

**State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Council**  
Meeting #57  
June 21, 2016

**Location:** Talking Book and Braille Library, 813 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI

Call to Order 10:11

**Introductions**

**Committee members present:**

Nissan Bar-Lev – Chair/CESA 7 Special Education Director  
Cheryl Orgas – Executive Director of Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement (ABLE)  
Sadiqua White-Harper – Milwaukee Public Schools TVI/O&M  
Chris Zenchenko – Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired: attended by phone

**Committee members absent:**

Pete Dally – WCBVI Center Director  
Kediboyne Carpenter – Parent of a Visually Impaired Student  
Julie Hapeman – Wisconsin Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (WAER-BVI)/ O&M/TVI  
Staphanie Klas – Parent of a Visually Impaired Student  
Steve Lutzke – Parkview School District Administrator  
Tonya Olson – Parent of a Visually Impaired Student  
Jen Collins – Higher Education; UW-Platteville  
Mary Spidell – Public School District Representative; VI Special Services Supervisor, MPS  
Nancy Thompson – WASB Representative; Waterloo School Board  
Fred Wollenburg – CESA; Special Education Director, CESA 5

**Other attendees:**

Amanda Jordan – WCBVI Administrative Assistant  
Stacy Grandt – WCBVI Outreach Director  
Holly Adams – WCBVI Outreach-Office Operations Associate  
Kay Rhode – WCBVI Outreach O&M Consultant  
Alisha Ragainis – WCBVI Outreach Vision Consultant for school age children  
Linda Vincent – Management Librarian of Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL)

**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.**

No public input

### **Council Statement on UEB and Nemeth**

- Recalled process (beginning on November 2, 2012) from when BANA voted to adopt Unified English Braille (UEB) to replace English Braille American Edition (EBAE) in the U.S. while maintaining the Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science Notation, 1972 Revision; the Music Braille Code 1997; and the International Phonetic Alphabet Braille code (IPA), 2008.
  - It has been 4 years since the process began and it is time for all states to be on board with new code.
  - Several problems associated to students getting mixed material and differences between states and institutions that do not use UEB or test using UEB
    - Students moving to different districts that do not use the code the student has learned.
    - Students coming into their first years in school and the school still using EBAE; inconsistencies for their learning to come
    - There has been at least one recognized inconsistency in testing where a student's test results indicated less competency for that individual based on the fact that the student had learned UEB but the test was in EBAE calling for EBAE answers
- WCBVI has already adopted BANA's set terms, since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, to implement UEB into all materials produced and distributed
- WCBVI is currently registering students for their 4<sup>th</sup> UEB training with Julie Sumwalt (WCBVI Braille Consultant)
- The committee agrees that it is time to move forward with their formal recommendation to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to adhere to BANA's policy statement on implementing UEB nation-wide.
  - Stacy Grandt, Amanda Jordan, and Dave Hyde helped construct a document for a formal recommendation using other states' formal documents as examples, especially Minnesota. Also used some verbiage of BANA's policy statement (italicized portion of SSBVIEC recommendation document)

All attendants at this meeting agree that the present draft of the recommendation be proofread and formalized and sent to the state superintendent, leading to the following motion:

***The State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Council accepts the UEB with Nemeth statement for producing math and science materials for production throughout the state of Wisconsin according to BANA's policy statement dated November 2, 2012.***

Motion: Cheryl Orgas

Motion Seconded: Nissan Bar-Lev

(\*action to result upon board's approval of formal recommendation)

Stacy will first communicate with Barbara V and formalize document;

Stacy and Cheryl will work together on drafting a paragraph for DPI explaining the rationale and justification as to why the implementation of BANA's recommendation THIS year is important.

- This should be sent to Nissan along with the formalized recommendation when available; Nissan will forward to the board for approval

Stacy:

- Need to make sure the assessment team is setting aside money for the new UEB (last spoke with Troy Couillard who is no longer part of this decision making)
- Discuss format of tests

Nissan will email the formal recommendation to board for approval

## **Teacher Induction Program**

Kay Rhode and Alisha Ragainis introduce the Instructional Coaching Program to begin its pilot run this summer with four Instructional Coaches/Mentors, two UW-Platteville TVI graduates and two other tbd TVIs in Wisconsin. Some of the documents from the information packet included in their presentation are included in this document.

- History behind program and pedagogy – overwhelming need for TVIs and O&M’s to have communication and support from other specialists in their line of work; the nature of this work often leaves TVI/O&M specialists feeling isolated since they are usually the only one in their school district who does what they do; at WCBVI’s Program Support Teacher (PST) meetings, Alisha and Kay received overwhelming evidence, through surveys and general feedback, that there is a great need for a support system like the Teacher Induction Program. Wisconsin has never had one in place. Alisha participated in Texas’ mentoring workshop that has been used for many decades for the purpose of supporting TVIs across their state; Texas is very happy to share their materials and expertise in this area
- Focused discussion around the Instructional Coaching element of Program
  - The “W” document (attached) covers questions regarding the people involved and the type of coach/protégé relationship
  - Discuss Wisconsin Induction Guidelines and Wis. Admin. Code PI 34 requirements (attached) regarding school districts to provide support system for initial educators (TVIs and O&Ms are often paired with a special education instructor and not someone specific to TVI/O&M teaching)
  - WCBVI Outreach has agreed to contract with each instructional coach for \$1,000 per student (year term).
- Reviewed elements of recruitment, maintenance, and participation
  - “Letter to administrator” – suggestions:
    - Consider alternative means of meeting (e.g. more phone/online conferencing) to make relationship with administrator and appeal to join program less restrictive
  - TVI/OM Coach Contact Log
    - Consider purpose it serves and where it ends up
    - Disclaimer about confidentiality AND that it is not a form to use as a means of assessment for/of TVI protégé
    - Include a date and source on each document for reference
  - Look at DPI boundaries/guidelines are for these types of documents; look at how Texas handled certain program documents (e.g. Coach contact log); consider

having a document all unto itself that explains the nature of these other documents in order for them to remain confidential and not included as a means of assessment of the TVI/O&M protégé

Nissan suggests that Kay and Alisha write up a paragraph/brief explanation describing the rationale behind Wisconsin Teacher Induction Program and the value of the network of support it provides to initial and current staff in Wisconsin. Frame explanation along the lines of “here is how everyone can benefit from this program”.

Nissan will forward this to the Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services (WCASS)

Nissan suggests attending and presenting at CASS meetings (next one in November)

- Discussion of support networks already in place:
  - Discuss the 3 listserv/google groups
    - Wisconsin Vision Educators Group
      - Teachers and O&Ms
    - WCBVI Family Updates (to be launched)
      - Source for families to find information & resources (info to public; not 2-way)
    - WCBVI Updates (to be launched)
      - Directors/Administrators/Professors (info to this group; not 2-way)

For the info-to-group google groups, members of group could contact others directly with questions or to share information (email/phone) but cannot post on the google group website directly

- Those who do not fit into the categories that the google groups are geared for can still sign up for the WCBVI Updates google group to receive information
- A major reason for “one-way” google groups is that WCBVI does not have staff to continuously monitor content that can go back and forth between google group participants.
  - Chris Z. offers assistance to WCBVI IT if needed
  - Will remind WCBVI Technology Support of C.Z.’s support
- WCBVI has created a digital map for other TVI/O&M professionals to locate others doing what they do throughout the state
- Discussion of UW-Platteville and WCBVI teaming up with the TVI Training program – first set of graduates this summer (2 graduates) and second cohort coming (7 students)
- Discussion about strategies to market WI for recruiting TVI/O&M Trainees and recruiting TVI/O&M specialists for students in Wisconsin?
  - Consider groups that we talk to and make aware of PST meetings to all staff and administration at various LEAs
- Discussion around Portal use and purpose

Committee is very happy about the new Wisconsin Teacher Induction Program and Nissan asks Kay and Alisha to return to the next meeting to give the committee an update on how the program’s pilot run has been going. It is agreed that Nissan and others will provide feedback to Alisha and Kay about a re-worked “To Administrator” letter, and that the committee is glad to support and provide ideas and feedback for the Induction Program. It is mentioned that new

people in new and old positions (e.g. Alisha R. and Kay R.) are vital to a growing reach of support throughout Wisconsin because of their energy and fresh vantage points.

Break: 11:26

Lunch

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

- Talking Book and Braille Library (TBBL) is thriving and has new patrons
  - With changes in operations of the National Library Service (NLS) (a department of the Library of Congress who provides the books), there has been a lot of “excessing” and deciding which books they will have re-recorded as cassettes/analog books are changed to digital recordings (on a USB that is structured into the plastic cassette “tapes”)
  - Very excellent relationship with Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement, Inc. (ABLE). When a patron is looking for a book that the TBBL does not have, they see if they can order it from the NLS or borrow it from another library (and are connected to a national inter-loan system). If they can do neither, they are able to connect the patron to ABLE and the individual is able to order an audio book through them. Linda described ABLE as kind of a “book catalog” – and says that, even when ABLE does not have a book listed in their catalog, they are generally able and willing to record it for the patron requesting (and then have it to add to their catalog. All of ABLE’s materials are free to the public.
  - There is a discussion about the difference between Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) (\*formerly Accessible Instructional Materials – or AIM) and the materials that TBBL provides. TBBL may incidentally, or coincidentally, provide AEM materials to the public – but this is not their mission. They are a leisure-reading library
  - Nissan raises the question to Linda on her feelings of the TBBL being prepared for anticipated influx of demand for alternative reading materials
    - Changes to who qualifies for receiving TBBL and ABLE materials may greatly increase the demand
    - Currently our biggest clientele for AEM are those who qualify as having a “Specific Learning Disability” (SID) – and the addition of “dyslexia” diagnosis
    - As Wisconsin strives to make materials accessible to all people at different levels of impairment, diagnosis, and/or preferred mode of learning – it is expected that, the demand for specially-formatted media will increase
  - State funds pay for operating TBBL; More money from state budget has been requested; special budget (not DPIs funding – but funding comes through DPI)

Nissan explains: Universal design of learning that DPI adopted; UDL – “average learner”; need to provide multiple means for learning; teachers and parents will be looking for more options for learning then (this is where the influx will come)

Discussion of “organic brain dysfunction” and other physical limitations. The brain being part of the physical body: therefore, if the brain is unable to perform its job – this is a physical limitation.

Discussion related to Convergence Disability and students not getting their needs met based on definitions of what constitutes one’s eligibility for AEM, and other services.

- As this is a vision condition that negatively impacts the student’s education, a teacher of the visually impaired would be instrumental in determining the eligibility, services, and accommodations needed by the student to access the regular education curriculum.

Issue and discussion of State and Federal definitions of visual impairments is raised.

- Problem – the state and federal are not consistent, with the state definition being more restrictive than the federal definition.
- It was commented that dyslexia qualifies as “visual impairment” according to a cortical visual impairment (CVI) scenario in which the condition is caused by damage to the brain as opposed to physiological abnormality in the eye.
- There are inconsistencies of services and curriculum when the legal definitions of impairment are insufficient.

It benefits the student and state to allow anyone who wants to receive AEM to receive AEM. If a student can participate in an classroom discussion setting because text to speech format was available to him or her, than this develops an appreciation for learning media and active learning; this student is not left to the wayside and perpetually behind in test scores and curriculum.

New DPI IEP forms: The format and guidelines will have tremendous changes

Discussion about developing materials that are accessible to everyone from the onset of production and distribution

- UDL – develop curriculum surrounding accessibility (born accessible)
- Discussion about whether the production and development of UDL policies will encourage earlier braille learning;
  - many proponents think that it will, but that ground-level elements (such as the expectation that braille reading students read at the same academic level as their sighted peers, and the associated teacher evaluation) will drive the number of how many students are actually introduced when they could/should be

### **WCBVI Outreach Updates**

- UEB courses offered through WCBVI (just had twelve students finish)
- More students to arrive on campus soon for UEB course
- Midwest Braille Conference went exceptionally well and many hope for WCBVI to do it again
- EmployAbility – 11 students this summer; grows every year

### **TVI Training Program Update**

- 1<sup>st</sup> year just ended

- Next group (7 students) starting July 11, 2016
- First 4 weeks of classes will be on WCBVI campus
- None of current students are certified teachers currently
- TVI Training Program Feedback committee developed and had their initial meeting June 16<sup>th</sup>: a diverse group of people to provide program feedback (Jen Collins UW-P and Pete Dally have designed structure of program and seek to make it better) and have already provided feedback:
  - Program should have a course on Assessment
  - Program should include a course on Multiple Disabilities
  - Many other suggestions and feedback collected already from committee members

### **WCBVI/DPI Updates**

- Summer programs
- Issues with funding;
  - 13 students (not WCBVI students) throughout state for What Now program
  - All the World's a Stage (20 students)
  - Piloting early (1 week program) ABC Read With Me
- Student outlook for school:
  - 63 students this last year (one student died last year)
  - Year 2017 – 56 students (most students we've started with in 10 years!)
  - Aged out and graduated 14 students

### **Tour of TBBL and ABLE**

Thank you Linda Vincent and Cheryl Orgas!!!

Next meeting – **Mandy will send out some date possibilities**

- Date NOT to be in the beginning of September

Adjourn 1:45 p.m.