

October 26, 2015

Hi, everyone,

This email is intended to give everyone an update on our braille competency activities, hopes, and expectations for this school year. We are working hard to ensure that Colorado is in full implementation with the Unified English Braille code by the end of this school year specific to the braille competency of TVIs. Please take time to read carefully through this information. There are many moving parts to our UEB competency process since people are in varying stages of our existing process.

First let me say that you all have been fantastic about demonstrating braille competency. As a state, pretty much all but new people to our field and/or our state have demonstrated initial braille competency and, many of you have earned a CDE Renewal Certificate. Thank you for your commitment to the braille literacy of our braille learners. Our students depend on this knowledge and skill set. They are now counting on our updated knowledge and skill set with the UEB.

I am very hopeful that you all have been and are working independently on your UEB competency (following the CDE sponsored fall 2014 UEB training) though the following venues found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

Independent-training and support options include:

- Hadley School for the Blind correspondence course
- NLS Transcriber Manual and Lessons
- CNIB Transcribers Online Course
- RIDBC online training course

The CDE Braille Competency Committee is working hard on the following tasks to ensure we have high-quality products that measure UEB knowledge and skills:

- **Converting the current CDE Braille Competency Test from English Braille American Edition (EBAE) to the Unified English Braille (UEB) Code.** We are about three weeks away from having the test done with updated multiple-choice questions and new braille

passages. I will send out an official email when the new test is officially ready – know we have some people ready to take the test to demonstrate their initial braille competency! [Please note that the EBAE version of the CDE Braille Competency Test will be officially retired by January 4, 2016.](#)

- **Converting the current CDE Braille Renewal Modules from EBAE to UEB.** The renewal modules are for persons who are required to continue to demonstrate braille competency over a five-year period from the date of earning the initial CDE Certificate of Braille Competency. This is a one-time requirement. These modules will be done in mid to late November. I will send out an email to confirm when we are officially ready to go with these modules. [Please note that all EBAE renewal modules will be officially retired by January 4, 2016.](#)
- **Preparing a UEB Refresher Course that will contain braille related tasks for the purpose of demonstrating UEB competency.** This will be a refresher course and not a training course. The content will be focused on key changes from EBAE to UEB. The braille tasks will be different than the 15 renewal modules, as they will be designed to provide the participants with an overview of key code change (specific to literary braille), allow for practice opportunities, and then confirm competency per testing exercises. Participants who pass the required testing components will earn a CDE Certificate in UEB Competency.

The goal of the Refresher Course is to provide a supportive testing infrastructure for those persons who want to have some instruction and practice opportunities onsite with our state experts. This is how our first braille competency work was done – in a large group with “refresher training.”

All TVIs currently employed (full-time, part-time, on contract) with a Colorado administrative unit(s) must demonstrate braille competency in UEB by May 31, 2016. There is no state mandate for a brailist employed by a Colorado administrative unit to demonstrate braille competency through established CDE guidelines. Braillists may do so, but this is not required. Based on an individual’s current status with demonstrating braille competency, there are different routes to achieve this goal. We have three groups of people to get on the other side of demonstrating UEB braille competency:

1. **New TVIs or braillists who have never taken the CDE Braille Competency Test.** These individuals will demonstrate braille competency by passing the CDE UEB Competency Test and passing the 15 UEB renewal modules over the course of the next five years. These individuals are not eligible to participate in the UEB Braille Refresher Course.
2. **Veteran TVIs or braillists who have earned the initial CDE Certificate in Braille Competency and are in process of completing the renewal modules for the CDE Renewal Certificate in Braille Competency.** Individuals in this category must continue



to take the braille renewal modules based on their established 5-year plan. They are also required to demonstrate UEB Braille Competency by passing (a) the CDE Braille Refresher Course or (b) the CDE UEB Braille Competency Test.

There is no expectation that any or all the renewal modules have to be completed in order to be eligible to participate in the refresher course. Persons in process of the 15 braille renewal modules may continue to take EBAE modules until the end of this calendar year based on their scheduled 5-year roll-out. If there are five or fewer modules remaining in the sequence, these must be reserved for the UEB versions. It is the strong recommendation of the CDE Braille Competency Committee that all remaining renewal modules just be completed in UEB. If waiting for the UEB renewal modules to be ready compromises a person's five-year schedule for renewal, Tanni will work with each individual on a *reasonable* extension of time to renew his or her CDE Braille Certificate of Competency. However, if someone is in their fourth or fifth year of the renewal period and has never taken a renewal module, there will be an expectation of steady completion of the new UEB modules. I just want to be clear about that word *reasonable*!

- 3. Veteran TVIs or braillists who have earned both the initial and renewal CDE Certificate in Braille Competency.** Individuals in this category are required to demonstrate UEB Braille Competency by passing (a) the CDE Braille Refresher Course or (b) the CDE UEB Braille Competency Test. The latter option can be scheduled in small groups from two to five persons.

Based on rough math of the number of eligible participants, the CDE will offer one UEB Refresher Course in the southern region, one in the western region (if this is determined to be needed), and two in the metro area. The metro area courses will be open to Douglas County participants and northern region participants. Each course will be capped at 25 participants. The dates confirmed at this point in time are:

January 8-9, 2016:	Metro Location In Process of Being Determined
January 22-23, 2016:	Metro Location in Process of Being Determined
February 11-12, 2016:	Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

We will be taking stock of the need for a Western Region Refresher Course in the next two weeks. Western TVIs and braillists, I will be sending out a separate email shortly.

It is anticipated that we will need two days for each refresher course. Lodging reimbursement can be provided to those coming over 60 miles. Participants of the course must have already earned an initial CDE Certificate of Braille Competency and either are in process of completing the 15 renewal modules or have already done so. This is the vast majority of our state TVIs. The



course will be open to braillists only if they have earned a CDE Certificate of Braille Competency.

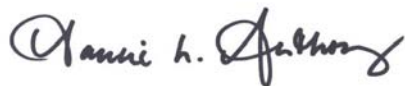
The CDE UEB Braille Competency Test may also be taken in lieu of the refresher course. All interested individuals can schedule this test session with Tanni at the Colorado Department of Education. If a small group (a minimum of three and up to five persons) can be arranged for a proctored testing session, we will work to host small group testing sessions in other areas of the state. For example, if Aurora School District wants to host a testing session for their staff to take the CDE UEB Braille Competency Test, we will work to make this arrangement for this to occur. TVIs and braillists who participate in this testing option will be responsible for assisting with securing an appropriate test site and each person will need to bring some of the required reference materials (those that can be printed). These requests should be directed to Tanni.

I realize that this is a lot to absorb. It is a lot to do.

A sign-up process will be established within the next few weeks for the three identified dates of UEB Refresher Courses.

I thank you for your support in getting on the other side of UEB competency. Please let me know what questions you have. Email: Anthony_t@cde.state.co.us Phone: (303) 866-6681.

My best,



Tanni L. Anthony, PhD
Director – Access, Learning, and Literacy Team
Exceptional Student Services Unit

