

# Spring 2026 Convention Issue



## Visual Impairment and Deafblind Education Quarterly

Volume 71, Issue 2

The Voice and Vision of Special Education



Cover photo description: The cover photo is of the DVIDB Executive Board Members at the DVIDB social at Salt & Olive in Salt Lake City, Utah on March 12, 2026. A long DVIDB banner is in the center with four females standing on the left-hand side and three females and one male standing on the right-hand side of the banner smiling. White glass windows are in the background.

Photo submitted by: Karen Koehler

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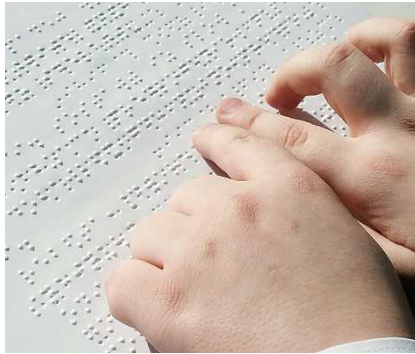
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## ***Back to School Issue***

*Visual Impairment and Deafblind  
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Email your manuscripts to  
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# Message from the Editor

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Welcome to the Spring issue of the *Visual Impairment and DeafBlind Education Quarterly* journal! This issue showcases two articles from presentations at the CEC 2026 Special Education Convention & EXPO from March of 2026 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The first article, by Drs. Ericson and Savaiano, is focused on addressing workload management for itinerant special educators. This article is unique in that most previous research has considered caseload management instead of workload management. The second article, by Drs. Redford, Clark-Bischke, and

Herzberg provides practical strategies for those in the field teaching mathematics using UEB math/science and Nemeth code. This article is amazing in that it provides those supporting students with low vision or blindness in math braille instruction with resources and strategies for teaching the math braille code.

The rest of the issue focuses on recognizing amazing people making an impact in the field of vision. Five people were recognized with DVIDB awards for 2026. Dr. Katie Ericson was awarded the 2026 DVIDB Deborah Hatton Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award, for her dissertation titled *Improving Feedback for Itinerant Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments*. Dr. Saurym Quezada was awarded the 2026 DVIDB Virginia M. Sowell Student of the Year award for her dedication, excellence, and scholarship while a doctoral student at Florida State University in the field of visual impairment and deafblind education. Spencer Churchill was awarded the 2026 DVIDB Teacher of the Year Award for his dedication, knowledge, and skill as a teacher of students with visual impairments and orientation and mobility specialist working with students in the state of Arizona and internationally. Katrina Dubree received the 2026 DVIDB Exemplary Advocate Award for her exemplary leadership and commitment to the field of visual impairments. Lastly, Rosel Dalisay received the 2026 DVIDB Distinguished Service Award for her service as a special educator, advocate, mentor, and partner to families in the field of vision.

The issue concludes with two additional award winners for 2026. Kelly Wilson was awarded the 2026 CEC Special Educator Rising Star Award for her amazing contributions as a teacher of students with visual impairments in her first five years of teaching. Dr. Karen Koehler, DVIDB treasurer, received the 2026 Board of Trustees Distinguished Teaching Award at Shawnee State University, for her contributions in supporting student engagement, teaching excellence, and impact in higher education. Congratulations to all the award winners making a difference across the country and abroad in the field of vision!

Are you working on something in the field of visual impairments and deafblindness that you would like to share with our members? Email me ([Kathleen.Farrand@asu.edu](mailto:Kathleen.Farrand@asu.edu)) for more information and to submit an article for the Summer Back-to-School issue by July 20, 2026.

The 2027 CEC Convention in Columbus, Ohio, call for proposals is open and submissions are due by June 1, 2026. Please consider submitting a proposal on your work in the field of visual impairments and deafblindness. [Submit](#) your proposal today.

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# President's Message

**Beth A. Jones,**

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Thank you for a very successful Preconference Webinar and Council for Exceptional Children conference in Salt Lake City in March. This issue features some of the great work that was shared at Convention; DVIDB had over 20 presentations and posters from leaders in our field. Our preconference featured Dr. Donna Clemens and Dr. Belinda Rudinger who presented on AI for Practitioners and Dr. Tiffany Wild who spoke about Accessible Science Education.

Additionally, we had a fabulous social event at Convention where we got to honor our awardees that were in attendance. Lee Sonnenberg, Executive Director of AER was also in attendance. Thank you to AER for being a Gold Level Sponsor! Our other sponsors included Allied Instructional Services (Gold), American Printing House, Accessibyte, Shawnee State University, and the Braille Institute (silver). Our university sponsors were Texas Tech College of Education and San Francisco State University.

In March, we also held a virtual awards ceremony for our annual award winners. I'd like to recognize them once again here:

- Deborah D. Hatton Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award, Dr. Katie Ericson
- Distinguished Service Award, Rosel Dalisay
- Teacher of the Year Award, Spencer Churchill
- Virginia M. Sowell Student of the Year Award, Dr. Saurym Quezada
- Exemplary Advocate Award, Katrina Dubree

Stay tuned for upcoming webinars and make sure to get in your proposals for next year's CEC Convention in Ohio. The Call for Proposals will be open from May 1-June 1, 2026. We would love to hear about the great work you are doing!

# ONE COMMUNITY ONE VOICE

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is a professional membership organization dedicated to empowering vision professionals who provide services for individuals with vision loss. AER promotes and supports professionals through education, training, and advocacy and helps build a community where members can connect, collaborate, and grow. Visit us online at [www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org).

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# Workload Management for Itinerant Special Educators

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**Target audience:** TSVIs, O&M specialists, administrators

“It’s a lot.” -Participant

With an ongoing shortage of teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs), orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists, and dual-certified professionals working in both roles, these professionals are often tasked with serving high numbers of students with diverse needs. As such, administrators often adopt a caseload approach when assigning students to teachers, a model that considers only the number of students who require special education or related services (Meador, 2015). For example, if a district employs two TSVIs/O&M specialists and there are a total of 36 students who require special education

services, each TSVI/O&M specialist could serve 18 students. In the past, TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dual-certified professionals have consistently reported serving caseloads of 1-100 students; and over time, the average caseload has been approximately 20 students (Hebert & Savaiano, 2021; Meador, 2015; Zebehazy et al., 2023). While the number of students served is an important figure, it does not capture all of what a TSVI and/or O&M specialist must do to meet student needs.

However, a workload approach accounts for not only the number of students, but also their supplementary needs and the additional work (or job responsibilities) needed to meet those needs (AOTA/APTA/ASHA, 2014; Wilton, 2017). In recent years, researchers and professional groups have advocated for a workload approach, rather than a caseload approach, as this accounts for the full range of a TSVI's and/or O&M specialist's responsibilities, such as materials preparation, travel, and meetings (AOTA/APTA/ASHA, 2014; Ericson et al., 2024). However, most researchers have considered caseloads, rather than workloads. Therefore, we asked:

1. What job responsibilities did TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dual-certified professionals report engaging in during the 2023-2024 school year?
2. What workload factors were associated with professionals' perceptions of manageability?

## **Method**

To answer these questions, we created a survey comprised of three sections. The first section consisted of demographic and contextual questions first written and used by Rosenblum et al. (2020) and analyzed again in Zebehazy et al. (2023). The second section asked professionals to specify (in percentages) the time they spent weekly on direct instruction, consultation, lesson planning, materials preparation (including braille), data collection, team/staff meetings, and travel. These percentages had to total 100%. The third section featured questions regarding student-specific activities (e.g., participation in staff professional development), including how often these activities occurred each year and how much time they spent completing these responsibilities. Questions in the second and third sections were based on the job responsibilities listed in the Visual Impairments Scale of Staffing Pattern Analysis (VISSPA; Poggrund et al., 2024). To conclude, we asked participants whether they felt their workload was manageable or unmanageable and why.

### **Data Collection**

After receiving approval from the University of Nebraska - Lincoln Institutional Review Board, we sent the survey link via email to moderators of state and territory-level listservs for TSVIs and O&M specialists. When a state or territory did not have such a listserv, the email was sent to other state, territory, or agency-level contacts for distribution. An exact number of TSVIs, O&M

specialists, and dual-certified professionals who received the link could not be determined, as many listserv moderators did not know how many subscribers they had. The survey link was sent to moderators and other contacts in March 2024; it remained open for 11 weeks, with a reminder email sent out after four weeks, and it was closed in June 2024. One hundred ninety-five participants started the survey, and our sample represented 183 respondents.

### **Key Findings**

Most participants were White (90.2%), female (88.5%) TSVIs (62.3%), working full time in their role (93.4%). The average total caseload across roles was 21 students ( $n=168$ ). Across roles, professionals reported providing direct instruction to an average of 13 students ( $n=168$ ). Participant demographics and caseload numbers were in line with previous research findings (Burgin et al., 2022; Correa-Torres & Durando, 2011; Zebehazy et al., 2023).

Participants reported spending most of their time providing direct instruction to students ( $M=37.66\%$ ; see Table 1). However, they spent the next greatest amount of time in travel between sites. Of note, only 34% of participants received dedicated planning time. Similarly, 71% of participants had a duty-free lunch, and of those, only 62% took their duty-free lunch regularly. Based on these results, a caseload approach captures what takes up the most time for itinerant TSVIs and

O&M specialists (i.e., direct instruction), but it does not capture all of what these professionals are and should be doing.

**Table 1**

*Participant Demographics*

	Total Responses (N = 183)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	90.2% (n=165)
Male	8.7% (n=165)
<b>Race</b>	
White	88.5% (n=162)
Asian	2.7% (n=5)
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.5% (n=1)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1.6% (n=3)
Black or African American	1.6% (n=3)
Other	1.6% (n=3)
Prefer Not to Say	1.6% (n=3)
More Than One Race	1.6% (n=3)
<b>Role</b>	
TSVI	62.3% (n=114)
O&M Specialist	9.8% (n=18)
Dual-Certified, working in both roles	27.9% (n=51)
<b>Current Employment Status</b>	
Full-time	93.4% (n=171)
Part-time	6.6% (n=12)

We also asked participants about the amount of time they spent annually in student-specific activities (see Table 2). Participants spent the most time in IEP/IFSP meetings (on average 7-10 times per year), and they noted that these meetings occurred throughout the school year. They spent the least amount of time attending medical appointments with students and families (on average not doing

this at all). We then provided participants the opportunity to share other responsibilities they engaged in that were not captured in our lists. These responsibilities varied by site and role and included but were not limited to: serving on recess or lunch duty, planning and working with short term programs and/or special events (e.g., Space Camp, Braille Challenge), and parent-teacher meetings.

**Table 2**

*Percentage of time spent in general job responsibilities*

	N	Mean (%)	Range
Direct instruction	150	37.66	(1-75)
Consultation	150	13.63	(0-55)
Lesson planning	150	8.59	(0-30)
Materials preparation	150	10.52	(0-50)
Data collection	150	8.33	(0-40)
Team meetings	150	6.15	(0-30)
Travel	150	15.12	(0-48)

Our survey concluded by asking participants if they felt their workload was currently manageable or unmanageable and why they felt that way. Most participants (75%) across roles felt that their workload was manageable. However, the open-ended feedback we received revealed a more nuanced picture. Several participants noted that their workload fluctuated, and their response reflected one moment in time. As one participant observed, “We have hired more people recently so right now it is manageable. Earlier in the year, it was not when we were down multiple people. Every year fluctuates.”

Others revealed that, despite describing their workload as manageable, they required additional (personal) time to complete all their job responsibilities. “I am able to meet the needs of my students and the duties at my job \*mostly\* during my work hours, though meetings, report writing and IEP writing must be written during my personal time,” shared one participant. Another wrote, “[It’s] manageable because I just donate more of my personal time as needed to keep up with my job.”

Those who felt their workload was unmanageable shared similar explanations. “I manage it, and I feel like I do a good job. I would still consider it unmanageable only because I never have the time to actually lesson plan and develop lessons.” Several participants listed the many tasks they were responsible for, summarizing their workload by writing, “It’s entirely too much,” and “It’s a lot.”

We also examined the relationships between workload factors and perceived manageability (displayed in Table 3). Those educators who spent more time in professional development meetings were less likely to perceive their workload as manageable. Interestingly, the presence of a state policy regarding caseload did not directly correlate with perceived manageability; however, those working in a state with a caseload policy were significantly more likely to have lower caseloads.

**Table 3***Time spent on other student-related responsibilities*

	N	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Range
Requesting/managing equipment	149	2.42	(0-4)
Providing technical assistance	148	2.57	(0-4)
Completing evaluations	147	2.57	(0-4)
Attending IFSP/IEP meetings	147	3.73	(0-4)
Attending professional development	147	2.23	(0-4)
Attending other meetings	146	2.56	(0-4)
Attending medical appointments	146	.48	(0-4)

<sup>a</sup> 0 = not at all; 1 = 1-3 times; 2 = 4-6 times; 3 = 7-10 times; 4 = 10+ times per year

The survey responses indicate that itinerant TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dual-certified professionals adopt different strategies to address their job responsibilities. Based on the results, it seems that many educators sacrifice data documentation, lesson planning, and/or personal time to prioritize direct instruction and collaboration. Additionally, results suggest that perceived workload manageability is highly subjective. However, the use of workload analysis tools can support these professionals in developing more equitable workloads.

### **Recommendations**

- Administrators should receive further training regarding the job responsibilities of TSVIs and O&M specialists and their students' needs, as they often lack knowledge of and experience working with students with blindness/low vision.

- Advocacy by TSVIs, O&M specialists, dual-certified professionals, and their administrators remains essential. TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dual-certified professionals should work with their administrators to adopt a workload approach.
- Administrators can and should help TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dual-certified professionals advocate at the state and national level for adoption of a workload approach and for manageable workloads.
- TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dual-certified professionals should consider documenting their time spent in job responsibilities using available workload analysis tools (e.g., the *Visual Impairment Scale of Staffing Pattern Analysis, or VISSPA*).
- To address inequitable workloads, TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dual-certified specialists should use appropriate strategies to manage workloads, including, but not limited to: shifting job responsibilities among team members; using alternative scheduling strategies (e.g., clustering or group lessons); attending meetings or lesson virtually; hiring additional help; and/or using paid preparation time before the start of the school year (Pogrund et al., 2024).

While a caseload approach provides a straightforward way for administrators to address staffing needs, it does not fully account for students' needs or the full job responsibilities of TSVIs and O&M specialists.

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# Practical Strategies for Teaching Mathematics Using UEB Math/Science and Nemeth Code

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**Target Audience:** This article is intended for teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs), university preparation faculty, families, and other IEP team members supporting students who are blind or have low vision in math braille instruction.

Teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs), families of children who are blind or have low vision, and other members of individualized education program (IEP) teams are often faced with a challenging question: Which math braille code is the most appropriate for the student?

Since the adoption of Unified English Braille (UEB) in 2016, the options for math braille instruction have changed significantly. Although UEB was intended to

create greater consistency across braille use, the decision to retain the Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation (Nemeth Code) resulted in two official math braille codes being used in practice. While this decision has provided flexibility to braille readers, it has also led to ongoing confusion for TSVIs, families, and other IEP team members when determining the most appropriate math braille code for individual students (Braille Authority of North America [BANA], 2015).

Research has cited challenges related to preservice TSVI training, access to TSVI resources and student resources/materials, and overall TSVI confidence when working with math braille (Herzberg & Rosenblum, 2022; Hong et al., 2017). Many TSVIs report having stronger confidence in teaching Nemeth Code compared to UEB Math/Science while others report not knowing either math braille code (Redford et al., 2026). As a result, TSVIs report differences in state guidance and ongoing barriers related to materials and professional support, which may influence students' access to consistent and effective math braille instruction (Redford et al.).

Despite these challenges, students who are blind or have low vision can successfully learn mathematics using either code. The goal is not to prioritize one code over another, but to support informed, individualized decision-making. By bringing more awareness to and providing information on available resources for

learning either or both codes, TSVIs, families, and other IEP team members can create more consistent and effective learning experiences for students. The remainder of this report describes practical strategies and resources to support TSVIs, families, and other IEP team members in making informed decisions, participating in training, and accessing informational resources.

## **Strategies for Educational Settings and Home Environments**

### ***1. IEP Teams Should Utilize Individualized Decision-Making***

*Avoid defaulting to preferences.*

When determining which math braille code is most appropriate for a student, IEP teams should base decisions on the individual student's needs rather than relying on teacher familiarity or perceived state defaults. This includes considering the student's current and future mathematical demands, cognitive and learning characteristics, access to instructional materials, and long-term academic and career goals. Teams should also consider the student's proficiency with braille, the availability of instructional supports, and the potential impact of each code on the student's independence and efficiency.

*Use established guidance tools.*

Guidance documents developed by states such as Indiana and Pennsylvania can support teams in evaluating the advantages and limitations of each code (Indiana UEB Implementation Sub-Committee, 2015; Pennsylvania Training and

Technical Assistance Network [PaTTAN], 2023). Using these resources can help teams move beyond preference-based decisions.

## ***2. Strengthen Professional Competency in Both Codes***

*Engage in ongoing professional development.*

Limited training is one of many factors that influences teacher confidence and instructional decision-making (Hong et al., 2017). TSVIs should actively and consistently seek opportunities to build fluency in both math braille codes through regular practice, professional development, collaboration with other professionals, and application with real instructional materials. This may include setting aside time each week to practice reading and writing math braille, working through examples from current student materials, and engaging in collaborative problem-solving with colleagues. TSVIs, families and other IEP team members can access free, widely available resources such as BANA guidelines, codebooks and publications, and online training modules to build their knowledge and skills. In addition, tactual items are available from several entities that can be used as resources for students who are blind or have low vision.

*Collaborate with colleagues and mentors.*

TSVIs who feel less confident in their braille knowledge and skills should seek support from experienced colleagues and university faculty. Collaboration across the IEP can also improve understanding and implementation.

### ***3. Ensure Consistent and Accessible Classroom Implementation***

*Provide timely access to materials.*

All students must have access to textbooks, instructional materials, and assessments in their selected math braille code before instruction begins. Delays in their access can significantly limit participation and impact learning outcomes.

*Explicitly teach code-switching when necessary.*

For students using Nemeth Code, direct instruction in using switch indicators is essential. TSVIs should model when and why switching occurs and provide repeated opportunities for students to participate in guided practice. TSVIs who are unsure of how to teach these indicators or implement code switching should seek information within available resources and participate in professional learning opportunities.

*Promote consistency across providers.*

All members of the educational team should be aware of the student's selected math braille code and use it consistently across settings. TSVIs should ensure that families and other IEP team members understand the importance of generalizing braille skills and the implications of inconsistent use. Classroom teachers and other professionals may be unsure how to incorporate braille into instruction. TSVIs should provide team members with quick reference materials and model braille use to support student access to braille.

#### ***4. Build Systems for Ongoing Support***

*Develop shared expectations at the district level.*

Districts can promote consistency for both students and educators by establishing clear expectations for math braille code instruction and timelines for accessible material production. Collaboration between district leaders and TSVIs can support informed decision-making and reduce variability across schools.

*Ensure access to qualified transcribers.*

TSVIs may benefit from access to a qualified braille transcriber. TSVIs might consider advocating for reliable transcription and effectively communicating how such services can support the accuracy, efficiency, and consistency in student braille materials.

#### ***5. Support Learning in the Home and Community***

*Educate families about math braille options.*

Families play a critical role in the IEP process and should be provided with clear, accessible explanations of the advantages and limitations of both UEB Math/Science and Nemeth Code. As active members of the IEP team, they should be meaningfully involved in decisions about their student's math braille code.

*Encourage communication between home and school.*

Strong communication between home and school is essential for maintaining consistency and supporting skill development. TSVIs should share student

progress updates regularly and provide practical tools such as reference guides or “cheat sheets” to help families reinforce braille learning at home and in their communities. Additionally, TSVIs should model ways to incorporate braille into daily routines to support ongoing use and skill development.

### **Resources**

Numerous resources exist to support the development of math braille knowledge and instructional practices. These include guidance documents, professional learning opportunities, and reference materials intended to enhance understanding of UEB Math/Science and Nemeth Code and to inform instructional decision-making. Table 1 provides a curated list of resources to support TSVIs, families and other IEP team members in advancing math braille instruction and access.

### **Conclusion**

The coexistence of two math braille codes, UEB Math/Science and Nemeth Code, presents both opportunities and challenges for the field of visual impairment. While variability across states and IEP teams exists, these challenges can be addressed by increasing awareness of the tools, resources, and guidance available for teaching and learning math braille. As professionals working to support students, we must prioritize individualized decision-making within IEP teams, build competency in both math braille codes, ensure consistent access to materials

for braille learners, and engage in ongoing collaboration to provide high-quality instruction. The end goal is not to prioritize one code over another, but to ensure that every student has equitable access to mathematics.

**Table 1**

*Resources for Learning and Teaching Math Braille Skills*

Resource	Description	Intended Use
Nemeth Code: Codebooks and Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">The Nemeth Braille Code for Mathematics and Science Notation (2022)</a>;</li> <li>● <a href="#">Nemeth Braille Code Errata (2025)</a>;</li> <li>● <a href="#">Chemical Notation Using the Nemeth Braille Code (2023)</a>;</li> <li>● <a href="#">Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics (2022)</a>;</li> <li>● <a href="#">Learning and Teaching the Nemeth Code within UEB Contexts: A Step-by-Step Guide; Nemeth at a Glance: A Math Resource, Grade Level Chart, and Evaluation Tool (2017)</a>;</li> <li>● <a href="#">Graphing Calculator Guidelines (2018)</a>;</li> </ul>	Official BANA guidelines and supporting materials for accurate transcription and instruction in Nemeth Code to be used for accurate transcription and instruction.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Nemeth Reference Sheets from the National Braille Press</a></li> </ul>	
Unified English Braille: Codebooks and Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Graphing Calculator Guidelines for Transcription Using Unified English Braille (2024)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Provisional Guidance for Transcribing Mathematics in Unified English Braille (2019)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Rules of Unified English Braille (2024)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Unified English Braille Guidelines for Technical Material (2014)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Unified English Braille Guidelines for Technical Material: Grade 1 Indicators (2025)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Unified English Braille Guidelines for Technical Material: Signs of Operation and Comparison (2018)</a></li> </ul>	Official BANA and ICEB guidelines and supporting materials for accurate transcription and instruction in UEB Math/Science.
Online Training and Tutorials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">American Printing House for the Blind Nemeth Tutorial</a>;</li> </ul>	Self-paced modules and interactive tutorials for

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">American Printing House for the Blind Unified English Braille Tutorial</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Braille Brain (Unified English Braille Foundation, Unified English Braille Advanced, Nemeth Code modules)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Canadian National Institute for the Blind Technical Course (2023)</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, Library of Congress, the National Federation of the Blind: Mathematics Braille Transcribing Course (UEB Course Coming soon)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Unified English Braille Online</a></li> </ul>	<p>building foundational and advanced math braille skills to support TSVI learning and student instruction</p>
Instructional Materials and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">American Printing House for the Blind (APH) materials and resources</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Project INSPIRE modules and materials</a></li> </ul>	<p>Materials and tools to support math braille instruction and student learning</p>
Professional Learning and Collaboration	Professional organizations	Ongoing professional development, collaboration, and

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- [Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired \(AER\)](#) access to current practices in math braille instruction
  - [National Federation of the Blind \(NFB\)](#)

Conferences, workshops, webinars, and professional networking opportunities (every other year)

- [Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired \(AER\)](#);
  - [Getting in Touch with Literacy \(GITWL\)](#);
  - [National Federation of the Blind \(NFB\)](#)
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math/science and UEB with Nemeth: A guidance document for IEP teams.

<https://www.pattan.net/Publications/UEB-MathScience-and-UEB-with->

[Nemeth-A-Guidance-Doc](https://www.pattan.net/Publications/UEB-MathScience-and-UEB-with-Nemeth-A-Guidance-Doc)



## Online Learning

Typing & learning apps — accessible & cloud-based.



## Studio for Windows

All-in-one productivity hub — built-in accessibility.

# Deborah D. Hatton Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award: Dr. Katie Ericson

**Nominated by Mackenzie Savaiano**



Dr. Katie Ericson's dissertation, *Improving Feedback for Itinerant Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments*, honors the legacy of Dr. Hatton's dedication to scholarship and represents a commitment to excellence. Dr. Ericson received her

Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln in May of 2025.

According to Dr. Savaiano, “Dr. Ericson’s dissertation addresses a critical and often overlooked need in our field: ensuring that itinerant professionals receive high-quality, actionable feedback that strengthens instructional practices and outcomes for students.” Through her dissertation she utilized qualitative methods with an innovative feedback model to advance the current research base as well as implications for working professionals and their supervisors to improve outcomes for teachers and students with visual impairments.

Congratulations to Dr. Katie Ericson on the 2026 CEC Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness Deborah Hatton Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award!



# CONNECTCENTER

Connecting the vision loss community to a world of resources

**The APH ConnectCenter offers FREE curated advice and resources to assist children, parents, adults, and job seekers who are blind or low vision, and their associated professionals.**

Through the [APH ConnectCenter](#) website, you are able to access these ConnectCenter resources, and much more:

- **APH Information & Referral Hotline:** One of our experienced representatives can provide free information on virtually any topic related to visual impairment and blindness. Call toll-free (800) 232-5463 or e-mail us at [connectcenter@aph.org](mailto:connectcenter@aph.org).
- **For Families:** Find support and resources for families of children who are blind or low vision.
- **For Job Seekers & Employers:** Find employment information, tools, and guidance for job seekers who are blind or low vision or for employers who work with individuals who are blind or low vision.
- **VisionAware:** Designed for adults and seniors who are living with vision loss.
- **ConnectCalendar:** For use by the entire blindness field to find and promote events, all in one place. [Promote and share](#) your organization's event by adding it to the Calendar or [discover upcoming events](#).
- **APH ConnectCenter Transition Hub:** Planning for graduation and life after school brings up a lot of questions. Find information about transition programs that emphasize empowerment, career exploration, and work experiences for teens and young adults who are blind or low vision.



**ConnectCenter**  
for Families



**ConnectCenter**  
for Job Seekers and Employers



**VisionAware™**  
For independent living with vision loss

# Virginia M. Sowell Student of the Year Award: Saurym Quezada

**Nominated by Michael Tuttle**



Dr. Saurym Quezada's scholarship, teaching, and service demonstrate her commitment to supporting individuals with visual impairments and deafblindness as a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Instruction program, majoring in special education, at Florida State University (FSU).

During her time at FSU, she has led research projects and writing efforts, as well as a strong dedication to service and teaching. She volunteered in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom to support a student with visual impairments and their teacher in developing strategies for success in accessing the math curriculum. She was the 2025 TED Publications Award for a literature review she wrote, was awarded a grant from the Organization for Autism Research and has published in the *Visual Impairment and Deafblind Education Quarterly* journal. For her service to the field, she has served as the former student representative and current director for CEC's Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness. She also had an internship with the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Special Education Programs, Research to Practice division, where she helped work on Visual Disabilities and Deaf education data and policies.

Congratulations to Dr. Saurym Quezada on the 2026 CEC Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness Virginia M. Sowell Student of the Year Award!

# Join the Braille Challenge Movement!

Over the last 26 years, Braille Challenge has become a worldwide movement. As the only academic program of its kind for students in grades 1-12 who are blind and visually impaired, the program has motivated students to practice and hone their braille literacy skills, which are essential to academic achievement, career opportunities, and lifelong independence.



41

U.S.  
States

5

Canadian  
Provinces

6

Countries &  
Growing

60+

Regional  
Competitions

23K+

Students & Families  
impacted

## Getting involved is easy!

### *Interested in your student participating?*

- Find a regional near you and sign up! If none are nearby, 1:1 proctoring is available.
- Order Foundational Materials free of charge, year-round.

### *If you would like to host:*

- Partner: Connect with Braille Institute and sign a regional agreement to become an official host.
- Plan: Form a planning committee, set your date, and organize logistics.
- Program: Recruit students and volunteers, then host your program and celebrate literacy!

For more information, contact us at  
[BrailleChallenge@brailleinstitute.org](mailto:BrailleChallenge@brailleinstitute.org) or visit  
[BrailleChallenge.org](http://BrailleChallenge.org).



## Desafío Braille

The Spanish-language Braille Challenge  
- reaching even more students in their preferred language.

All of our services are **FREE**, thanks to generous donors.

Whether a student is new to braille or already building strong skills, together we can make braille literacy a movement that reaches every student, everywhere.

# Teacher of the Year Award: Spencer Churchill

**Nominated by Katie Ericson**



Spencer Churchill is a teacher of students with visual impairments and a certified orientation and mobility specialist serving students with diverse backgrounds in the state of Arizona and internationally. He has served as a member of AER's International Services and Global Issue Division where he coordinated a scholarship program for international university students working to serve individuals with low vision and blindness. He has also worked to provide quality instruction for students with low vision and blindness, creating experiences

to extend learning beyond the classroom, such as teaching 12 teenagers to sail the Caribbean in 2018, and as a coordinator for a summer college preparatory program through the state of Arizona.

Congratulations to Spencer Churchill on the 2026 CEC Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness Teacher of the Year Award!

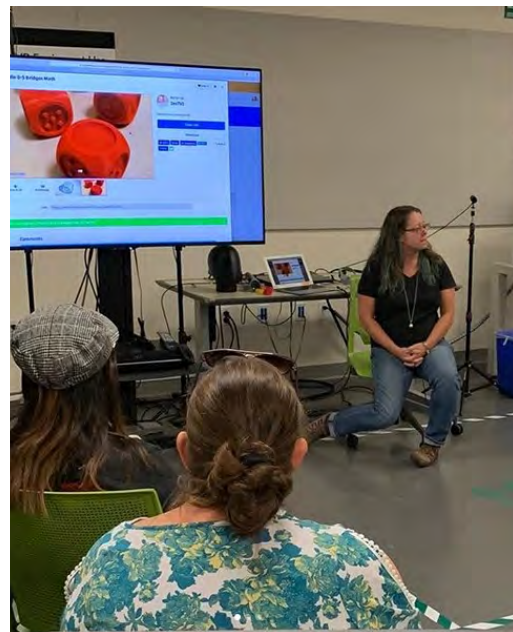


### **The Education Specialist Credential Program in Visual Impairment (VI)**

prepares highly qualified educators to teach and empower a diverse range of blind and low vision students aged birth to 22 and their families. Our program prepares educators to bridge current evidence-based literature with practice-orientated instructional strategies that are focused on promoting students' access to core and expanded core curriculum areas, while emphasizing barrier-free membership in school, home, and community settings. We commit to exercising culturally responsive pedagogy as aligned with principles of anti-racism and anti-ableism. Candidates are expected to demonstrate skills in working with an array of professionals as well as families in order to facilitate learner participation and growth within the context of their educational experience.

#### **Graduates from our program:**

- Demonstrate competence in assessment and instruction to promote functional literacy in braille, print and auditory methodologies
- Have skills in collaborating with an array of professionals as well as families  
In order to facilitate learner participation and growth
- Participate in field assignments that include diverse populations, and issues related to the effects of cultural and linguistic differences
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding the effects of adventitious and congenital visual impairments as well as the impact of various conditions on learning and development



**For more information, please contact:**

Dr. Adam Graves: [adamgraves@sfsu.edu](mailto:adamgraves@sfsu.edu)

## Exemplary Advocate Award: Katrina Dubree

**Nominated by Hilary Travers, Michele Shutz, and Emily Lanchak**



Katrina Dubree is a champion for accessibility rights and someone who continues to leave a lasting impact on the field. She has engaged in sustained accessibility advocacy with national partners, technology developers, and higher education institutions. She is also a valuable member of project *EMPOWERing Youth with Visual Impairment*, a federally funded initiative dedicated to supporting transition-aged youth who are blind or have low vision.

According to her nominators, “Katrina embodies the spirit of this recognition through her tireless commitment to ensuring that individuals who are blind or have low vision have equitable access to information, education, and rehabilitation services.”

Congratulations to Katrina Dubree on the 2026 CEC Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness Exemplary Advocate Award!

# ATTENTION BLINDNESS AND LOW VISION PROFESSIONALS

Get Your Ducks in a Row to  
Join us at GITWL & AT 2027

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH LITERACY & AT 2027



**December 6-9, 2027**  
Long Beach, CA

# Distinguished Service Award: Rosel Dalisay

**Nominated by Kallie Black Eagle**



Rosel Dalisay holds a master's degree in early childhood education, a post-baccalaureate certificate in Special Education (K–12), and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Education with a major in Special Education. She is a licensed Special Education teacher in the state of Montana with over ten years of international teaching experience and a strong professional background in inclusive and early childhood education. She currently serves as a Special Education Teacher at Crow

Agency Public School under Hardin School District, where she supports students with diverse learning needs through individualized, student-centered instruction.

Building strong, trusting relationships with students is one of her greatest strengths and the foundation of her teaching practice. Rosel believes that meaningful learning begins with connection, and she intentionally creates a supportive, respectful, and nurturing environment where students feel safe, valued, and empowered to succeed both academically and socially.

According to Kallie Black Eagle she is, “more than a teacher- she is an advocate, mentor, and a partner to families.”

Congratulations to Rosel Dalisay on the 2026 CEC Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness Distinguished Service Award!

# Literacy Success For All

## 3rd Annual Online Language and Literacy Symposium

Friday, May 15, 2026  
9am-1pm PST/12-4pm EST



**Erin Campbell, Ph.D.**  
Research Assistant Professor  
Boston University Deaf Center  
Keynote Presentation: How vision,  
hearing, and language input shape  
toddlers' early language development



**Adam Graves, Ph.D.**  
VI Program Coordinator  
San Francisco State University  
Presentation: Including the Informal  
Functional Hearing Evaluation in  
Collaborative Assessment for  
DeafBlind Students



**Kristin Di Perri, Ed.D.**  
Boston University  
Presentation: Modality Matters:  
Accessible Language Pathways to  
Literacy for Deaf Students



**Amy Parker, Ed.D., COMS**  
Associate Professor  
Portland State University  
Presentation: Meaningful O&M  
Routines that Support Literacy for  
Students who are DeafBlind



**Christopher Brum, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor  
San Diego State University  
Presentation: Engaging Learners who  
are Deafblind in Meaningful Shared  
Reading Instructions

**Parent Panel: Supporting Students who are DeafBlind With Transition**

**REGISTER NOW!**

Cost:\$40.00

Format: Zoom & Canvas

ASL interpreter will be provided

**4 ACVREP CEUs Available**

Hosted by University of Massachusetts Boston Vision Studies, California State  
University  
Los Angeles, and Northeast Resource Center for Vision Education (NERCVE)



# CEC 2026 Rising Star Special Educator of the Year Award: Kelly Wilson

**Nominated by Joy Calles, Fred Hall, and Julie Oliver**



Kelly Wilson is a teacher of students with visual impairments at the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) in Phoenix, Arizona. The Rising Star Educator of the Year Award is given to a CEC member who is a special education teacher in their first five years of teaching.

In her role at FBC she has worn many hats, preschool teacher, itinerant TSVI providing services across Phoenix, AZ, and a teacher in the Saturday and summer Sports, Habilitation, Arts, and Recreation Program (SHARP). Her nominators recognize her kindness, professionalism, and ability to be a fierce advocate for students with visual impairments. According to Calles, Hall, and Oliver, “She approaches each day with kindness, enthusiasm, and an unwavering dedication to her students’ success.”

Congratulations to Kelly Wilson on the 2026 CEC Rising Star Special Educator of the Year Award!

## LOW INCIDENCE SENSORY DISABILITIES



## OHIO DEANS COMPACT LISD COLLABORATIVE

### GRADUATE PROGRAMS

#### **Intervention Specialist: Visually Impaired Licensure Program**

A 22-credit hour program offering graduate level coursework leading to licensure as a teacher of students with visual impairments (TSVI). The program is designed to be completed in one year and applicants must hold a valid Ohio teaching license. Coursework is mostly online with extensive face-to-face field and practicum experiences.

#### **Intervention Specialist: Hearing Impaired Licensure Program**

A graduate level, 24-credit hour program offering coursework leading to licensure as a teacher of the Deaf/hard of hearing. The program is designed to be completed in one year and applicants must hold a valid Ohio teaching license. Coursework is mostly online instruction with extensive face-to-face field experiences.

#### **Certificate in Deafblindness Education**

A graduate level, 15-credit hour program, leading to a certificate in Deafblind Education from Shawnee State University. This certificate will meet the post baccalaureate education needs of working professionals. The program courses provide in-depth knowledge of the needs of and supports for children with combined hearing-vision loss (also known as deafblindness) and is aligned with CEC standards for deafblindness

### UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

#### **Intervener Certificate Program**

A 30-credit hour program offering undergraduate level coursework leading to a Shawnee State issued Intervener Certificate. The Intervener Program is designed to be completed in two years. Applicants must meet the admission requirements at Shawnee State University. An intervener provides consistent one-to-one support to a student who is Deaf, blind or dual sensory impaired (ages 3 through 21) throughout the instructional day. Coursework is primarily completed in an online format, culminating with a field based practicum experience.

- Online Coursework through our Consortium partner institutions of higher education
- Field based practicum/internship experience
- Funding support provided by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, Office for Exceptional Children
- Aligned with Ohio Priorities
- Made possible with support of the Ohio Deans Compact and the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Gail Chinn**

[gchinn@shawnee.edu](mailto:gchinn@shawnee.edu) // 740.351.3571

**Shawnee State University**

940 Second Street // Portsmouth, OH 45662

## 2026 Board of Trustees Distinguished Teaching Award at Shawnee State University: Karen Koehler



Dr. Karen Koehler, associate professor in the School of Education at Shawnee State University, was awarded with the 2026 Board of Trustees

Distinguished Teaching Award on May 2, 2026, at the Shawnee State commencement ceremony.

Dr. Koehler's excellence in teaching is exemplified by her leadership roles in university programs, such as the TVI Consortium Program, Intervener Certificate Program, and Certificate in Deafblindness Education Program. She also demonstrates a commitment to service in her role as treasurer for CEC's Division on Visual Impairments and DeafBlindness, as well as a member of the Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children.

Congratulations to Dr. Karen Koehler on the Shawnee State University Board of Trustees Distinguished Teaching Award!

# DVIDB ON FACEBOOK

## Join Our Facebook Family

If you are passionate about the education of children and youth with visual impairments and deafblindness, including those with additional disabilities, please become part of our social network on Facebook. If you have a Facebook account, you can find our page and become a fan by searching for Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness.

For those who do not have a Facebook account, you can view our page by going to the following URL:  
<https://www.facebook/pages/Division-on-Visual-Impairments-and-Deafblindness/248244976215>