CDE INITIAL BRAILLE COMPETENCY OPTIONS FOR VIRTUAL TVIS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE OF COLORADO WHILE WORKING IN A COLORADO ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT(S)

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a brief history of braille competency testing in Colorado and outline testing options for virtual teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) who are working in a Colorado administrative unit(s) while living outside of Colorado to demonstrate braille competency.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has required braille competency testing for teachers licensed and endorsed in the area of visual impairment since 1994 (Colo. Rev. Stat. §22-20-108(4.5)(d)). The CDE Braille Competency Test was established to protect and promote literacy instruction for blind and low vision students and to ensure that teachers licensed with endorsement in visual impairment possess proficient braille reading and writing skills.

Following the national adoption of Unified English Braille (UEB), the CDE updated its testing materials to assess proficiency in the UEB literary code in 2016.

Virtual Providers

Colorado administrative units may employ virtual TVIs to meet the educational needs of students who are blind, have low vision, or are deaf-blind. Many of these professionals reside outside Colorado and provide services exclusively through virtual instruction.

All TVIs employed by a Colorado administrative unit are required to demonstrate braille competency within their first year in the role. Procedures are already established for TVIs who reside in Colorado. To address the growing use of virtual TVIs who live outside the state, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has approved four pathways for these professionals to demonstrate braille competency.

The four pathways outline procedures for demonstrating initial braille competency and a one-time renewal requirement. The first option involves travel to Colorado to complete the CDE Braille Competency Test and/or to complete renewal modules under standard procedures established for in-state TVIs by CDE. Two additional options involve the successful completion of nationally recognized braille competency examinations. A fourth option allows candidates to submit documentation of braille competency certification from another state with time to discern whether the certification requirements from that state are comparable to Colorado braille competency standards.

The chart on page 2 provides broad details of the first three options with a narrative following the chart with details about the fourth option.

Options for Demonstration of Colorado Braille Competency by Virtual TVIs*

Test Details	CDE Braille Competency Test	National Certification in Unified English Braille	Praxis Braille Proficiency Exam (0633).
Purpose	Measures competency in reading and writing UEB for Colorado teachers of students with visual impairment.	Provides national certification of proficiency in Unified English Braille reading, writing, and proofreading skills	Measures braille proficiency knowledge and transcription skills for educator licensure and professional qualification purposes
Description of Test and Sections	In-person proctored testing scheduled Monday–Saturday in a public location. Includes: (a) 100 multiple-choice questions involving reading and proofreading Unified English Braille (UEB), and (b) production of a 3.5-page UEB braille sample using a braillewriter.	In-person proctored testing administered at an approved testing location. Includes: (a) Braille Writing – 90 minutes using a braillewriter; (b) Proofreading – 90 minutes identifying braille errors; and (c) Reading/Multiple Choice – 60 minutes assessing braille rules and usage.	In-person paper-delivered testing administered at an approved testing site. Includes 2 test booklets: Booklet 1 contains 40 multiple-choice reading questions and one transcription assignment using a slate and stylus. Booklet 2 contains 3 transcription tasks using braillewriter
Max Time Allocation	4 hours	4.5 hours	4 hours
Resources Allowed	Approved reference materials provided	Approved reference materials provided	No reference materials are permitted
Cost	No cost	There is a cost	There is a cost
Certificate Expiration Date / Renewal Option	Initial CDE certificate is valid for five years of its date of issue. A one-time renewal must be obtained through the completion of 15 CDE in-person braille renewal modules (averaging 3 a year) within the five-year re-certification period.	Certification is valid for five years and renewable through the National Blindness Professional Certification Board recertification procedures. This test may be retaken for Colorado braille competency renewal and timeline requirements.	ETS maintains scores for 10 years. This test may be retaken for Colorado braille competency renewal and timelines requirements.
For more information	Webpage for CO Braille Competency Documents	NCUEB Exam	Braille Proficiency Test - ETS Praxis Praxis Braille Proficiency Study Companion

*A fourth option allows a candidate to provide an official certificate of braille competency issued by another state. The CDE State Consultant on Blindness/Low Vision will work with the candidate and one or more members of the CDE Braille Review Committee to gather information about the certification provider, the

testing procedures, and other state's examination metrics to determine if there are comparable testing expectations in reading and writing accuracy and efficiency proficiency in the Unified English Braille Code. This review will result in approval or denial of the certificate for purposes of demonstrating Colorado braille competency requirements.

This option is likely to meet only the requirements for initial braille certification in Colorado, unless the other state has an established process for continued demonstration of braille competency that aligns with CDE's braille competency renewal requirements.

For questions about the renewal guidelines and options for virtual TVIs working in Colorado but residing out of state, please contact Dr. Tanni Anthony at Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or (303) 503-4647.