Separate setting selected due to the nature of the SDI needs of the student with a paraeducator, brailist, and/or a TVI.
- Before or after school lessons
- Evening O&M lessons to address poor night vision.
- Instructional group size (individual, small group)

**Recruitment Needs:** We must be creative and vigilant about bringing new people into the field. Ideas included (a) identifying parents and paraeducators as candidates for personnel preparation programs; (b) providing these individuals information about existing programs with federal funding supports or other funding supports; (c) identifying a cadre to support; and (d) checking to see if CSDB might be a site for housing practicum students to incentivize Colorado as an employment site. We know that personal experience with our kids really helps – so how can we be inclusive with more people to have these experiences?

**Next Meeting Date: September 5, 2024**

Agenda Items

- Welcome to new members
- Specially Designed Instruction



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A big thank you to the following people for their great assistance to our Annual Child Count of Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss: **Deb Andrews, Sumer Bellinger, Sally Burch, Jennifer Caster, Peg Collins, Elsa D'Angelo, Kathy Emter, Kari Finholt, Melissa French, Abby Horner, Barb Galgano, Amber Rundle Kahn, Paula Landry, Angela Loflin, Lori Mattick, Jessica Meisel, Debbie Mendoza, Mike Plansker, Ashley Renslow, Will Reynolds, Wendy Schlageter, Alyshia Shelton, Angela Sims, Morgan Turner, Ellen Wallis, Liz Wieder, and Chloann Woolley.** It takes a village, a very special village – thank you for your careful assistance with this paperwork.

## Braille Competency News

- ◆ Hats off to **Nancy Barron, Lorraine Chevarria, Gena Anderson Francouer, Julie Harrison, and Rachel Sullivan** for earning renewal clock hours.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Lorraine Chevarria** of Adams 12 School District for earning her CDE Braille Competency Renewal Certificate!
- ◆ Thanks for our CDE Braille Competency Team for their proctoring and mentoring work throughout this past fiscal year—Braille Superstars! **Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard, and Julie Wetzstein.**

## Professional Development!

- ◆ Thank you to **Linda Alsop** for her March 25th DB Webinar Series training on *Conceptual Framework for Students with Deaf-Blindness: Part 2*. We had a great turn and good discussion with this great leader in Deaf-Blind Education.
- ◆ We are grateful for **Debbie Mendoza** presentation with us on April 10th on the important *Resiliency Within Families of Students with Low Vision*. This was our last Sound Bites for this school year and the great attendance was most appreciated. Debbie gave us so much to think about in our work with families and authentic strategies for building partnerships.
- ◆ Colorado was the host site of the March 12-15 Deaf.Blind.Limitless Conference, which was sponsored by the Arizona Institute of Deaf and Blind. There was great attendance by Colorado providers, including many TVIs, O&M Specialists, Teachers of the Deaf-Blind, and interveners. Despite some weather challenges, there were people from the Anchor Center for Blind Children and Cherry Creek, Aurora, Delta, Douglas County, Colorado Springs 11 School Districts – sure I may have missed some, but it was so great to see many familiar faces despite some weather circumstances! **Tanni Anthony** provided a session specific to the deaf-blind strand and the closing keynote. **Abby Curtis** and **Seamus Jackson** were on the final day panel and shared great insights as to their school / early college experience as individuals with blindness/visual impairments.
- ◆ The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EDHI) Conference was held in Denver on March 17-19. There as a wonderful opportunity for “Thoughtful Conversations” on March 20<sup>th</sup> for personnel of State Deaf-Blind Projects to meet with national and state EDHI personnel to talk through how to improve the identification and referral support of infants with deaf-blindness with some excellent suggestions for improvement opportunities. **Jessica Meisel** and **Tanni Anthony** represented the CO Deaf-Blind Project.



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## 2024 CDE O&M Seminar

Over 50 people gathered for the 2024 CDE O&M Seminar, which was held at the Adams 12 Conference Center on May 2 and 3rd. Our featured presenters were Carolina Gonzales and Hex Withrow, two amazing experts on deaf-blindness and specific O&M strategies. The team lead us through sign language for O&M terminology, protactile and haptics for tactile cuing information for the individual with deaf-blindness, tactile identifiers, AMDS, and other key strategies.

The first day involved using the tactile information with partners and making a tactile identifiers. The photos on this page and the next page show these two a activities with some of our attendees.

A bit thank you to our two amazing presenters, the interpreters, and the attendees. Truly a fabulous two days together!



Bryan Moles and Barb Galgano practicing the tactile cue for "go straight."



Debbie Mendoza puts on Ann Marie Jansen's tactile identification bracelet



Lisa Oliphant shows her tactile identification bracelet



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## 2024 CDE O&M Seminar



Hex Withrow & Carolina Gomez modeling protactile coding.



Jadwiga Brown provides a tactile cue to Emile Jackson



Garrett Mumma and Eunice Canoy



Sasmitha Bosoi and Lorraine Chevarria (in a blindfold, receiving the tactile cue)



Robin Tueting completes her tactile identifier bracelet.



Julie Wetzstein completes her tactile identifier



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## Personnel

- ◆ A big shout out to CSDB Board of Trustees and CSDB staff for a lovely reception to honor the appointment of **Tera Spangler** as the new Superintendent of CSDB. Tera had been serving in this role as an interim basis ahead of a national search and interview process. The reception was held on CSDB's campus on March 21. Congratulations to Tera on this important appointment.

We also have two new TVIs working in Colorado school districts:

- **Elizabeth Webb** has been working in Colorado this school year as a virtual / hybrid TVI. She holds a BA in Elementary Ed from Biola University in California and an MA in Visual Impairment from the U of A in Arizona. She taught at the Arizona School for the Blind, itinerant in a district in Tucson, and itinerant in a large inner-city district in Houston, TX. In 2018 Elizabeth began contracting remotely in the late afternoons for a rural district in Arizona that had been without a TVI for over a year. When the pandemic hit, she was able to help her fellow TVIs in Houston with strategies for remote instruction having already figured out lots of workarounds. In 2020 Elizabeth and her husband Joshua sold most of their things, bought an RV, and traveled the US and Mexico full-time for over two years. Since the pandemic, Elizabeth has been teaching remotely in five states for charter schools, private clients, and districts that have been unable to find a TVI. In 2022, Elizabeth and Joshua bought off-grid mountain property at 10,300 feet near Fort Garland, Colorado and started a homestead. Now each morning after feeding their 52 animals,

Elizabeth teaches students online in Virginia, Texas, Colorado, and California. Elizabeth enjoys helping other TVIs by presenting at conferences such as the TVI Online Symposium and sharing strategies on TVI Facebook groups. She is passionate about advocacy, finding solutions, inclusion, full team collaboration, assistive technology, and Braille (she helped run the Arizona Braille Challenge for 4 years) including Nemeth, music Braille, and Spanish Braille. In her spare time, she enjoys playing the harp (which she also teaches online) at church and for events, crocheting, archery, and playing with her dogs. Elizabeth can be reached at [elizabeth@virtualltvi.com](mailto:elizabeth@virtualltvi.com).

- **Barry Rochford** is the new teacher of students with visual impairments in Thompson School District. He relocated to Loveland from Grand Junction, where he lived for two decades. He has a Masters degree in Special Education with a focus on teaching students with blindness and visual impairments from Teachers' College, Columbia University. Barry has an undergraduate degree in Psychology, specializing in Child Psychology from Hamilton College. Throughout his career, he has pursued additional coursework in assistive technology, special education law, and distance learning. Over the span of 31 years, he has various roles in education, including: Itinerant Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired for K-12; Assistive Technology Specialist and Multidisciplinary Team Leader; CTE Classroom Teacher; Special Education Administrator; General Technology Specialist. Barry has contributed to higher education as the Director of Educational Access Services at Colorado Mesa University and an Adjunct Professor in Special Education. Barry shares that returning to direct teaching is a source of great excitement for him and looks forward to collaborating with students.





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## *Farewell and In Gratitude*



It is with a little bit of sadness, but mostly just plain awe and thanks that we announce the it-is-really-going-to-happen-this-time retirement of **Karen Wood**. Karen retired and then came back to support Colorado Springs 11 School District for few more years and did some great contract-work up north this year.

She tells me she is really done after 36 years of contribution and we are really grateful for her expertise, dedication, and longevity. Karen and I share a love of elephants, so let's just end by say, "You will not be forgotten for your enormous contributions!" Thank you, Karen, and all the best in your for-real retirement!

**Mary Dakos** has been a Vision Technician with the Cherry Creek Schools for 21 years. Over her career she has been an explementary employee. She is confident, reliable, efficient, organized and most importantly very caring towards the students and families she has worked with and her co-workers. Mary is loyal! Mary has always been willing to help out. This could be learning new skills herself to help a student, creating extravagant tactile graphics and materials, to helping out at the numerous department events, such as holiday craft days (held on Saturdays), to obtaining her braille certificate through The Hadley School for the Blind, along with tackling the more challenging braille music classes.

We here in Cherry Creek will miss Mary tremendously. We wish her all the best as she moves on to this next chapter. Thank you, Mary!

We thank you for your dedication and service! You will be missed—enjoy this time ahead and know your made lasting contributions.

Our big thanks to **Kathy Gallina**, a wonderful TVI in the southern region for her 44 years with us. So many students have benefited under her instruction and care. Kathy has provided contract TVI support to many administrative units in the southern and southeast regions of the state. She has been a champion for so many students and families through her service and careful attention to needs and supports.

All the best to you, Kathy, in your retirement. We are truly grateful for all you have shared over these past four decades.

Thank you to our three retirees! Your work has truly mattered and is forever lasting in the students you served.









**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

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