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Keeping in Touch!

A Newsletter for **Parents and Service Providers of Colorado Children with Blindness, Low Vision, CVI, or Deaf-Blindness**

October 2026



Every child must have meaningful opportunities to learn, grow, and make progress in their education. For a student with blindness, low vision, or deafblindness, the IEP should address the student's individual learning needs and provide the instruction, services, accommodations, and supports necessary to access and participate in the general curriculum and make progress toward IEP goals.

IEP goals should be appropriately challenging and reasonably ambitious in light of the child's individual circumstances. The team should consider what the student knows and can do, how the student learns best, and the specialized instruction and supports needed to build concepts, skills, and independence. For students with blindness, low vision, or deafblindness, both general education and specially designed instruction must be tied to the results of evaluation finding that include the Functional Vision / Learning Media Assessments. This includes the need for specialized equipment, instructional materials, and authentic and customized learning opportunities.

Progress should be monitored throughout the year using meaningful information and data. If a student is not making expected progress, the team should examine whether the instruction, services, accommodations, and supports are appropriately addressing the student's needs and make adjustments when needed.

Attention to progress helps ensure that the IEP remains responsive to the child and supports meaningful engagement, learning, participation, and growth. Progress is name of the game for the results of a child's educational needs. The role of a TVI, O&M Specialist, Braillist, Intervener, and BLV-specific paraeducator cannot be overstated in the educational outcomes of our students. Onward toward Outcomes!

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Low Vision Evaluation (LVE) Clinic News

2026-2027 Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics

Clinic	LVE Clinic Date(s)	Due Date for Paperwork	Site Coordinator
Northern LVE Clinic @ Ensight Skills Center	November 12-13, 2026	October 29, 2026	Samantha Thuis thuis_samantha@svvsd.org
Southern LVE Clinic @ Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB)	December 3-4, 2026	November 19-20, 2026	Jim Olson jolson@csdb.org
Metro LVE Clinic @ Anchor Center for Blind Children	February 24-26, 2027	February 8, 2027	Krista Berkey Berkey_k@cde.state.co.us

Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics are Coming Your Way!

We are so happy that our regional LVE Clinics are funded and full staff for this school year. We are thrilled to have our full team returning for this school year. This includes optometrists Drs. Kara Hanson and David Simpson and low vision therapists Jim Olson and Erika Andersen Ko. Also, Krista Berkey is back on board as our Colorado Low Vision Evaluation Clinic Coordinator. We are grateful to have Sam Thuis, Jim Olson, and Krista Berkey as our regional site coordinators for the Northern, Southern, and Metro Low Vision Evaluation . We will have three regional clinics this year. The Northern Clinic will include Dr. Karen Hanson and Erika Andersen Ko, the Southern Clinic will include Dr. Kara Hanson and Jim Olson, and the Metro Clinic will include Dr. David Simpson and Erika Andersen Ko.

TVIs, your work is now to fill the clinics, which are reserved for school-age learners who have a good likelihood of benefiting from magnification tools during their school day, at home, and in the community. Please be aware that the LVE Clinics are for students with low vision who will benefit from low vision accessibility tools. The clinic is reserved for students with Individualized Education Programs. It is not designed for students with cerebral / cortical visual impairment. It is a requirement of the clinic that eligible children and youth must have an active IEP and be served by a teacher of students with visual impairments. Both the TVI and a parent **must** attend the clinic with the child. For virtual TVIs, please contact Tanni to work through how it may be possible to attend virtually.

There is no cost for the clinic evaluation. Device costs are the responsibility of the family and/or administrative unit. We ask that a fiscal plan be discussed ahead of the clinic in anticipation of prescribed devices. It is the TVI's responsibility to review the LVE report with the family and student, and to train the child on the ordered devices. The clinic reports will be sent to the TVI three weeks following the clinic through a secure portal.

For logistical questions about the clinics, please contact Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us.

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 Project) will begin our fourth year of a five year cycle on October 1, 2026. The purpose of the project, awarded to every state and U.S. territory, is to identify children and youth with deaf-blindness and provide free technical assistance (TA) to the identified children, their families, and service providers.

Key project activities are to maintain an annual Child Count process, host professional learning events that include an annual webinar series and the long-offered Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness, and to provide tiered and customized technical assistance to families and/or service providers.

The project has four key goals: (1) timely identification of children with deaf-blindness; (2) family networking, training, and TA support; (3) professional training and TA support; and 4) intervener recruitment and training / support. The project has an active website, lending library, and Deaf-Blind Advisory Task Force.

We have four CDE staff (Project Co-Directors **Tanni Anthony** and **Gina Herrera,** TA Specialist **Jessica Meisel**, and Program Support Assistant **Krista Berkey**. We also have a contracted Family Engagement Specialist **Cindy Colwell.** For training, support documents and resources, please check out our Deaf-Blind website.

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project Offers Intervener Training

Colorado Deaf-Blind Project Offers Intervener Training

The Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss (Colorado Deaf-Blind Project) is conducting intervener training program, free of charge, twice during the school year. A new cohort began in August 2026. The next one will begin in January 2027. Be in touch if you are interested in learning more about being an intervener or working with a staff person to be trained for this important role.

The program is designed to provide the background knowledge needed for working one-on-one with students who are deaf-blind and who are on the CO Deaf-Blind Child Count. This program provides a wonderful opportunity for schools or agencies with a staff member(s) who would like to receive intervener training. The training will include:

- An online course of study-hosted by the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project -using modules developed by the National Center on Deaf-Blindness. This includes feedback on all assignments
- Coaching/mentoring and consultation from the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project personnel
- On online support network of other interveners in Colorado, including
- Ongoing professional development opportunities from the Colorado Deaf-Blind Project

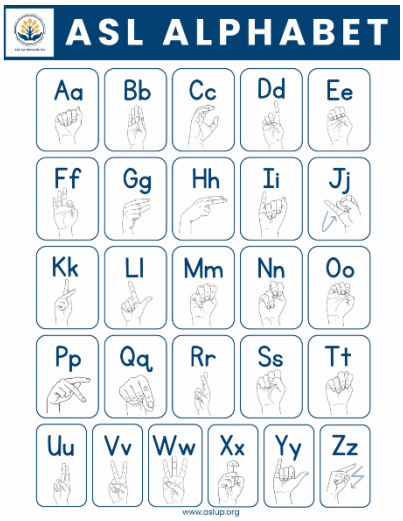
Do you have a new intervener who needs this training? For more information and to register, please contact Jessica Meisel at Meisel_j@cde.co.state.us.

Free Technical Assistance for Learners with Deaf-Blindness

Technical assistance (TA) is the mission of the CO Deaf-Blind Project. TA recipients include Colorado families of children and youth who are deaf-blind, early intervention and school personnel, and agencies providing services to identified 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 per your request
- virtual workshops and state in-person trainings, including an annual Summer Institute
- 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. If you have questions, reach out to Gina Herrera at Herrera_G@cde.state.co.us or call at 303-253-0451.



Free Printable ASL Charts

The ASL Up Network has shared free printable ASL charts for supporting learning at home, in classrooms, and in therapy settings.

The free printables, which include letters, numbers, and a coloring book, can be found on the ASL Up Printables webpage



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Check It Out

PhET's Interactive Simulations

Did you know? A growing number of PhET's Interactive Simulations have Inclusive Features that Support Blind and Low Vision Students! Many science and math teachers know PhET Interactive Simulations: a suite of 174 free science and math simulations, plus a database of thousands of teacher-contributed activities. These highly interactive, game-like "sims" engage learners in active exploration of STEM concepts and can be adapted for use from kindergarten through early university, especially in inquiry-based learning. PhET sims are reliable (grounded in education research), effective, free for educational use, easy to access on or offline, and translated into 137 languages.

If you have not used PhET before because our sims were not accessible to learners with blindness/ow vision, that is changing. In 2014, we launched our Inclusive Design Initiative, working with researchers, designers, software developers, teachers, and blind learners to build inclusive features that flex and adapt to meet learners' needs. Today, **94 sims** have one or more fully designed inclusive features, and all new sims launch with a foundational set of features built for blind and low-vision learners:

- **Alternative Input** – full keyboard/switch accessibility (61 sims)
- **Pan and Zoom** – built-in zooming for low vision or small devices (88 sims)
- **Interactive Highlights** – bright, high-contrast focus outlines for mouse and touch (54 sims)
- **Basic Sounds** – confirmatory sounds to support interaction (52 sims)
- **Core Description** – screen-reader-accessible descriptions that support interaction and track the current state (20 sims)

Several sims have features that go much further in supporting blind / low vision learners.

- **Interactive Description** – screen-reader-accessible descriptions that provide a fully interactive and independent experience (12 sims)
- **Sound and Sonification** – meaningful sonifications, sound effects, and confirmatory sounds (24 sims)
- **Voicing** and **Core Voicing** – flexible and customizable spoken descriptions, available directly through the browser (6 and 1 respectively)
- **Localization** – easy in-sim language switching (68 sims)

Additionally, all HTML5 sims include **Enhanced Touch** (large click areas), making mouse and touch interaction easier.

To find sims with inclusive features, use the Inclusive Feature filter on the Simulations page, or check our Inclusive Feature Tracking Spreadsheet, linked from our Accessibility Statement. Learn more about how Inclusive Features can flex and adapt to meet learners' needs.

PhET Needs Students with Disabilities for Sim Co-design and Testing. Student feedback is essential to good sim design! We are building a pool of students with disabilities to co-design and test our sims through remote interviews. If you know a student (ages 4–17) who would like to get involved, share our Parental Sign-up Form, or have parents/teachers reach out to Taliesin.Smith@colorado.edu.



New Resource: Sensory Team Service Time Matrix

The Texas Deafblind Project has developed the **Sensory Team Service Time Matrix**, a resource to support collaborative teaming between Teachers of Students who are Visually Impaired (TSVI) and Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Progress Center - Eligibility

The **PROGRESS Center** is an OSEP-funded technical assistance center that offers a wide variety of free resources and self-paced learning related to special education. Their resources are especially helpful for building or refreshing foundational knowledge in areas such as IDEA and special education law, IEP development, specially designed instruction, evidence-based practices, and supporting progress for students with disabilities.

One of their newest resources, **Understanding Disability Under IDEA: An Introduction to the 13 Categories**, is a 30-minute self-paced module that provides an introduction to IDEA's 13 disability categories, including definitions, potential impacts on students, and strategies for support.

Access the module here: Module: Understanding Disability Under IDEA: An Introduction to the 13 Categories

Please take some time to check out the PROGRESS Center resource and learning library.

SWAAAC Upcoming Webinars, Trainings, and Events

Looking for professional learning related to assistive technology? The Statewide Assistive Technology, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (SWAAAC) Program supports providers of assistive technology services in Colorado public schools and hosts webinars, trainings, team meetings, and other professional development opportunities throughout the school year.



Upcoming Training and Events: Keep track of live webinars, team meetings, and regional workshops on the SWAAAC Events Hub

Self-Paced Training: Access the foundation curriculum and modules through the SWAAAC Foundations Learning Guide

Annual Conference: Get details on workshops and the annual gathering via The Conference for Assistive Technology in Education (CATE)

OSEP-Funded TA Centers

** Early Childhood

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center provides 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.

** Learners Who Are Deaf-Blind

The National Center on Deaf-Blindness covers OSEP guidance, technical assistance, resources for families and service providers, and learning for proficient communicators who are deaf-blind. The website is 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.

** Accessible Materials and Technologies

The National AEM Center at CAST has provides TA, coaching, and resources that increase the availability and use of educational materials and technologies for learners with disabilities across the lifespan.

*** Professional Learning Modules

The IRIS Center is a dedicated to improving education outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities who are birth through age 21 through the use of effective evidence-based practices and interventions.

*** Center for Parent Information & Resources (CPIR)

CPIR is the hub of valuable information and products specifically designed for the network of Parent Centers serving families of children with disabilities.

Cortical / Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI) Resources



CVIers Discussion Group

The **CVIers discussion group** refers to specialized support and advocacy networks dedicated to individuals living with **Cerebral or Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)**, as well as their families, educators, and medical providers. In this context, "CVIers" is a self-advocacy term used by individuals who navigate this complex, brain-based visual condition. TVIs or other professionals should not join this group unless they attend with a child with CVI / parents and with their expressed permission. Please take time to read more information about these groups and expectations of membership. Please also share with your families of children with CVI.

Primary Active CVIers & CVI Groups

- **The SEELab Discussion Group:** Hosted by the Smith-Kettlewell Eye Research Institute (SEELab) in collaboration with prominent blind-advocacy organizations, this specialized CVIers Discussion Group meets virtually every six weeks. It offers a centralized space for older children with CVI, parents, researchers, and clinicians to exchange coping mechanisms and share direct life experiences.
- **CVI Now Communities:** Formed by the Perkins School for the Blind, this ecosystem hosts prominent private peer support circles on Facebook separated into a **Parent Group** and an **Educator Group** to share customized educational strategies and learning resources.
- **Center for Visually Impaired (CVI) Peer Groups:** Organizations like the Center for Visually Impaired operate peer-led support groups focused on managing daily life, overcoming the sensory fatigue associated with clutter or lighting changes, and building overall independence.

Core Areas of Focus within the Groups

- **Compensatory Strategies:** Members collaborate on how to utilize non-visual cues, color-coding systems, tactile senses, and auditory tools like audiobooks or Braille to navigate daily tasks.
- **Navigating Visual Behaviors:** Discussions frequently center around addressing the 16 recognized CVI visual behaviors, such as light gazing, struggles with visual clutter, reduced fields of view, and difficulty recognizing faces.
- **Education & Advocacy:** Assisting families with educational planning, including implementing functional vision evaluations or learning protocols to ensure students get appropriate accommodations in mainstream classrooms.

CVI Now at Perkins School for the Blind has **a hub of resources about the assessment of CVI** and how to understand the abilities and access needs of individuals with CVI. This expanding collection explores essential components of a comprehensive assessment, from gathering family insights to conducting direct assessment and translating findings into meaningful support strategies.

CDE Happenings

Looking for On-Demand Learning?

Not everything needs to be another live webinar! There are also a number of free resources you can access whenever you need them.



Progress Center Online Learning Courses

Need to learn or refresh the basics of special education law and practice? The Progress Center offers free online learning courses covering foundational special education topics, evidence-based practices, progress monitoring, intensive intervention, and more.

Explore Progress Center Online Learning Courses

CDE On-Demand Professional Learning

Need professional development hours for CDE re-licensure? Hundreds of hours of free, on-demand professional learning are available across a wide range of topics, making it easy to find learning that aligns with your role and professional goals.

Explore CDE On-Demand Professional Learning

View Upcoming SWAAAC Webinars, Trainings, and Events

Child Find FAQ Document

CDE has published an FAQ document addressing common questions related to Child Identification Obligations of AU-A and AU-R, developed in response to the March 2025 ECEA Rule changes. If you have specific questions, please reach out to Melissa Taucher, Child Find Specialist, taucher_m@cde.state.co.us

CDE AI Webpage

The integration of Artificial Intelligence in K-12 education webpage includes a broad range of tools, resources, and curriculum materials. This webpage features a selection of resources to explore and implement AI in meaningful ways.

Please note that these resources are intended to support and enhance high-quality classroom instruction, not replace the essential role of teachers.

Connecting the Dots: A Commitment to Braille

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 CDE Braille Specialists Committee consists currently of the following individuals:

Name	Phone Number	Email Address
Tanni Anthony	(303) 503-4647	Anthony_T@cde.state.co.us
Nancy Cozart	(303) 905-4074	Cozart_N@cde.state.co.us
Christine Maynard	(719) 229-4981	Maynard_C@cde.state.co.us
Brenda Shepard	(303) 995-7913	Shepard_B@cde.state.co.us
Julie Wetzstein	(303) 819-7887	Wetzstein_J@cde.state.co.us

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 updated Braille Competency Guidance documents can be found at: the braille competency webpage.

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. The Braille Authority of North America approves two math codes. 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.

Braillewriter Repair

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

Graphing in a Box

The Project INSPIRE NextGen team is excited to be offering *Graphing in a Box*, a new virtual program for U.S. and Canadian braille readers in grades 5-8. Students will receive a box of materials in their choice of either Nemeth Code or UEB Math/Science. Students will meet with our team on 6 consecutive Saturdays via Zoom. The program begins October 17 and ends November 21. The attached accessible flyer has all the information needed to share with students and their families. We promise the students will enjoy the program as they learn! Families can register their child for *Graphing in a Box* at: https://bit.ly/2026GIB

Be sure to check out our other student programs where you can download our materials and use them with your students. We will hold our fourth annual Mathlete Competition in spring 2027.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum at lprosenb@uscupstate.edu. The *Graphing in a Box* program is funded by the generosity of the Lavelle Fund for the Blind.

Math Books with Associated Open-Source 3D Printable Models

Check out Joan Horvath and Rich Cameron on Makershed.

They have about 120 editable, open-source OpenSCAD models in their GitHub book repositories. How to edit the models to make various math and science points is described in the books; they are not meant to stand alone.

- *Make: Geometry* is available as a PDF with alt text on images and text equations.
- *Make: Trigonometry* and *Make: Calculus* are available (on the publisher's site only) as epubs with MathML equations and alt text on images.
- Our recent *Make: Physics* (mechanics with calculus, for first-semester college physics) is also available on the publisher's site with MathML and alt text.

In addition, they developed instructions for blind users to do their own 2D and 3D CAD projects in OpenSCAD for CATT-NW. The individual lessons, part of their larger "TAA-DAA" endeavor, can be found here:

2D and 3D Design in OpenSCAD
Moving from 2D to 3D Design (Overview of Activities 14-19)
Section A Making 2D shapes in OpenSCAD (Introduction to Activities 14-16)
Activity A.1. Create a Square in OpenSCAD
Activity A.2. Basic Shapes in OpenSCAD
Activity A.3. Rotating, Translating, Scaling and Mirroring Shapes
Programming in OpenSCAD - Section B
Activity B.1. Adding and Subtracting Objects
Activity B.2. Moving from 2D to 3D
Activity B.3. True 3D models

Calendar of Events

Date	Event
October	**National Disability Employment Awareness Month**
October 8 – 9	**CDE State Conference on BLV: CVI and AAC: Collaborate, Individualize, Amplify –** Adams 12 Conference Center Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
October 13 – 14	**2026 PEAK Conference on Inclusive Education** – Grand Junction, CO More information will be made available on the PEAK Parent website.
October 15	**DeafBlind Webinar Series: CO DB Project Overview and DB-Specific Resources w/ Gina Herrera**– Virtual (4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for the DeafBlind Webinar Series
October 21	**Sound Bites: Parent Partnerships with Kat Rains** – Virtual (4 – 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for Sound Bites
November 4	**Sound Bites: The Universe Is for Everyone: Accessible Science from Rocks to Stars with Dr. Tiffany Wild** – Virtual (4 – 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for Sound Bites
November 5 – 8	**NFB CO State Convention – Lone Tree** Contact: Jessica Beecham at jbbeecham@gmail.com
November 6	**CIMC First Friday Meeting** – Virtual (9 – 10 am and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
November 12	**DeafBlind Webinar Series: Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness: Making Sense of Behavior with Dr. Tim Hartshorne** – Virtual (4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for the DeafBlind Webinar Series
November 12 – 13	**Northern Low Vision Evaluation Clinic** – Ensight Skills Center Contact: Samantha Thuis at thuis_samantha@svvsd.org

Date	Event
November 17	**Southern Region TVI-DVR Meeting** – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Contact: Judy Mathews at judy.mathews@state.co.us
November 30	**Tools for Life Application Deadline** TFL Information
December 2	**Sound Bites: Braille Display Decision-Making Tips with Eli Sanchez and Leslie Edmonds** – Virtual (4 – 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for Sound Bites
December 4	**CIMC First Friday Meeting** – Virtual (9 – 10 am and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
December 5 – 8	**SOMA/SWOMA International O&M Conference** – New Orleans More information and registration on the SOMA/SWOMA website.
December 10	**DeafBlind Webinar Series: Capacity First: Redefining How We Assess and Support Deafblind Learners with Julie Maier** – Virtual (4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for the DeafBlind Webinar Series
January 8, 2027	**CIMC Second Friday Meeting** – Virtual (9 – 10 am and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
Jan 11 – Feb 12, 2027	**WIDA ACCESS Testing Administration Window**
January 14, 2027	**DeafBlind Webinar Series: Shared Reading and Children with Deafblindness with Dr. Christopher Brum** – Virtual (4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for the DeafBlind Webinar Series
January 19, 2027	**Southern Region TVI-DVR Meeting** – Academy District 20 (Bring a photo ID to the front desk.) Contact: Melissa Shular at melissa.shular@asd20.org
January 20, 2027	**Blindness/Low Vision Coalition Meeting** – Virtual (8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
January 27, 2027	**Sound Bites: TVI and Assistive Technology Competencies w/ Dr. Benjamin Lytle** – Virtual (4 p– 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for Sound Bites

Date	Event
February 5, 2027	**CIMC First Friday Meeting** – Virtual (9 – 10 am and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
February 10, 2027	**Sound Bites: Assistive Technology Needs Assessment with Dr. Yue-Ting Su** – Virtual (4 – 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for Sound Bites
February 11, 2027	**DeafBlind Webinar Series: The Forgotten Senses with David Brown** – Virtual (4. to 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for the DeafBlind Webinar Series
February 16, 2027	**Southern Region TVI-DVR Meeting** – District 49 (Bring a photo ID to the front desk.) Contact: Lori Mattick at lori.mattick@d49.org
February 24-26, 2027	**Metro Low Vision Evaluation Clinic** – Anchor Center for Blind Children Contact: Krista Berkey at berkey_k@cde.state.co.us
March 1, 2027	**Education for Life Scholarship Application Deadline** EFL Information
March 5, 2027	**CIMC First Friday Meeting** – Virtual (9 – 10 am and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
March 7 – 10, 2027	**The 9th Biennial POSB STEM Institute for Instruction** – Spartanburg, SC More information is available on the POSB STEM website.
March 11, 2027	**DeafBlind Webinar Series** – Virtual (4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for the DeafBlind Webinar Series
March 17, 2027	**Sound Bites: How do Low Vision Devices Work (or Not Work) with Dr. David Simpson** – Virtual (4 – 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for Sound Bites
April 2, 2027	**CIMC First Friday Meeting** – Virtual (9 – 10 am and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
April 5 – April 23, 2027	**Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) Administration Window**

Date	Event
April 7, 2027	**Sound Bites: Translating Microperimetry, Visual Fields, Retinal Imaging, and Diagnoses into Functional Vision with Dr. Kara Hanson** – Virtual (4 – 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for Sound Bites
April 12 – April 23, 2027	**PSAT/SAT Administration Window**
April 16, 2027	**DeafBlind Webinar Series: Collaboration with Families with Cindy Colwell** – Virtual (4. to 5:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Register for the DeafBlind Webinar Series
April 28, 2027	**Blindness/Low Vision Coalition Meeting** – Virtual (8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) Contact: Tanni Anthony at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us
May 7, 2027	**CIMC First Friday Meeting** – Virtual (9 – 10 am and 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
May 18, 2027	**Southern Region TVI-DVR** – CSDB/CIMC (Bring a photo ID to the front desk.) Contact: Jim Olson at jolson@csdb.org
June 7 – 9, 2027	**Western Regional Early Intervention Conference (WREIC)** – Denver, CO More information is available on the WREIC website.



Transition Preparation

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and this year's Department of Labor theme, "Celebrating Value and Talent," takes on special meaning as our nation marks its 250th birthday.

Helen Keller National Center and Helen Keller Services for the Blind are continuing our annual tradition with a fresh format this year: a webinar built around shorter, focused conversations with each speaker, followed by live Q&A. The 6th Annual NDEAM Webinar takes place Wednesday, October 14 from 2:00 to 3:30 PM ET. Speakers include Kirk Adams, PhD, of the Institute for Sustainable Diversity & Inclusion; Kathy West-Evans of Abilities United Consulting; and Michael MacKillop of the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind, with more to be announced. They will share best practices, real-world insights, and career strategies that celebrate the value and talent individuals who are DeafBlind, blind, or have low vision bring to the workforce. Register for our **NDEAM webinar**.

Celebrating Deaf Awareness Month: A Deafblind Client finds His Niche Thanks to Assistance from GVRA

Take a moment to check out this article recently posted in the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency's (GVRA) website highlighting **Alex Foster and his mom Diane**.

Alex is living his best life- working and enjoying activities with family and friends in his community. His success story demonstrates that when we work together, our DB network and collaborative partners have positive impact for our DB youth and their families.

Secondary to Postsecondary Transition Modules

The Described and Captioned Media Program has two free, online modules that provide students with information and skills for a successful transition from a secondary to a postsecondary setting. One is for students who are **blind/low vision** and one for students who are **deaf/hard of hearing**. Both are organized around four key questions:

1. Who Am I?
2. What Do I Want?
3. How Do I Get There?
4. What Tools Do I Need?



Just for Parents

Colorado IEP Parent Training

CDE is excited to share that the Colorado IEP Parent Training is now available on the CDE website. This free, on-demand training was created to help parents and families better understand the special education process and meaningfully participate in IEP meetings and decision-making. The training includes ten modules covering IEPs, parent and student rights, and key federal and state special education laws and procedures. This training was developed in response to Senate Bill 24-069, now codified in Colorado Revised Statutes § 22-20-122, which directed CDE to create and make available a parent training program on IEPs and related rights and procedures publicly. **The ten modules and all related resources can be accessed here.**

Contact Katherine Rains, rains_k@cde.state.co.us, with any questions or to inquire about an in-person training.

Just for Paraeducators – Sending a Bouquet of Gratitude

Northern and Metro Region Paraeducator Training



More great news to share about the paraeducator trainings for this fall. The Northern Region training was held on September 18th with 9 participants. Thanks to Greeley 6 School District for hosting the training room.

The trainers were Nancy Cozart, Donna Keale, and Kaitlin Lombardi. Thanks to the following districts for sending their paraeducators to the training: Denver, Greeley 6, Fort Morgan, Johnstown Milliken, and Poudre School Districts.

The final Metro Region training was held on September 25th in a room provided by Littleton School District. In total, there were 22 participants.

The trainers were Nancy Cozart and Donna Keale. Thanks to the following administrative units for sending staff: Adams 12 Five Star School District, Aurora School District, Cherry Creek School District, Denver Public Schools, Douglas County School District, District 49, Elizabeth School District, Jefferson County School District, and Littleton School District.

We will be reviewing evaluation feedback to determine next steps for possible other trainings that may explore more in-person and/or virtual sessions. A big shout out to Michelle Chacon, Nancy Cozart, Donna Keale, and Kaitlin Lombardi for their teamwork. This was a sponsored training event by CDE and CSDB BLV Outreach. A shout out to Krista Berkey for her program support of all three of the paraeducator trainings. Also thank you to the TVIs who support their TVis to attend the trainings and, of course, to all of the paraeducators and other approved participants who attended a southern, northern, or metro training event. It takes a village and ours is pretty spectacular!

Colorado Jobs Specific to TVIs, COMSs, Braillists, BLV Paraeducators, and Interveners



We have vacancies for Colorado TVIs (teachers of students with visual impairments) and Orientation & Mobility (O&M) Specialists. There may also be openings for braillists, paraeducators specifically working with students with blindness/low vision, and paraeducators. Please keep in touch with Tanni about your 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 they have an opportunity to learn about being a TVI and/or an O&M Specialist. This may be a paraeducator, a braillist, and/or a colleague already in the teaching profession.

Please work with Dr. Silvia Correa Torres or Dr. Anitha Muthukumaran 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 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 our students.

New! The CDE BLV Job Board



The CDE BLV team has created an up-to-date job board to advertise positions for TVI/COMS jobs, paraprofessional, and special service (e.g., braillist and intervener) jobs across Colorado.

The CDE BLV Job Board is updated regularly as new positions become available. If you have a position, you would like posted or updated, please contact **Krista Berkey** at berkey_k@cde.state.co.us.

If a position on the current BLV Job Board is filled, please notify Krista to remove it. Thanks!

Are You Retiring Soon?

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. If you are an O&M Specialist, please also maintain your ACVREP O&M certification. Please keep in touch with Tanni if you are interested in this type of work after your retirement! Let Tanni know if you want to be added to her list of private contractors by emailing her at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us

Visual Impairment Professions Video

AER's Professional Personnel Recruitment Committee (PPRC) is proud to announce the release of the long-awaited recruitment video: "Visual Impairment Professions."

Access the video without audio description.

Access the video with audio description.

Initial Licensure and Endorsement for TVI / O&M

For information about the endorsement requirements for the Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21, go to the Endorsements page on the CDE website.

Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired Ages Birth-21: (9.02)	✓ Must hold a master's degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution in special education / visual impairment or its equivalent, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education. ✓ Must have completed a program from a regionally-accredited institution for Special Education Specialists: Visually Impaired that includes prescribed field experience requirements. ✓ Please note. For TVIs who are hired under a Temporary Educator Eligibility (TEE) authorization, under Colorado law, the employing school district must place you under the supervision of a professionally licensed person in the same area of specialization**.**

For information about the endorsement requirements for the School Orientation and Mobility Specialist, go to the Endorsements page on the CDE website.

School Orientation and Mobility Specialist Ages 0-21: (11.03)	✓ Bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally-accredited institution. ✓ Completion of a preparation program from a regionally-accredited institution for school orientation and mobility specialists. ✓ Completion of practicum or internship, which must be in a school setting and equivalent to a minimum of 350 hours, full-time, and under the supervision of an Academy of Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education (ACVREP) certified orientation and mobility specialist. ✓ Passing of the ACVREP exam. ✓ **Hold a current and valid ACVREP Certified O&M Specialist certificate (for initial and renewal licenses).** ✓ Please note. For O&M Specialists who are hired under a Temporary Educator Eligibility (TEE) authorization, under Colorado law, the employing school district must place you under the supervision of a professionally licensed person in the same area of specialization**.** ✓ **Please do not let your ACVREP O&M Certification expire. If you are providing O&M services 0-21, please be sure you have a license to do so.**

Blindness/Low Vison Coalition
Virtual Meeting – September 9, 2026

Persons in Attendance: Tanni Anthony, Michelle Chacon, Abby Horner, Jonathon Karli, Donna Keale, Paula Landry, Macy Marshall, Judy Mathews, Tammy Miller, Tiffany Moon, Anitha Muthukumaran, Jim Olson, Mike Plansker, and Chloann Woolley

MISSION OF THE BLINDNESS/LOW 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/low vision (April 1998).

Acronym Legend

ASV	A Shared Vision
BLV	Blind / Low Vision or Blindness/Low Vision
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 Blindness/Low Vision Coalition for the 2026-27 School Year

- A Shared Vision – Paula Landry
- Anchor Center for Blind Children – Tammy Miller
- Colorado AER Chapter – Chloann Woolley
- Colorado Center for the Blind Youth Program – Tiffany Moon
- Colorado Department of Education – Tanni Anthony
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Macy Marshall and Judy Mathews
- Colorado Instructional Materials Center – Jim Olson
- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind – Jonathon Karli

- Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Outreach – Donna Keale
- Metro TVI / COMS– Michelle Chacon
- Northern TVI / COMS – Abby Horner
- Southern TVI / COMS – Chloann Woolley
- University of Northern Colorado – Anitha Muthukumaran
- Western TVI / COMS – Mike Plansker

Norms of the Blindness/Low 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). Blindness/Low 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.

Announcements

Welcome to Mike Plansker as the new representative from the Western Region and Anitha Muthukumaran as our new UNC representative. We are so glad to have Mike and Anitha on board with us, as we begin this new school year.

Program Updates

Metro Region (Michelle Chacon)

Jeannie Lei, who coordinates the metro TVI / COMS regional meetings, is in contract with Trina Boyd-Pratt, and she would be happy to present at our first Metro Meeting on an accessibility center in North Carolina. We were talking about Wednesday, September 23 at 3:30 to 4:30/5 PM. CCSD will host the first meeting, which will be online. The plan is to have a discussion about going in-person with a virtual option or continuing to meet virtually.

BLV Paraprofessional Training Series: A collaborative group of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) recently designed a specialized training tailored for paraprofessionals supporting students who are blind or low vision. Nancy Cozart and Donna Keale successfully launched the first of three scheduled sessions in August at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB).

The final initial Paraprofessional training will be for the metro area in Littleton on September 25 from 9:00-1:00 at Support Services at Twain (formerly Mark Twain Elementary School). For inquiries, contact Nancy Cozart at nkcozart28@gmail.com. Currently, this training is full with 20 participants registered and confirmed at this point in time.

Northern Region (Abby Horner)

Our first Northern TVI Meeting will be on October 2nd. It will be a make and take, which is a continuation from last school as it was such a great time connecting and making materials to use with students. There are some

new faces and some that moved: Jared is new in Thompson, Hanna is now Boulder, and Joe is now in St. Vrain Valley. We are excited to have the paraeducator training happening in the Northern region to better support our students with blindness and low vision.

Discussion Item: How are TeleTVIs included in order to keep updated on state topics/requirements like the Colorado Braille certification, low vision clinics, state conferences, Sound Bites, and CIMC sessions? *Response*: All virtual TVIs are added to the CDE and CIMC communication lists. Most CO virtual TVIs live out of state but we have a handful (Elizabeth Webb, Julia Hutchison, and Mary Kate McLaughlin who live in Colorado). Tanni reaches out to each person about the braille competency requirements. Most CO virtual TVIs live out of state but we have a handful (Elizabeth Webb, Julia Hutchison, and Mary Kate McLaughlin who live in Colorado). All virtual TVIs are invited to participate in CDE sponsored BLV or DB trainings. If a virtual TVI wants to send a student to the Low Vision Evaluation Clinics, they may do so. We will work to see how virtual TVI attendance is possible as it is a mandate for the TVI to be present at the LVE Clinic. It is hoped that virtual TVIs are invited to CO's regional TVI / COMS meetings. We believe there are 10-11 virtual TVIs working in Colorado administrative units.

Western Region (Mike Plansker)

Our first Western Slope meeting of the year will be held virtually on Monday, September 14th.

The western slope folks are excited for the opportunity to attend the CDE Conference on BLV virtually, but together in Montrose.

Caseload: We all continue to see high numbers of students with both diagnosed and suspected cortical / cerebral visual impairment (CVI).

Discussion: There may be two students in the Western Region AU who may want to attend a front range LVE. What is CDE's guidance when the TVI is virtual and cannot attend the clinic? Response: The Western Region did not have enough students to warrant a LVE clinic this year. If there is a family who would like to attend another clinic site, they should be in touch with Krista Berkey at Berkey_b@cde.state.co.us to make needed arrangements.

Southern Region (Chloann Woolley)

The Southern Region TVI/DVR Group ended the school year with our May meeting at the Pikes Peak Library District 21C learning about the public library MakerSpace areas and available accessible materials for individuals who are blind or low vision. The wonderful library staff shared accessible items that the public Library has for adults, students and teachers. Please check out your local library!

The first 2026-2027 Southern Regional TVI/DVR meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 15th from 2:30 - 4:00 at the Colorado School for the Blind, hosted by the CSDB Staff.

The southern region shares a Microsoft Teams site to house all the meeting minutes, training handouts, and group information. Check out present and past information on the shared Southern Region TVI/DVR site.

The Southern Region has Five Meetings scheduled for the year:

- September 15th, 2026. Host: CSDB, School for the Blind
- November 17, 2026. Host: DVR (Colorado Springs office)
- January 19, 2027. Host: Academy District 20
- February 16, 2027. Host: District 49 (Falcon)
- May 18, 2026. Host: CIMC

Job openings for TVI/O&M positions within the Southern Region: CSDB Outreach; El Paso District 11; and District 49.

A Shared Vision (Paula Landry)

A Shared Vision celebrates its 10th anniversary this October. Since our founding in 2016, we have served approximately 1,000 young children with blindness or low vision and their families and provided nearly 15,000 early intervention visits across Colorado.

Beginning July 1, 2026, EI Colorado requires an Annual Redetermination of Eligibility (ARE) as part of each child's annual IFSP review process. This new process requires vision screening not only during the initial Child Find evaluation, but also as part of each children ARE. This is a significant change as it creates more opportunities to identify vision concerns, including those associated with cerebral/cortical visual impairment (CVI), and connect children and families with appropriate evaluation and services earlier. Note**:** An Annual Redetermination of Eligibility is not required for Children with established (diagnosed) conditions, children at transition age (2 years, 9 months or older) who are eligible for Part B or Extended Part C, or children with a parent who has a diagnosed developmental delay.

A Shared Vision's Vision Screening Protocol© continues to be recommended by leading pediatric ophthalmologists and optometrists in Colorado, including members of our professional advisory team. Early intervention professionals across the state use either the 2022 or 2025 version of the Protocol to support their vision screening practices.

We are also pleased to welcome Dr. Paula Conroy to A Shared Vision as an EI-TVI. Paula recently retired from her positions as a professor and coordinator of the Visual Impairment and Orientation and Mobility program at the University of Northern Colorado and as a TVI with Boulder Valley School District. Paula brings tremendous knowledge and extensive experience in providing direct services to children who are blind or have low vision, as well as preparing future professionals to serve children and individuals with visual impairments.

As we enter our second decade, our work extends beyond the direct services provided by our EI-TVIs. We continue to invest in English and Spanish resources for families and professionals, enhancements to our Vision Screening Protocol©, professional training, our newsletter, and collaboration with EIBs across Colorado to strengthen the identification and support of young children with vision concerns.

Discussion: Delayed referrals to EI-TVIs have been identified within some EI Brokers. This is concerning because early intervention during the critical period of development is essential for young children with blindness/low vision. Research supports prompt referral to specialized vision services.

Within a primary service provider model, the primary provider is often not a TVI, which may result in valuable time being lost before a referral is made to a BLV entity. It is recommended that the three EI entities review their data to document referral dates, the dates BLV services began, and the length of time between identification of a vision concern, referral, and initiation of services. This information could help identify patterns, barriers, and opportunities to improve timely access to specialized vision support.

Anchor Center for Blind Children (Tammy Miller)

We are off to a fantastic start of a new school year in our three children's programs! Preschool is on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and our Infant & Toddler Program is on Mondays and Fridays. Our Home Visit EI Program is continuing strong with a great team. There are 22 preschoolers! Many of the preschoolers are dually enrolled in their neighborhood school districts and the Anchor Center. This has been a great way to share the child's preschool programming needs. There are 7 children who have a shared placement.

Events: We have some fun 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 continues to host Night Watch respite events one night per month during the school year.

Research: Our CVI Initiative research team is collaborating on a research project with Children's Hospital/University of Colorado. We are working alongside physicians and therapists in their NICU follow-up clinic (BLOSSOM), where we screen patients who are at risk of brain-based visual impairments/CVI using the NAVEG screening tool. We presented on this research and some other upcoming research endeavors at the Perkins CVI Conference in Boston, MA in July.

Fundraising Events: Our annual fundraising gala, Sunset in the City, will take place on October 24th. Tickets are available at www.anchorcenter.org

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

our center-based infant, toddler, and preschool programs, with financial assistance available to all families. No child is ever denied access to services based on the family's inability to pay.

The Anchor Center for Blind Children is open for tours.

WREIC: Colorado is hosting the Western Region Early Intervention Conference on June 7-9, 2027. The Colorado planning committee consists of Anchor Center, CSDB, and CDE. The focus in on early intervention across Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Low Vision, and Deaf-Blindness. There is an administrators meeting for personnel in AZ, CO, UT, WY, and NV. The conference will be open for national attendance.

Colorado AER Chapter (Chloann Woolley)

The CAER Chapter will host their annual meeting on October 8th in Thorton at the Tequila's Family Mexican Restaurant. The hope is that CAER will continue to be Colorado awards. Please send in your award nominations to celebrate professionals in the field by September 18th, 2026. State recognition of AER member will be awarded at the annual Banquet for the follow categories: Gary Schmidt Award, Connections Award, Lifetime Achievement Award and Ken Neve Award. Purchase your White Cane Day t-shirt to support chapter mini-grants for the 2027 year.

There has been a motion and second to combine forces to create a more robust area chapter to offer ACVREP trainings and conference events. Beginning talks are in the works to join with our surrounding state neighbors to create a unified Four Corners AER Chapter with UT, AZ, and NM – and possibly Nevada. Please come to the annual meeting to cast your vote and celebrate the work we do in the field for individuals with Blindness and Low Vision!

Colorado Center for The Blind (CCB) Youth Programs (Tiffany Moon)

No Limits To Learning: Our 2026 No Limits To Learning summer youth program was a huge success! We had 18 students participate, coming from nine different states as well as one student who joined us internationally. Five came from Colorado and three were funded through DVR. There were also other circumstances of partial or full scholarships.

In addition to their daily enrichment classes, students participated in several meaningful challenge recreation activities. These included rock climbing, whitewater rafting, a ropes course and paddleboarding day, a fishing clinic, and martial arts. There were also tactile art experiences.

It was another great summer of helping blind youth build confidence, develop new skills, challenge themselves, and realize just how much they are capable of doing. The combination of training, recreation, and spending time with other blind students continues to make No Limits To Learning such a valuable experience. Several of the older students are interested in the adult training program with the Colorado Center for the Blind.

CSDB Mentorship: Our mentorship dates are locked in for the 2026–27 school year. We are excited to continue working with students at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind and provide programming that is

practical, educational, and empowering. Our goal is to give students opportunities to learn skills they can use in their everyday lives while also connecting with positive blind role models.

Upcoming Events:

- October – Recreation and Leisure: What do blind people do for fun and to enjoy the outdoors? We will talk with students about the different ways blind people participate in recreation and outdoor activities. We will also talk about what we did as teenagers, how we navigated these activities with our parents, and how parents can support their children while still having confidence in their ability to participate independently.

- December – Shopping as a Blind Person: With the holiday season fast approaching, we will talk with students about how blind people shop independently. We will explore apps that can make shopping easier, as well as other technology and resources that can make everyday life more accessible.

- January – BTL ILS: Taco Day! We will work with students on stovetop cooking, baking, and knife skills as they prepare a delicious taco lunch to enjoy.

- February – High School ILS: Programming is still being finalized.

- March – High School ILS: Grilling! Students will learn how a grill works and how to safely use it. Then we will put that knowledge into practice by grilling chicken.

- April – BTL ILS: Grilling! We will continue our independent living skills training with another hands-on grilling activity.

Emerging Leaders: Blind Brothers Blind Sisters. We are hoping to officially launch our Blind Brothers Blind Sisters mentoring program within the next four to six weeks. This program will connect blind youth with positive blind adult role models who can provide encouragement, support, and someone to talk to who understands what it is like to grow up blind. The age range is 8-10 to older based on parent comfort.

Calendar of Events:

September 19 – Climb Higher Toward Confidence! Youth outdoor rock climbing in Golden.

September 24 – Pathways, Possibilities & Opportunities: A career and college fair. It is from 9:45 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. Lunch is included. Please RSVP.

October 10 – Buzz, Roar & Explore: Youth Science Day! The Talking Book Library will bring dinosaur eggs for students to “excavate” their own dinosaur. They will also share fun facts about dinosaurs and discuss the services available to students.

We will also have our resident beekeeper joining us for a very hands-on experience. He will bring tactile models of different types of bees, including both large-scale and actual-size models. He will talk about what it takes to maintain a hive and how beekeeping can be done non-visually. Students will also get to learn about

the different pieces of equipment he uses, from moving bees to separating honey. This is going to be a very cool, hands-on science day!

November 5 to 8: National Federation of the Blind Colorado State Convention at Lone Tree, Colorado. This year, there will be an opportunity to sponsor families with costs for hotels and meals. The goal is to encourage the Parents of Blind Children Chapter starting again.

November – The Proof Is in the Pie! A youth cooking day at the Colorado Center for the Blind.

December – Annual Holiday Gathering: A chance for our youth, families, and staff to come together and celebrate the holiday season.

University of Northern Colorado (Anitha Muthukumaran)

Enrollment: As of Fall 2026, the University of Northern Colorado's M.A. Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment (VI) program has 29 students enrolled. Of these students, 19 are also pursuing Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Endorsement in addition to their TVI preparation. At this time, the most recent available residency information is from the Fall 2025 census data, as the corresponding Fall 2026 data are not yet available. Based on the Fall 2025 census, the program included 5 resident students, 17 non-resident students, and 1 international student.

School District Partnership: The University of Northern Colorado and the school district have established a partnership designed to make graduate degrees and endorsements more affordable and accessible for educators. Through this partnership, eligible educators have access to discounted tuition for master's degrees and endorsements in the School of Teacher Education and the School of Special Education, including a tuition rate of $1,000 for a 3-credit master's-level course, allowing educators to potentially complete a 30-credit master's degree for $10,000 or less. The partnership also provides opportunities to complete a CLD or Special Education endorsement or pursue other graduate programs, with affordable, fully online options and some stackable pathways, such as Culturally Linguistically Diverse (CLD) coursework that can be applied toward a master's degree. Depending on eligibility, educators may also receive credit for prior learning, professional development, and relevant work-based experience. Programs are designed to provide flexibility, with opportunities for teachers to begin their coursework in the fall, spring, or summer. More information on the UNC-School District Partnership can be found in this link.

Discussion: Is there a shift to focus more on CVI with UNC coursework? The answer is yes that there is CVI content embedded in the existing coursework. For example, more content in the assessment course. Assignments area also geared to be inclusive of students with CVI.

Colorado Instructional Materials Center (Jim Olson)

At the start of this 2026-2027 school year, the CIMC is serving students in 64 administrative units (AUs). This includes 17 B.O.C.E.S who serve multiple school districts; as well as charter schools, online schools, private schools, home-schooled students, and early intervention programs across Colorado.

Statewide Count: Statewide registration count as of 08/28/2026: 1,183 and Statewide registration count as of 09/04/2026: 1,171

Please continue to submit CIMC Registration Forms for infants (0-2) and school-age students (3-21) who have entered or withdrawn from your administrative unit.

The CIMC is working with the CDE Deaf-Blind Project staff to reconcile registrations. Please check each of the counts for your AU / agency to ensure students are accounted for in both the CIMC Count and the Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count. CDE Deafblind Project (April) 176 students. CIMC (Today) 136 (5 early intervention and 131 school-age). This is a difference of 40 learners

Please email cimcregistrations@csdb.org to set up a one-on-one video call with CIMC staff to go over your caseloads and statewide registration database report.

CIMC "First Friday" statewide Zoom meeting dates for the 2026-2027 school year:

The CIMC has hosted monthly "First Friday" meetings for seven years. This meeting has no pre-set agenda, although CIMC staff always comes prepared share something – usually a new APH product. CIMC hosts the Zoom meeting room, and you bring the agenda. Typical participants are TVIs and COMS, paraprofessionals, and school-district braillists. Together, we have a one-hour opportunity for you to ask each other questions, discuss strategies, new technologies, new apps, new podcasts, YouTube videos, new APH Press books, APH educational products, and whatever else is on our minds. All of this in a laid back, stress-free, atmosphere. We laugh a bit also.

Two Zoom sessions are scheduled for each meeting date. Morning session: 9 am – 10 am. Afternoon session: 2:30 pm-3:30 pm. Contact CIMC staff for Zoom meeting link.

- August 14, 2026 ("Second Friday")
- September 11, 2026 ("Second Friday")
- October 02, 2026
- November 6, 2026
- December 4, 2026
- January 8, 2027 ("Second Friday")
- February 5, 2027
- March 5, 2027
- April 2, 2027
- May 07, 2027

CIMC Table at the CDE Fall BVI Conference: CIMC staff will be available to answer your questions and disseminate APH educational materials before and after the BVI conference. Please contact CIMC staff ahead of time if you have equipment to return or in need of repair.

Spotlight on new APH Products:

- My Sight Kit, My Sight Kit product page, 1-84000-00, $609.00
- My Sight Light box puzzle: 1-84001-00, $357.00
- My Sight puzzle, 1-00840-00, $357.00

- My Sight Puzzle, Spanish, 1-00840-SP, $357.00
- Paige Connect, Paige Connect product page , 1-08570-00, $339.00
- Newly Revised: Building on Patterns: Kindergarten, Second Edition, BOP: Kindergarten product page
- Creacube, Creacube product page, 1-08485-00, $95.00
- Grid and Go, Grid and Go product page, 1-08112-00, $189.00
- Room With A View, Map-Reading Concepts and Skills, Room with a View product page, 1-03136-00, $489.00.

New APH Hive Course Helping Students Manage Frustration: Big feelings can interfere with learning when students do not understand what frustration is, where it comes from, or how it affects the brain and body. This course invites educators to observe a virtual classroom as a school counselor guides young learners through a lesson that builds self-awareness through body- and brain-based strategies. As part of a collaborative approach to supporting student needs, participants will learn breathing techniques, positive self-talk, and simple planning tools that help students manage frustration and return to learning. ACVREP Credit Hours: 2.

CSDB School for the Blind (Jonathan Karli)

Over the summer, the School for the Blind hosted a skateboard camp, and it was fun! They are also building a blind soccer pitch. The hope is for an unveiling in October, funds permitting. This is a partnership with USABA. The Colorado School for the Blind is excited to offer an Independent Life Skills for all students this year. This is made possible by the addition of a new full-time Independent Living Skills teacher, Sarah Mora.

During the first three weeks of the school year, students have already begun developing practical skills through engaging, hands-on activities, including making smores in the microwave. This simple activity incorporates a variety of independent living skills, including following directions, safely operating a microwave, measuring ingredients, and cleaning up. The students are incredibly excited about this class and are eager to see what Ms. Mora has planned for the year.

There are 64 students on campus, preschool through Bridges to Life. This count does not apply to the babies and school age students served by the Outreach Department.
There are two new modular buildings that are currently being revamped. These buildings will supplement the School for the Blind building. One will be a model apartment for students to practice their independent living skills. The goal is to be completed by October.

In our elementary classrooms (grades K-5), we are implementing a new literacy curriculum this school year, McGraw-Hill Open Court Reading. This curriculum allows for explicit instruction across all areas of literacy while also giving teachers the flexibility to differentiate instruction more efficiently and appropriately based on individual student needs. Implementation of the curriculum is off to a strong start, and we are looking forward to seeing positive results throughout the school year.

The School for the Blind has one vacant position specific to Assistive Technology Specialist (TVI). Until we find a full-time candidate to fill this position, we are contracting with two separate vendors to provide instruction to students. The latter gives the students a chance to practice their virtual skills.

There will be a Friday, October 15 White Cane Day in Acacia Park. Jonathan will send out a flyer.

CSDB Outreach Services (Donna Keale)

BLV Outreach is off to a strong start for the 2026-2027 school year. We are currently providing direct services to 25 students across five school districts and 29 infants through two Early Intervention (EI) brokers.

We are proud to be collaborative partners in the statewide paraeducator trainings. The training hosted at CSDB for the Pikes Peak region was highly successful, with 19 participants in attendance. The Greeley training is scheduled next, followed by the Metro area training, which has already reached capacity. The overwhelming interest in these trainings demonstrates a growing commitment across Colorado to learning effective strategies for supporting students who are blind or have low vision. The training team is proud to help make these professional learning opportunities a reality.

Additionally, a team of four TVIs have been meeting to explore opportunities for expanding activities and events to regions of the state beyond the Pikes Peak area. A survey will be distributed to TVIs in the coming weeks to gather feedback, identify needs, and determine priority activities for future programming. Please take time to complete the survey.

Outreach is also partnering with the CSDB Athletic Director and the Interim Director of the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) to bring two sports clinics to CSDB: soccer and goalball. These Saturday events will provide families with five hours of hands-on instruction and participation. Participants will rotate through four activity stations designed to develop a broad range of skills, including body mechanics, game rules, throwing techniques, and kicking skills.

The Outreach Director position remains in the interview process as we seek a candidate who can lead the program forward and support the goals outlined in the new strategic plan. Outreach also continues to recruit for one remaining Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) position.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) (Judy Mathews and Macy Marshall)

Judy is lead AT Specialist and Macy is lead Counselor. There is still a wait list for DVR services based on disability priority and application date. They currently have a hiring freeze to fill vacant positions. TVIs should continue to work with their students and their families to complete an application to get into the system's queue.

Colorado Department of Education (Tanni Anthony)

Colorado Services for Children and Youth with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss Project: We are in our fourth year of our five-year award. 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 difference. 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 project. Jessica Meisel is a Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist. 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 and community-based interveners. Krista Berkey is the Program Support Assistant. Cindy Colwell is on contract as the Family Engagement Specialist.
- **Technical Assistance:** To request FREE technical assistance for students with deaf-blindness, please contact Gina Herrera at Herrera_g@cde.state.co.us
- **Fiscal Support**: If there is a need for funding support specific to a DB-project, let Tanni know. This might be a make and take session or support for training.
- **Annual Deaf-Blind Child Count:** The December 1, 2025 Colorado Deaf-Blind Child Count was completed in April with 176 students identified across Colorado who are deaf-blind. New and update forms will be disseminated in early November for the December 1, 2026 Child Count. Our key contacts in most administrative school districts is a designated TVI. Children and youth with deaf-blindness can be added to the Child Count database anytime throughout the school year. The December 1 process is a confirmation of all identified students on this date, which corresponds to the state count of learners with IEPs that is required by the Office of Special Education Programs.
- **Project Webpage***:* The CDE DeafBlind webpage URL is http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-DB.asp
- **Project Trainings:** Thanks to Susanne Morrow for a wonderful two-day June Summer Institute on Deaf-Blindness with over 40 participants, representing a child with deaf-blindness on their IFSP or IEF Team. An 8-part webinar series has been planned for the 2026-27 school year with a variety of topics: child identification, resources, behavior, strengths-based assessment and programming, shared reading, hidden senses, literacy, and working with families. The dates, topics, and registration information is posted in the Keeping in Touch Newsletter and has been sent out in calendar invites to Colorado TVIs. Plans for the June 2027 Summer Institute are currently underway.

BLV 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 families of professionals serving children who are blind/low vision, including CVI.

- 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 note the requirement that a TVI must have taken their university-level braille course or have evidence of another form of significant self-study before taking the CDE Braille Competency Test the first time. 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.

Tanni maintains close records on the status of braille competency of our TVIs. There was some great forward movement over the summer months. There have been a number of TVI and braillists who have recently demonstrated braille competency or completed the required renewal modules. While the latter s is not required by CDE, it is wonderful to see this commitment.

- All of the CDE documents on braille competency were updated over the summer. Thanks to Nancy Cozart and Chris Maynard for their assistance to Tanni on this project.

- CDE State Conference on Blindness/Low Vision / CVI: This year's conference will be held on October 8-9 on the topic of *CVI and AAC: Collaborate, Individualize, Amplify* with Sylvia Mangan. It is open to CO TVIs and one SLP from Anchor Center / AUs.

- CDE/CSDB Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics: The full team is back for another year of Low Vision Evaluation Clinics. We are missing Western Region this year and will be back for the Northern, Southern and Metro Clinics. The team includes Drs. Kara Hanson and David Smith, certified low vision therapists Jim Olson and Erika Andersen Ko, and state coordinator Krista Berkey. Clinic paperwork will be disseminated to late September for the first two clinics. TVIs are expected to attend with their student(s). The clinics are for Colorado public school students with low vision and who have an active IEP. The clinics are not designed for students with CVI.

- Sound Bites*:* Sound Bites are monthly virtual training / dialogue sessions based on identified topics of needs. There will be 9 Sound Bites this school year! For details check the KIT Calendar of Events. Calendar invites have been sent to all of the TVIs.

- CDE O&M Seminar: This dates, topics, and presenter are in process. Contact Tanni with ideas!

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

- *Keeping in Touch* Newsletter: The August—September 2026 has been disseminated. Remaining newsletter will include, October 2026, November-December 2026, and January – February 2027, and March – May 2027 editions. KIT newsletters have been posted on the CDE BLV website. TVIs, be sure to share the email messages with the newsletter link with parents, district braillists, and paraeducators.

- Recruitment and Retention: Colorado still has TVI / COMS openings, but the vacancies have improved markedly. Thanks for to our TVI / COMS contractors for assisting with many of the smaller FTE vacancies and there were a few new TVIs to the state who have filled full0time vacancies. There is an important

opportunity with UNC right now at reduced tuition rates. We have a new Job Board that Krista Berkey designed and will maintaining. Please share any expected vacancies with Krista B. at Berkey_k@cde.state.co.us so we can be as proactive as possible with recruitment needs. Here is the link to the BLV job board

- Tanni would like to know about people coming up for retirement. Contract TVI and O&M staff are needed in several AUs. 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.

Agenda Items for Discussion

CDE Blindness/Low Vision Approved Budget for 2026-2027

The following activities are slated for funding requests:

- ✓ Braille Competency Testing / Mentor Support
- ✓ CDE O&M Seminar
- ✓ CDE State Conference on Blindness / Low Vision (focus on science)
- ✓ Paraeducator Toolkit
- ✓ CIMC Interagency Agreement
- ✓ Blindness/Low Vision Coalition (no costs but an approved activity)
- ✓ Regional Low Vision Evaluation Clinics
- ✓ Sound Bites (monthly virtual trainings)

Discussion Items

Paraprofessional Training: We thank our paraeducator team. Donna Keale and Nancy Cozart provided the southern region training to great reviews. The northern and metro regions are coming up in September. There will be further discussion on whether there will be more training sites added.

Exceptional Children Education Act (ECEA) Rules: The rules will soon be open for public comment per proposed revisions. Tanni will send them out when they are ready.

Referral Process: Michelle Chacon raised the issue of what administrative units are using for a referral process for students suspected as having a visual impairment, including blindness. A subgroup of Michelle, Anitha, and Abby volunteered to review existing protocols to bring back recommendations to the Blindness/Low Vision Coalition's January 2027 meeting. Anitha shared there is one with Douglas County and Jonathon helped developed one in Iowa.

Dates for School Year 2026-27:

- January 20, 2027
- April 28, 2027

Colorado Connections



- Braille Competency: Hats off to TVI Jessica Hank of NW BOCES and Anchor Center for Blind Children for earning her CDE Renewal CDE Braille Competency Certificate. Hats off to **Gina Francouer Anderson, Jessica Hank** and **Chris Kinney** for completing braille renewal modules over the summer months.
- Thanks to **Nancy Cozart, Chris Maynard, Brenda Shepard,** and **Julie Wetzstein** for their proctoring and mentoring work. Thanks also to **Jo Pinto** for braille proofreading work!

- If you are a new in-person or virtual TVI to a Colorado administrative unit have not demonstrated braille competency yet this school year, please reach out to Tanni to learn more and secure an immediate testing date. Thank you to everyone for keeping our standards for braille competency high!

Personnel Updates

✓ Congratulations to **Dr. Debbie Mendoza**, who has been appointed to the CSDB Board of Trustees. Debbie is a TVI / COMS with Adams 12 School District and an adjunct instructor with the UNC VI Program.

✓ Welcome to **Allie Rubin**, who us working for Denver Public School District. She earned her undergraduate degree at Tulane University in Early Childhood Education and Psychology and then attended the University of Denver for a master's degree in early childhood special education (ECSE). She has taught in Denver Public Schools as an ECSE since 2019 and is now hired (on a temporary license) as a TVI within the district. This summer Allie got engaged and used her summer break to plan the majority of her wedding that will be happening in Crested Butte in July 2027. Big career change, back to graduate school, and planning a wedding this year! She notes that she is just a little busy! So thrilled to have Allie on board as a TVI-in-training!

✓ Also welcome to **Sarah Renbjor**, who is now working in Johnstown Milliken School District. She is a native Floridian and new to Colorado. Her entire professional career has been involved with education in some way, shape or form. She started in childcare after high school, leading her into college where she found a satellite program with Florida State University and graduated with her master's degree in late 2021. Sarah completed her internship through Pinellas County Schools and was immediately added to the team of 20! Ther team had 15 TVI Teachers and 5 O&M specialists! She became one of the O&M specialists on the team and learned to love that side of instruction. She and her finance moved to Colorado recently. Sarah shares that she has never truly experienced seasons, OR SNOW, and is reeling in the new of it all. Right now, life just carries her, her fiancée, Dan, and their tuxedo cat, Tato. Sarah notes, "Thank you all for the warm welcome so far. Colorado has been a dream so far and I hope I get to live on this cloud as long as I can." Welcome to Colorado, Sarah!