

State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Council

AGENDA – Meeting #55

December 15, 2015

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning

2109 S Stoughton Rd, Madison, WI

Call to order

Introductions

Nissan Bar Lev, Martha Berninger, Peter Dally, Stacy Grandt, Julie Hapeman, Sadiqua White-Harper, Mandy Jordan, Cheryl Orgas, Nancy Thompson, Linda Vincent, Chris Zenchenko

Public input and comments

- An opportunity for members of the public attending the meeting to make comments or raise issues of concern is designated for this time.

Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning and Talking Book and Braille Library Updates

Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library – We are currently partnering with ABL on projects and the Sound Center, and the transition to Digital Talking Book player is going very well. Essentially we've reached the point where people don't want the cassettes any longer and digital format has become the norm for virtually all users. We are now calling the tape machines back in, and divesting ourselves of the cassettes, which is a huge project, due to the fact that we have approximately 50,000 cassettes. In spite of this though, and our effort to complete the transition, some items are still only on cassettes, so in instances where this is the case can the tape players can still be sent out if that comes up. In addition, the NLS is transferring their holdings in analog-only format to digital, except things like out of date medical texts, for example.

SWH – Question: What is the situation regarding storage of this new format?

Linda Vincent – That is a good question and brings up an issue, but the new format takes up less space so that is a good thing and is assisting us in our ability to maintain a large collection.

Chris Zenchenko – How does the move to this format effect the storage capacity when you compare digital downloads to SD cards?

LV – SD cards contain much more information. This is mainly due to equipment requirements, but also technological expertise.

Cheryl Orgas- Also, the sound booths we use are up to NLS standards, so more books will be available to National BARD.

Cheryl Orgas – Right now we have eight people recording, and Andrew editing. As more people are reading we will be producing more books.

LV – There are High School volunteers from Bayview who are working with us filling bags, stuffing envelope applications and things like that. These students come once a week and work, and they are doing a good job. We are very excited and thankful for their work, and they are excited about gaining valuable experience.

With ABLE – Print braille books with cartridges in kits

We also have a Free Bill-Reader for those who apply for it, as money is not yet tactile. This is available to people who are in the library program.

NBL – DPI is emphasizing UDL – providing teachers/students multiple ways of accessing information- What are you doing to assist people with this access?

Linda Vincent – We are more of a public library, for recreational reading. We are not experts in the texts, but the apps. I am not sure if we are a better resource than the TVIs. We are more of a provider of equipment and books at this time.

Nissan B-L – Actually, as we know, Print Disability is not listed in IDEA, and it has only been listed since 2006 as part of NIMAS. Very few people are aware of this.

Stacy Grandt – Sample IEPs on DPI website. I am the NIMAS coordinator for Wisconsin. With assistance from Jeremiah Beasley, WCBVI AT specialist. We have discussed putting into the model forms language that prompts IEP teams to discuss print disability. The suggestion was sent to the DPI team to be included. (She will send the suggested language...)

CO – ABLE’s mission is to provide alternative ways for people with print disabilities to read. We do an excellent job with people with visual impairments, and hope to do better with general print disabilities as well. We do ask folks to sign up with WTTBL first.

NBL- *Discussion re: IEP vs. Plan of Service.* Private school doesn’t have right to procedural safeguards as public schools. Discussion on UDL prompts and delivery is a way to perhaps address this. Print disability info is separate from the braille determination.

DPI is also adding more information regarding family engagement. They have looked at Title 1 model replacing individual parent-teacher conferences with group conferences – Linking Form – Section D – It summarizes a few universal strategies to discuss at parent meetings to support student academics. Perhaps this is something we as a council should think about – what are the kind of activities we can recommend for TVI/O&M to suggest to parents at IEP meetings?

PD – Actually, it’s interesting you bring this up, perfect timing. I recently saw a fantastic presentation on family engagement at the Director’s meeting at DPI. It is absolutely a key area to address and one which is remarkably important and vital for student success. It’s a challenging and important concept, and one that is critical for finding real ways to engage parents is so important.

NBL – It’s true, we need a way for engaging parents in such a way that changes the dynamics to more of a partnership in learning.

SG – Unfortunately this prompt, at this time, isn’t in the form, and this may be confusing. We are creating modules to support IEP documents, so this idea would be presented in that format.

For example we recently had a discussion regarding Convergence Insufficiency and who can provide support in this area. As we know, IDEA requires access to general curriculum. There is also Discussion on UDL and accessibility, AIM to AEM (Accessible Educational Materials) to consider. It is stated that materials must be born accessible, and should create a curriculum that is accessible to all initially. This can be challenging but that’s the goal.

CZ – I agree this is and there has been a lot of discussion on accessibility and technology, and the instructions are clear.

NBL – Perhaps to gain greater clarification we should invite new UDL consultant from DPI to our next meeting.

WCBVI Outreach Updates:

NIMAS/AIM/AEM

Stacy Grandt: As you know, Julie Sumwalt –braille specialist at WCBVI – has been forwarding a lot of initiatives over the the last five years that have required a lot of additional attention to detail. Julie is working in her new position, which was created for more than straight transcription; she has been focusing much of her attention on the training of professionals in our state. Julie will continue doing training, because as we transition to the UEB, in depth training will be needed by people across the field.

I'd also like to say that the recent ABLE Celebration was wonderful! It was great representing WCBVI at this fantastic event.

We are also working on the implementation of the Forward Exam – Pete and Jeremiah Beasley and myself met with Troy Couillard, Director of Assessment Team about a month ago, and one of the very positive outcomes from the meeting was that the test will be available in hard copy braille this year.

NBL – Is this a promise, or does it actually exist?

PD – We do have word that this will be the case this year.

SG – Yes, DPI is also aware that the test needs to be proofread beforehand, and the amount of time it takes to emboss the assessment. We also discussed formats and the rules that need to be followed.

PD – I have to say, I am extremely impressed with how much Troy and the assessment team truly understand the needs and requirement of our field, and he is keenly aware of what is needed for success. It's really a pleasure working with Troy and his team, they are doing a very good job, with a very challenging task.

SG – As far as what we can tell teachers in terms of the accommodations? We can expect as a minimum standard for accommodations are those that were available in Smarter Balance. That is to say, we will have the SB accommodations as a minimum for IEP determinations, and the Forward Exam.

NBL – This statement seems to invite disaster, in terms of terminology. It leave a potential for dispute between parents and schools.

CO – And has the braille production already been chosen and vetted? How are we assured that the vendor will pick an appropriate braille transcription service?

SG – DPI provides guidelines, we don't get to say who does the braille, just what criteria they must meet (re: formats, proofreading, etc)

PD – You bring up a very good point. We can check regarding the contract language citing the vendor responsibility for locating and securing accurate production.

CO – Thank you, I'm just concerned about the accuracy of the braille used on the test.

Recruiting for Short Course O&M instructor – We are currently also recruiting for a short course O&M Instructor and we're keeping the posting open through at least January 7. So we can establish a good pool of candidates to choose from.

With this recruitment in mind, we are looking at making changes to how we do Outreach services in many ways, specifically with regard to the consultants who go out and perform evaluations and do consultations. For example, Tricia Weis, goes into homes, plays, observes, discusses with parents, writes a report and shares with the team, and she does this about once a year.

What we have realized, especially for teachers who serve older students, they pretty much know how to do this evaluation process themselves. What is needed is when issues do come up, the teachers often ask us for some instructional coaching. They are hoping for some rich, deep, instruction-changing assistance and not just a one-time visit. We are truly looking into how we can do that. A mentorship program seems a natural fit for us, and we're exploring that possibility very strongly.

In addition we have realized that we need PDP reviewers with Vision Expertise. Therefore, we are looking at training a group of Vision Teachers and O&M instructors to get trained as PDP reviewers. This is in conjunction with looking at mentoring program for TVI/O&M as well, which goes along with this potential new approach to delivering quality Outreach services to teachers and districts in the state. We want to provide excellent support throughout the field for new teachers, and we are open to ideas as to how we can successfully do just that. ESSA talks about Innovative Ideas for ...

We are also running PST Meetings, and I'm glad to report to the council that there were 40 vision professionals at last meeting which is great attendance! We also heard that some people in the field still prefer the more regional meetings, therefore the spring meetings will be separated into regions again because we want to be responsive to the needs and wishes of the professionals who we work with.

Preschool Conference March 12, Green Lake – At APH meeting – Tristan Pierce – works on projects and equipment for students with additional disabilities. Joy player (similar to old simple cassette design) Five buttons that can be used in conjunction with sensory learning kit from APH and some of the literacy materials as well. Can also play music. It can help create the foundation for literacy, a tool to use to help students with additional disabilities move toward being literate. She is coming to preschool conference, but also want to invite TVI for that session as well at the conference.

UEB – This year PK-2nd received UEB. What comes next for Wisconsin? Bringing together braille experts to work on the plan, and what we need to think about in terms of testing as well as we move forward.

SWH – What other conferences are you planning?

SG – Well, we have several Short Course offerings, Learning to move/Moving to learn – 2 credit course on spatiotemporal. Moving Forward with CVI with Christine Roman in August at Devil’s Head in Baraboo.

In 2016 we will have an all grade level conference to focus on transition and we will also be holding a Transcriber Conference in May of 2016 as well hopefully.

SWH – One idea might be to have a conference about Septo-Optic Dysplasia. We have noticed an influx of Septo-Optic Dysplasia and “Optic Nerve Hypoplasia Syndrome”

JH – This is an issue with the optic nerve, and also can have a lot of other issues, specifically with endocrine system. The effects can be behavioral and in stature.

Can we do a pre-conference for WAER, or a training in the fall specifically regarding this, or perhaps as a course for credit? I think that would be really helpful.

SG: We can definitely look into doing that. It sounds like the need is there.

Discussion on Nemeth:

CO – What is the stance of the state staying with Nemeth?

Discussion on an official stance – Wisconsin will be sticking with our original plan, which states that Wisconsin is continuing to use Nemeth for braille math. In other words, Wisconsin will not be using UEB math. There is one caveat however, we cannot dictate what an IEP team would indicate in the IEP. There are actually several states that will be using UEB math, not Nemeth.

CO – Nemeth is more powerful code for math and science.

CZ – Mass-produced texts are going to be in UEB/Nemeth –

NBL – And it will be up to the TVI to implement the IEP, so it behooves them to support Nemeth

SG – Minnesota Braille Authority statement re: UEB vs Nemeth “-until research-based data ... “
Send to Council to review

SG– do we need to do that in terms of adopting theirs, or can we write our own?

Discussion re: quorum and voting. Do we need to vote to support a statement or not? Decision:
No

In fact, North Carolina, Massachusetts and Utah will be using UEB math, and about 8 states supporting both codes.

SG – will get those documents and send to everyone to review. Discuss at next meeting.

Lunch:

WCBVI/DPI Updates:

PD- I want to start my WCBVI updates by talking about a huge project that we and all other state agencies have been undertaking that most of the council may not be aware of.

We are currently implementing a new finance, payroll and Human Resources system known as the Star project or – Peoplesoft. The transition has been challenging, and very

time consuming but we're getting it in place successfully, and the system does appear to be a very good one.

CZ has been working on accessibility, discussing issue with turning on accessibility tools, and complications with multiple options.

SWH- Milwaukee people have been using, and like it. It good to hear the state is beginning to use this.

In terms of the school, I'm very happy to report that WCBVI is growing, and as I shared previously, WCBVI had its highest enrollment since the 2003-2004 school year – In fact WCBVI had 63 students enrolled last year, and we currently have 57 students enrolled this year in spite of graduating 8 students last year. In addition, I'm also pleased to report that Outreach Short Course enrollment went up as well last year – as we had 44 short course students enrolled last year.

This year our Short Course instructor TVI Jenny Stroh, is doing a marvelous job in taking over the job and we look for tremendous things from her and as Ms. Grandt mentioned earlier we are also recruiting for a Short Course O&M instructor. We will keep you posted on how this important recruitment going.

In the school, our new hires like Tim Fahlberg and Sarahelizabeth Baguhn are teaming to make a truly outstanding math department. They are using innovative instructional techniques that are truly reaching students and engaging them in high level learning.

In addition, we are also hiring for a part time science position at WCBVI, and we look for continued big things in the science department as well.

A renewed focus on academics, student support in all areas and the CCR program are playing strong assisting roles in boosting interest and enrollment at WCBVI

In spite of budget cuts at the university level, the students participating in this program have been impressive, and the number continues to grow. The CCR program is a rigorous program, and again it's an area that I believe will continue to grow.

I think it's important to note that Andy Soto, who was formerly running the program, has now been hired as the Dean of Students at WCBVI. So we will need to fill his former position with a highly qualified and highly skilled person. In short, Mr. Soto has done a tremendous job, and leave hard shoes to fill, based on the amount of areas that need to be covered. At this time, I am still working to help cover the Dean's position until we can effectively hire a new CCR instructor at the school. This transition has been a Great opportunity for me to witness the many activities and educational work that goes on during the evenings at WCBVI. The dorm is such a unique setting, and an amazing amount of learning and instruction goes on there during the course of the week and year.

JH – Shares a story of student success at WCBVI– It's a great place for building confidence and skills. And SWH also shares a story of student success at WCBVI too.

CZ – I agree and the socialization impact is underestimated in the dorms. It's a place of intense learning.

SWH – team participation

PD- At this time, the dorms are doing very well and we are actually using rooms that have not been utilized for several years due to our growth. And it's not only about the CCR programs, Our WCBVI Elementary program is rapidly growing, and we're committed to running the best program possible, maintaining our already marvelous staff, and also hiring the best people for each position. In short, the School and Outreach have amazing staff.

NT – How do you market and publicize the good things that are happening?

PD- That's a good question and actually we don't market the Center, we simply rely on word of mouth and all students have to be placed at WCBVI through their IEP, and this is for both school and Outreach programs.

Julie – Yes, WCBVI has other good things too, like Glen Stacey funds that fund student trips for students who come from across the state.

SG – Can you write something for the next outreach newsletter, also share on larger subscription email list?

Martha – management software TEPDL – Microsoft CRM

CZ – Gov delivery, very easy to manage, gather statistics

UWP Teacher program –

PD- We've brought the new brochure for the UW-Platteville TVI program. Again, I need to thank and acknowledge the outstanding work that the Silver Lake TVI program has done throughout the years. Without the leadership of Sister Mary Karen and the Silver Lake Instructor core, there is very little chance that the UW would have considered the TVI program. So a huge thank you to Sister Mary Karen and The Silver Lake Team for their incredible work and leadership.

Given that we have so many people retiring from the field in on a nationwide basis, it is great to see the UW-Platteville program taking shape, and moving ahead.

Discussion re: advertising HEAB loan forgiveness info. (add to brochure) – add a “revised on” date to the brochure

JH – Do we think the UW-P TVI program falls under the frame of the Council? We do have a need for a higher education rep. Perhaps we should ask– Jen Collins and invite her to participate as our higher education rep.?

Invite Platteville folks, as well as school of education folks (more general) to discuss
And hopefully Platteville will be open to this.

Discussion regarding the purpose of the Council

NBL- What is the role of the council? What are we supposed to be focusing on? Where does our information go?

Can we as a Council make recommendations?

JH- A good example: Serious concerns about some DPI requirements for PE – they are very rigid, and are negatively impacting some of our students. We want to make this a meaningful experience. We need to. So for instance, Can we approach DPI as a Council with the concerns?

CZ – Of course, yes, we can forward recommendations.

NBL – I suggest that we bring an additional DPI rep to meeting and discuss the issue. This can help clear up any misunderstanding and clarify our role. I suggest we invite DPI compliance.

SWH – Where, as a parent, can we find the information?

NBL – Meeting with SE director and will ask her to select a representative to come to the meeting.

SG – Parent would ask vision teacher, who would contact outreach who would contact DPI.

CZ – We have a very loosely defined and broad mission as a Council. It is what we make of it. We as a council have a lot of flexibility in what we do and how we do it. Minutes are a good source, but we need the website to be more easily located.

JH – If we are supposed to be the think-tank for DPI, we would like our suggestions to mean something. Do we have the Superintendents' ear or are we just reporting to each other?

NBL – The answer lies somewhere in between. My understanding is that the advisory council must be maintained for a wide array of stakeholders. So we have different views articulated – the idea is to bring the stakeholders together to talk about the programming for students who are VI, and where are there issues that should be brought to the State Superintendent for additional discussion.

When we have specific issues, more formal reports can be made.

CO – I also think we should be careful that we aren't saying students who are blind CANT do PE for instance though, and focus on the modifications that can lead to success.

FROM AER:

JH- Interested in finding the answer to this question. There is a case of a person who applied for a license in O&M – that emergency licenses in O&M can be issued with just a bachelors degree. I didn't think DPI issued emergency licenses in O&M. It is a major safety issue, and I'm strongly concerned with this.

Discussion

SG- It's my understanding that It is up to the district to sign off on the emergency license.

NBL: Perhaps this is an issue where we also should invite DPI licensure to one of our council meetings to discuss provisional licensing (since the meeting several emails have been exchanged between council members and licensing)

CZ – This is an education issue, and carries liability for districts

NBL – It also has liability for DPI

JH – O&M is classified as a related service, and other related services such as S&L, OT/PT are required to be licensed. I think this should be revisited and explored further.

Future Meeting Dates:

March 1, RLL 10-2

June 21, RLL 10-2

Adjourn 1:50