CDE BRAILLE COMPETENCY TEST AND BRAILLE RENEWAL MODULES

Procedures for Allowable Accommodations

Colorado Department of Education

The purpose of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Braille Competency Test is to establish a sufficient level of accuracy and efficiency in the knowledge and skills to read and write the Unified English Braille Code. The test involves reading Unified English Braille and producing a written braille sample using a Perkins brailler. It is a four-hour test.

More information about the CDE Braille Competency Test can be found in a separate document entitled *CDE Braille Competency Tes ing Guidelines* located at the CDE webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

Procedures for Requesting Accommoda on

In the event that a test candidate anticipates the need for an accommodation(s) to take the CDE Braille Competency Test, they will be required to submit a written request with supporting documentation to the Colorado Department of Education.

The use of the following items has been pre-approved for candidates who are blind or have low vision.

- Hand-held magnifier
- Video magnifier / closed circuit television (CCTV)
- Large print test Specific to a no-serif font size
- Felt-tip marker
- Reader / scribe

Requests for any of the above accommodations do not require a complete application, but must be requested in writing one month prior to the scheduling of the CDE Braille Competency Test.

For all other accommodation requests, the test candidate must comply with the following procedures:

1. The test candidate must submit a written request for the use of an accommodation(s) to Dr. Tanni Anthony at the Colorado Department of Education a minimum of one month prior to the proposed date to take the CDE Braille Competency Test.
2. The request must be accompanied by the following documentation:
    a) Description of the proposed accommodation(s) and the reason(s) for the accommodation(s). Information must be provided as to how the requested accommodation(s) is aligned to the difficulty of the test candidate to read and write literary braille based on the required equipment and time frame of the test. Information must be provided as to the need for an accommodation(s) for the both the multiple choice and braille sections of the CDE Braille Competency.

b) Medical diagnosis from a physician with supporting documentation to verify the disability condition and the need for the accommodation(s) requested. Confirmation as to how the disability was verified by the physician (e.g., examination, assessment, etc.) must be included.
c) Verification from the candidate's employer of the specific need for accommodation and current use of the specified accommodation in the employee's work environment. For example, as a result of the documented disability, does the employee utilize specialized equipment? The employer must verify that the requested accommodation(s) is actively in place for the employee in the work setting for the knowledge and skill set of reading and producing braille.

3. The request can be emailed to Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or mailed to:
   Dr. Tanni Anthony
   Colorado Department of Education
   Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
   201 East Colfax, 4th Floor
   Denver, CO 80203

Written approval or denial of the requested accommodation(s) will be provided to the candidate within three weeks of the receipt of the candidate's written request, accompanying medical documentation, and employer verification. The CDE-appointed Braille Committee will review the anonymous content of the accommodation materials on first an individual and then a collective basis. The final decision of the accommodation approval or disapproval will be made by the CDE per the input of the Braille Committee and as needed, legal counsel.

Questions about the accommodations process can be sent to Dr. Anthony via email at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or by phone at (303) 503-4647.

Arrangements must be made with Dr. Anthony regarding who will provide the specific piece of equipment/software to be used in the accommodation.

Allowable Accommodations

The following is a list of allowable accommodations to access the CDE Braille Competency Test per established evidence of need:

- A live reader may be used to read aloud both the multiple-choice section and the braille passage for candidates who are blind or have low vision. The reader must be an approved CDE proctor. Simulated braille in the multiple choice section will be provided as embossed braille. The live reader can also be used to access reference materials provided at the test site and to record multiple choice answers.
- If an alternate format is needed for the testing materials for a candidate who is blind or with low vision, the following formats are allowable: (a) an enlarged print version (typically 18 point) hard copy provided at the testing site and/or (b) magnification (nonelectronic magnification such as a handheld magnifiers / electronic magnification devices such as video magnifiers) provided by the test candidate.
- Extended time requests will be considered and determined based on (a) medical documentation of need, (b) accommodations approved at the work site, and (c) validation by the employer. Accuracy and efficiency are two constructs measured by the CDE Braille Competency Test. The four hour time allocation for the test under standard testing procedures as a means to measure the efficiency of the candidate in reading and writing Unified English Braille. Extended time requests will be reviewed to ensure that the efficiency requirement of the CDE Braille Competency Test is protected.
- If a candidate is physically unable to use a manual Perkins brailler, the braille passage may be produced using a Perkins brailler with extension keys, an electric Perkins brailler, or the Mountbatten or other electronic braille writer with braille-input only. This equipment is to be provided by the test taker and,

in the case of the approved use of the Mountbatten or other approved electronic braille writer; the assigned proctor will work with the candidate to determine that it functions only as a braille-input tool.

- If the candidate's documented physical restrictions prohibit the use of either a Perkins brailler with or without extended keys or an electronic brailler, keyboard entry may be an approved option. A computer keyboard and CDE-approved braille-entry-only software / hardware may be used and will be provided at the test site. The use of braille translation software, such as Duxbury or Megadots, is not acceptable as a means of braille production for the purposes of demonstrating braille competency for the CDE certificate.

Accommodations for Braille Renewal Modules

The above noted procedure for applying for an accommodation(s) is also mandated for the test candidates taking the CDE approved braille-renewal modules. The *Braille Competency Renewal Testing Guidelines* can be found at the following CDE webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs.