

# Ohio Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired 2015



**The Ohio Guidelines provide information regarding services to support the implementation of educational goals for students who are blind or visually impaired.**

**Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials  
Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children**



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## Preface and Acknowledgements

The *Ohio Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired* is an adaptation of the *2010 Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired in Virginia Public Schools*. References to federal law have been updated in this document to reflect the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) and the [Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities \(2014\)](#).

[The purpose of the \*Ohio Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired\* is to provide decision-makers and families with a set of guidelines and information regarding services to support the implementation of educational goals for students who are blind or visually impaired.](#)

The document sections highlight recommended standards and guidelines, along with an explanation of the components found in high-quality programs. This resource of suggestions for educators and families interested in serving the educational needs of students who are blind or visually impaired will be posted, modified, and updated as needed on the [Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials \(CISAM\)](#) website.

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## Key to Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in this Document

<b>AATA</b>	Age Appropriate Transition Assessments
<b>ACB</b>	American Council of the Blind
<b>ACS</b>	American Community Survey
<b>ACVREP</b>	Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>AEM</b>	Accessible Educational Materials
<b>AER</b>	The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
<b>AFB</b>	American Foundation for the Blind
<b>AMPC</b>	Accessible Materials Production Center
<b>APH</b>	American Printing House for the Blind
<b>AT</b>	Assistive Technology
<b>B/DD</b>	Board of Developmental Disabilities
<b>BSVI</b>	Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
<b>CAM</b>	CISAM AIM Modules

<b>CATS</b>	CISAM AIM Training Series
<b>CBDD</b>	County Boards of Developmental Disabilities
<b>CISAM</b>	Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials
<b>COMS</b>	Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist
<b>CVI</b>	Cortical Visual Impairment
<b>DODD</b>	Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
<b>ECC</b>	Expanded Core Curriculum
<b>EMIS</b>	Educational Management Information System
<b>ETR</b>	Evaluation Team Report
<b>FAPE</b>	Free Appropriate Public Education
<b>FVA</b>	Functional Vision Assessment
<b>HMG</b>	Help Me Grow
<b>IDEA 2004</b>	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
<b>IEP</b>	Individualized Education Program
<b>IFSP</b>	Individualized Family Service Plan
<b>LMA</b>	Learning Media Assessment
<b>LRE</b>	Least Restrictive Environment
<b>NASDSE</b>	National Association of State Directors of Special Education
<b>NCAEM</b>	National Center on Accessible Educational Materials
<b>NCLB</b>	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20. U.S.C. § 6319 (2008)
<b>NIMAC</b>	National Instructional Materials Access Center
<b>NIMAS</b>	National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard
<b>NSTTAC</b>	National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center
<b>OCDBE</b>	Ohio Center for Deafblind Education
<b>OCECD</b>	Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities
<b>ODE</b>	Ohio Department of Education
<b>OEC</b>	Office for Exceptional Children
<b>OOD</b>	Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
<b>O&amp;M</b>	Orientation and Mobility
<b>OSERS</b>	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
<b>OSSB</b>	Ohio State School for the Blind
<b>OSU</b>	The Ohio State University
<b>TVI</b>	Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments

## I. Introduction: Unique Educational Needs of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

The Ohio State Board of Education’s vision is “for all students to graduate from the PK-12 education system with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to successfully continue their education and/or be workforce ready and successfully participate in the global economy as productive citizens. Ultimately, all students will graduate well prepared for success.”

According to the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS), the prevalence of visual disability among children and youth between the ages of 5-20 years nationally was an average of 5.3%. Approximately 32% of persons with a visual disability ages 21-64 have a high school diploma, 29% have some college or an Associate’s degree, 11.9% have a Bachelor’s degree or more, and 18.5% receive Supplemental Security Income. Of the 21-64 age group, 24.6% are employed full-time.

In Ohio, according to the same ACS survey of 2012, the prevalence of visual disability among children and youth between the ages of 5-20 years was an average of 6.2%. Approximately 39% of persons with a visual disability ages 21-64 have a high school diploma, 28% have some college or an Associate’s degree, 8.4% have a Bachelor’s degree or more, and 19.5% receive Supplemental Security Income. Of the 21-64 age group, 21.3% are employed full-time.

Regardless of whether a child is blind or visually impaired, has a physical disability, or has no disability at all, educators must develop and implement educational programs and provide services that meet the needs of the student. Educators and families of students who are blind or visually impaired must have a clear understanding of their unique learning styles and the interventions necessary so that students can “successfully continue their education and/or be workforce ready and successfully participate in the global economy as productive citizens.”

In addition to the general education core curriculum that all Ohio students receive, students who are blind or visually impaired, beginning at birth, also need an expanded core curriculum (ECC) to meet the needs directly related to their visual impairments (refer to [Section VI Expanded Core Curriculum for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#)).

Students who are blind or visually impaired may require individualized programs in order to be successful in the general education curriculum. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (Pugh & Erin, 1999) listed ten issues that educators who administer special education services are responsible to establish, support, and evaluate to ensure high quality educational programs for children who are blind or visually impaired. These ten issues hold true for today’s educators (with modifications to Issues IX and X) to meet the needs of students who are blind or visually impaired in Ohio school districts.

- ❑ Issue I – Educators must be knowledgeable about the unique educational needs of students who are blind or visually impaired.
- ❑ Issue II – Educators must know about public policy and legislation that impact the education of students who are blind or visually impaired.

- ❑ Issue III – Educators must be aware of the philosophical foundations that guide the implementation of educational services for students who are blind or visually impaired.
- ❑ Issue IV – Educators must know that students who are blind or visually impaired have the right to participate in all areas of general school curriculum and activities.
- ❑ Issue V – Educators must be knowledgeable about the need for a full continuum of placement options for students who are blind or visually impaired, and they must understand the differences among placement options.
- ❑ Issue VI – Educators must be aware of the diversity of the population of students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities.
- ❑ Issue VII – Educators must respect the importance of equal participation of parents in educational planning and promote the concept of parents as partners in the educational process.
- ❑ Issue VIII – Educators must recognize that education for students with blindness or visual impairments is a continual transition process, and therefore, provide appropriate transition support at critical times.
- ❑ Issue IX – Educators must be knowledgeable about the various types of instructional technologies, including current assistive technologies, and their impact on the educational opportunities for students who are blind or visually impaired.
- ❑ Issue X – Educators must recognize that families with students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities, need services from professional teachers of students with visual impairments and from certified orientation and mobility instructors.

## II. Visual Impairment: Definition/Eligibility Standards and Procedures

According to [Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities](#) (2014):

“Visual impairment” including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

- a. The term visual impairment includes both partial sight and blindness.
- b. The term visual impairment does not include a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes, such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. 3301-51-01 (B)(10)(d)(xiii)

In the 2013-2014 school year, school districts reported in the [Educational Management Information System \(EMIS\)](#) that children and youth with the following disabilities received services:

- ❑ Visual impairments – **1,040 (.1%)**;
- ❑ Deafblindness – **46 (.0%)**; and
- ❑ Multiple disabilities – **12,761 (.8%)**

On behalf of ODE, Office for Exceptional Children (OEC), the Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials (CISAM) registered **1,857** school-age students who were legally blind during the **2015** annual [Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students](#) (refer to [section VIII](#))

[Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\) and Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#) for more information on Federal Quota).

## Legal Blindness

In the United States, students who are legally blind have a:

- Visual acuity of 20/200 or less in their better eye with best possible correction, and/or a
- Restricted visual field of less than twenty degrees.

According to the American Foundation for the Blind, legal blindness is a level of vision loss that has been legally defined to determine eligibility for benefits. The diagnosis refers to a person's visual acuity and does not refer to the student's ability to use his/her vision functionally. Visual acuity is an important part of a complete eye examination. Visual acuity refers to:

- Clarity or clearness of a person's vision;
- Measure of how well a person can see;
- Numerator (top number) that indicates the distance in feet from a chart a person stands (usually 20 feet); and
- Denominator (bottom number) indicates the distance at which a person with normal eyesight could read the same line correctly.

A person with 20/200 visual acuity can see at 20 feet what a person with 20/20 visual acuity sees at 200 feet. A person with a distance visual acuity of 20/20 is said to have "typical vision." In addition to what can be seen straight ahead, a person's visual field includes what can be seen above, below, and to either side. Students who are legally blind have a wide variety of abilities. They may be print readers or braille readers, or they may use a combination of accessible educational materials and assistive technology to be successful in their educational environment.

School-age students who are blind or visually impaired are very diverse. They may:

- Be totally blind or have varying degrees of low vision;
- Range from 3 through 21 years of age;
- Be born with a visual impairment or may have acquired the visual impairment some time later in life;
- Or may not be learners on the academic level of their sighted peers;
- Have a stable or degenerative visual impairment;
- Have additional disabilities: autism, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, or traumatic brain injuries;
- Have additional medical needs and considerations; or
- Have a visual impairment due to neurological causes ([cortical visual impairment](#), CVI).

To further clarify, students with vision loss have a wide range of visual abilities, and these abilities can vary depending on circumstances. According to Lewis and Allman (2000), three broad categories are used to describe a student's visual impairment:



- ❑ **Total blindness** – The student with total blindness cannot visually detect light or use limited vision to complete most tasks, so he/she uses other senses and tactile and auditory information to learn. For reading, the student’s primary reading medium is braille.
- ❑ **Functional blindness** – The student with functional blindness has some useful vision, but requires specialized instruction to effectively use his/her vision. Generally, the student uses tactile, auditory, and visual methods for learning, but uses braille as the primary reading method. The student can often read print, but not well enough to sustain efficiently for long periods of time. Students in this category can have a wide range of visual abilities ranging from only light perception to the ability to read print textbooks.
- ❑ **Low vision** – The student with low vision has the ability to see print and use print as the primary reading medium. The low vision student often utilizes specialized optical devices such as magnifiers or telescopes, or instructional methods such as bold line markers or seating arrangements to achieve visual efficiency. The primary method of learning for the low vision student is visual.

According to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS),

“States may not use criteria or other definitions for ‘visual impairment including blindness’ that result in the exclusion of children who otherwise meet the definition in [34 CRF §300.8 (c)(13)]\*.” Letter to Michelle Kotler from Director Melody Musgrove, November 12, 2014.

\* “Visual impairment including blindness” means an impairment in vision that even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

### III. Child Find: Screening, Identification, and Referral of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

#### Child Find ([Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-03](#))

(A) Each school district shall adopt and implement written policies and procedures approved by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children (ODE-OEC). These policies and procedures ensure that all children with disabilities residing within the district, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the state, and children with disabilities attending nonpublic schools, regardless of the severity of their disability who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated as required by IDEA and federal regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 300 (October 13, 2006) pertaining to [child find](#), including regulations at 34 C.F.R. 300.111 and 300.646 (October 13, 2006) and as required by the provisions of this rule.

#### School–Age (Part B)

[Part B of IDEA 2004](#) mandates services to be provided by the schools for students with disabilities, age three through 21, inclusive; in Ohio, Part B services are provided for students with disabilities ages three through 21, inclusive. When a child is determined eligible for special education and related services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed.

[Screening](#) is part of the identification process. Each school district is responsible for having procedures, including timelines, to document the screening of children enrolled in the district, including transfers from out-of-state. Vision screening and eye examinations are essential for detecting a visual impairment. Vision must be screened for all children on an IEP. If the results of the screening suggest that a child should be evaluated for special education and related services, he/she will be referred to the special education administrator or designee.

Each school district establishes a school-based team to process referral requests for children suspected of having a disability. Additionally, a teacher or other person may request an evaluation by contacting the special education administrator. If a school-based team suspects a disability, the team must refer the child to the special education administrator or designee.

### **Early Intervention Program (Part C)**

When a child (birth through 36 months) with a visual impairment is identified, referrals can be made to Ohio's early intervention program. The program operates within the Ohio Department of Health and is called [Help Me Grow \(HMG\)](#). [Part C of IDEA \(2011\)](#) provides early childhood intervention services for infants and toddlers (birth to 36 months) with disabilities, including blindness or visual impairment (34 CFR § 303.16). If a child with a visual impairment meets criteria for early intervention services, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed, including:

- Family support services;
- Nutrition services; and
- Case management.

An IFSP is a written plan that states child and family outcomes, as identified through the assessment process. The plan identifies the services and supports necessary to reach intended outcomes. Identified supports begin within 30 days after the IFSP is written. Family participation in early intervention is voluntary and once a child is referred to HMG, the steps to begin early intervention services are to be completed within 45 calendar days. Detailed information regarding the evaluation process and available services for infants and toddlers with visual impairments can be found in the [Making Sense of Early Intervention](#) document.

Should the family choose to transition from Part C to public school services, the child must meet the three-year-old age requirement for transition and other regulatory requirements. Help Me Grow service coordinators will begin the transition process for children receiving early intervention prior to their third birthday. The school district works with Help Me Grow programs regarding Child Find birth - two focusing on children age two who will become the district's responsibility at age three.

## IV. Guidelines for Evaluation of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

Initial evaluation information can be found in the [Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities](#) and [Whose IDEA is This? A Parent's Guide to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 \(IDEA\)](#).

For students with a suspected disability in the area of visual impairment, families are encouraged to provide the school district an eye doctor's report for review. When completing evaluations involving vision, there are a variety of assessment tools that can be used to gather information about the child in functional, developmental, and academic areas. Ohio special education regulations require that assessments be technically sound and administered by qualified professionals in the area of visual impairments.

During initial and subsequent evaluations, the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) can provide input that will help to ensure the use of appropriate evaluation tools and methods and analyze evaluation results as they relate to visual impairments. Collaboration with a TVI also assures that the needs of the student are recognized during the assessment procedure and the information acquired through the assessments accurately reflects the student's ability (Pugh & Erin, 1999).

The IEP Team must consider the following list of unique factors when conducting an evaluation or developing an IEP for a child with a visual impairment:

- Cause and age of onset of visual impairment;
- Degree of visual impairment;
- Other disabilities and medical conditions;
- Family and cultural characteristics;
- Physical and psychological maturity of student;
- Environmental characteristics;
- Sensory development (visual, auditory, tactual, kinesthetic);
- Social development;
- Concept development and reasoning;
- Listening skills and study skills;
- Leisure and recreation;
- Orientation and mobility;
- Use of media for literacy in reading and writing;
- Career education;
- Visual efficiency skills;
- Motor development;
- Independent living skills;
- Assistive technology devices and services;
- Communication modes;
- Academics; and
- Low vision aids.

The following evaluation tools can be utilized to evaluate a student with a visual impairment:

### **Functional Vision Assessment (FVA)**

As a part of the initial evaluation, the TVI conducts a FVA to analyze how a student performs visually in a variety of environments, both familiar and unfamiliar. The FVA includes a functional evaluation of peripheral fields; color and contrast discrimination; light sensitivity and preference; visual motility; near and distance acuity and discrimination with recommendations for instruction and accommodations. Input from a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) as part of the FVA may include recommendations concerning the need for instructional services for current and future mobility needs. The FVA should be conducted prior to other assessments so that other team members are able to consider visual factors before conducting their assessments.

### **Clinical Low Vision Evaluation**

Results of the FVA may indicate the need for a clinical low vision evaluation. An eye care specialist (e.g. optometrist, ophthalmologist) with specialized training in low vision may conduct a clinical low vision evaluation and prescribe low vision devices, as needed. If the team, based upon the recommendation of the FVA results, agrees to the need for a clinical low vision evaluation, a TVI serving the school district may provide a list of options for the family to reference. However, if the family cannot provide a current eye report, the district is responsible to pay for or provide the eye report. Results of a clinical low vision evaluation may further assist the group in determining eligibility.

### **Learning Media Assessment (LMA)**

The [LMA](#) can be conducted to determine if specific visual, tactual and/or auditory learning media are appropriate for a student. A TVI should conduct this assessment. The goals of the LMA are to examine:

- Efficiency on how the student gathers information from various sensory channels;
- Types of general learning media the student uses, or will use, to accomplish learning tasks; and
- The literacy media the student will use for reading and writing (Koenig, Holbrook).

### **Reevaluations**

Conducting a reevaluation provides the parents and the district with the opportunity to review the child's progress on academic and functional goals in response to special education services and to determine whether the child continues to be eligible for special education. The reevaluation must occur at least once every three years unless the parents and the school district agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary; however, a reevaluation may not occur more than once annually unless the parents and school district agree otherwise.

In some cases, a reevaluation is necessary when the child's initial evaluation was conducted at a very young age and the team is concerned that the initial results may not reflect the child's current

abilities or skills. A reevaluation might also be recommended when the child has demonstrated a significant improvement or decline in academic performance or behavior or has failed to make reasonable progress.

For students with visual impairments, there may be significant changes in demands on visual and sensory functioning as they grow older. It is important to monitor progress to determine how a student is functioning in new environments and whether new evaluations are needed. To assess the student's ongoing educational needs, the TVI and COMS, as appropriate, can:

- ❑ Perform the FVA and the LMA to determine appropriate modifications and accommodations for instruction;
- ❑ Conduct orientation and mobility (O&M) evaluations to establish or reevaluate the need for O&M instruction;
- ❑ Evaluate the mastery of appropriate Expanded Core Curriculum goals; and
- ❑ Use all data to develop appropriate program recommendations.

According to the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS),

“The evaluation of vision status and the need for special education and related services should be thorough and rigorous, include a data-based media assessment, be based on a range of learning modalities, including auditory, tactile, and visual, and include a functional visual assessment. An assessment of a child's vision status generally would include the nature and extent of the child's visual impairment, and its affect, for example, on the child's ability to learn to read, write, do mathematical calculations, and use computers and other assistive technology, as well as the child's ability to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum offered to nondisabled students. Such an evaluation generally would be closely linked to the assessment of the child's present and future reading and writing objectives, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media. The information obtained through the evaluation generally should be used by the IEP Team in determining whether it would be appropriate to provide a blind or visually impaired child with special education instruction or related services as required by the IDEA. In addition, because the evaluation must assess a child's future needs, a child's current vision status should not necessarily determine whether it would be inappropriate for that child to receive special education and related services while in school. Please see OSEP's Dear Colleague Letter on Braille, June 19, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/brailledcl-6-19-13.pdf> Letter to Michelle Kotler from Director Melody Musgrove, November 12, 2014.

## **V. Eligibility Guidelines of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

Once the evaluations are completed, the evaluation team determines whether the child is or continues to be a child with a disability and in need of special education and related services. Based on the results of the above evaluations and multiple sources of information, the team may determine that a child has a visual impairment if the following criteria are met. In the [Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities](#), the definition of a student with a visual impairment is:

“Visual impairment” including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

The term visual impairment includes both partial sight and blindness. The term visual impairment does not include a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes, such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. (3301-51-01 (B)(10)(d)(xiii))

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) includes a list of [special factors](#) that must be considered by every child’s IEP team. There are two special factors that focus specifically on students with visual impairments. These two special factors are:

- Instruction and use of braille; and
- Consideration of assistive technology and devices.



The term ‘visual impairment’ does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual-motor or perceptual disabilities, although students with visual impairments may also have these additional difficulties. Teams must consider recommendations provided by medical professionals for eligibility and services. Careful consideration of all assessment information related to visual dysfunction and input from other professionals (e.g. occupational therapists) support the IEP team in the development of appropriate educational interventions.

For those students who are prescribed vision therapy, a doctor, specifically an optometrist who specializes in vision therapy, should provide intervention. IDEA and the No Child Left Behind, Elementary and Secondary Education Act require educators to consider evidence-based educational practices. Due to the lack of scientific evidence of the efficacy of eye exercises, vision therapy as an educational intervention is not practiced by educators, specifically a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI). Medical services such as vision therapy are excluded as a related service under IDEA and should not be listed on the IEP, but obtained privately through an optometrist. Students with deafblindness, vision and hearing loss with or without additional disabilities, are eligible for services through the category “Deafblindness.”

## VI. Expanded Core Curriculum for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

For children who are blind or visually impaired, evaluations to document the present level of academic achievement and functional performance for the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) are required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004). The term Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is used to define concepts and skills that are typically learned incidentally by sighted students, but must be sequentially presented to the student who is blind or has low vision. An ECC may include experiences and concepts casually

and incidentally learned by sighted students that must be systematically and sequentially taught to students who are visually impaired.

In addition to the general education core curriculum that all Ohio students receive, students who are blind or visually impaired, beginning at birth, also need an expanded core curriculum to meet their needs directly related to their visual impairment. The ECC areas include:

- Assistive technology skills, including optical devices;
- Compensatory skills that permit access to the general curriculum;
- Career education and planning;
- Recreation and leisure skills;
- Orientation and mobility skills (O&M);
- Social interaction skills;
- Sensory efficiency (including visual, tactual and auditory skills);
- Self-determination; and
- Independent living skills.

For more information refer to [What is a Core Curriculum?](#) (American Foundation for the Blind).

The presence of a visual impairment requires that these skills be thoroughly evaluated and systematically taught to students by teachers with specialized expertise. Without specialized instruction, children with vision loss may not be aware of the activities of their peers or acquire other critical information about their surroundings (Pugh & Erin, 1999).

As the IEP is developed, the team should consider the following knowledge and skills related to the ECC:

### **Compensatory Skills**

Compensatory skills are needed to access the general curriculum. These compensatory skills include learning experiences such as concept development, spatial understanding, study and organizational skills, speaking and listening skills, and the adaptations necessary for accessing all areas of the existing core curriculum.

Access to literacy through braille and/or print, is required by the regulations implementing IDEA 2004, which states:

“In the case of a student who is blind or visually impaired, [the IEP team must] provide for instruction in braille and the use of braille unless the IEP team determines, after an evaluation of the child’s reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including evaluation of the child’s future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille), that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate for the child.” (34 CFR §300.324(a)(2)(iii); ORC 3301-51-07(L)(1)(b)(iii)(a)).

Many students with low vision use standard print with magnification devices. Some students need both print and braille. Students with multiple disabilities, including deafblindness, may use a tactile or object symbol system for literacy.

Communication needs will vary depending on the degree of functional vision, effects of additional disabilities and the task to be completed. Students with deafblindness and other disabilities may use alternative communication systems such as tactile sign language, symbol or object communication, augmentative communication devices or calendar boxes.

Specialized instruction in concept development may be of significant importance when visual observation is limited. Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) should offer specific and sequential hands-on, sensory-based lessons to build a broad base of experiences. In higher grades, there are many mathematical, geographical and scientific concepts that must be taught with adapted materials and strategies for students unable to learn from pictures and visual diagrams. A child with little or no vision may have fragmented understandings of the world without systematic tactile exploration and clear, verbal explanations. Some concepts are totally visual, such as colors, rainbows, clouds, and the sky. Some are too large to experience completely, such as buildings, mountain ranges, and oceans. Other items are too tiny or delicate to understand through touch, including small insects, a snowflake, or an item under a microscope. Some items are inappropriate to explore through touch such as wild animals or toxic substances. Fragmented concepts can impede social, academic, and vocational development.

Students who are blind and students with low vision need systematic instruction to learn efficient use of their senses. Instruction in visual efficiency must be individually designed and may include:

- Using visual gaze to make choices;
- Tracking car movements when crossing the street;
- Responding to visual cues in the environment; and/or
- Using optical devices such as magnifiers and telescopes.

For most students with visual impairments, an increased reliance on tactual skills is essential to learning. These skills should be considered as part of IEP development. A skill that may be readily captured with a glance by a sighted student may take more detailed “hands-on” interaction and repetition to tactually understand the concept, such as relative size, by a student with who is blind or visually impaired.

Systematic instruction in auditory skills may be needed for successful mobility and learning. Students must learn to effectively use their hearing to respond appropriately to social cues, travel safely in schools and across streets, learn from recorded media, and use echolocation for orientation.

### **Orientation and Mobility**

Orientation and mobility (O&M) is sequential instruction for individuals with visual impairments in using their remaining senses to determine position in space within the environment and techniques for safe movement from one place to another.



Instructional skills include, but are not limited to:

- Concept development (body image, spatial, temporal, positional, directional, and environmental);
- Sensory and motor development;
- Use of residual vision and low vision devices;
- Human (sighted) guide techniques;
- Cane techniques;
- Route planning;
- Problem-solving skills;
- Techniques for crossing streets; and
- Use of public transportation.



Orientation and mobility instructors work in center-based, school, and itinerant situations. They are frequently called upon to assist public transportation authorities in environmental management planning, such as alleviation of dangers caused by complex road patterns (e.g., traffic circles, multiple street intersections) and selective installation of audible pedestrian signals.

### **Skills in Using Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology (AT) allows students with visual impairments to access the general curriculum, to increase literacy options, and enhance communication. There are a variety of high- and low-tech assistive technology tools and software designed specifically for students with visual impairments that require specialized instruction.

These devices/software include, but are not limited to:

- Electronic braille notetakers;
- Colored transparencies;
- Tactile symbols;
- Calendar systems;
- Video magnifiers;
- Screen reader software;
- Screen enlarging software;
- Braille displays;
- Auditory access to printed materials; and
- Magnification devices.

For more information refer to [Section VII: Assistive Technology for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#).

## Social Interaction Skills

A visual impairment can socially isolate a student, impede typical social interactions, or limit social skill development. A student with a visual impairment who cannot see facial expressions and subtle body language to participate in conversations and activities may experience awkward and confusing interactions. Social skills that sighted children observe and imitate may need to be taught to a child with a visual impairment.



## Independent Living Skills

Successful transition from school to independent living and employment requires the development of critical skills including:

- Home living;
- Self-determination;
- Vocational;
- Community access; and
- Interpersonal/social.

Young children begin learning basic skills in independent living from visual observation and imitation. Most students with visual impairments, however, will need systematic instruction and adaptations to standard equipment, such as modifications to read oven markings and to cook independently and safely.

Depending on the level of vision, intellectual ability, and other unique characteristics of a student, adaptations may range from:

- Minor highlighting to tactile clues for matching clothing;
- Cooking foods;
- Grooming and hygiene;
- Cleaning the living environments; and
- Preparation for living on his/her own.

These skills are not typically evaluated or taught in a sequential and systematic basis in general education settings. Family members may require assistance and guidance to implement the

proper adaptations that will permit practice and mastery of new independent skills within the home.

### **Recreation and Leisure Skills**

Students with visual impairments need to experience recreation and leisure activities that they can enjoy as children and throughout their lives such as playing games with friends, joining clubs, and participating in sports. They are often not aware of the options or the possible adaptations that would allow them to participate in these activities. Such skills include both individual and organized group activities for students at all ages and levels.

### **Career Education**

Students with visual impairments need to learn about work and career options available since they cannot casually observe people in different job roles. They need opportunities to explore their strengths and interests in a systematic, well-planned manner.

Career exploration and subsequent training may include:

- Acquisition of specialized skills and equipment;
- Understanding of how to request and develop natural supports in the workplace; and
- How to compete in the job market.

Students must be prepared for a wide range of vocational choices and the adaptations, including technological devices, which make them attainable. It is important to provide students with opportunities to job shadow for concrete experiences of different career choices, and to learn about other persons with visual impairments who have successful vocational outcomes.

### **Self-Determination**

Self-determination includes:

- Personal decision-making;
- Self-advocacy; and
- Assertiveness based on an understanding of one's abilities and related needs.

These skills lead to competence, as opposed to learned helplessness, and are important components of positive self-esteem. Specialized instruction in developing self-determination skills can help students participate meaningfully in their educational and transition planning and make positive adult lifestyle, job, and other life choices upon graduation. Ongoing assessment of each of the ECC areas is critical to measuring success and assuring independence. Instructional needs in the ECC areas can be addressed using a variety of service delivery models. Collaboration between professionals will ensure comprehensive services.

Although the TVI and the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) are the primary resources for instruction in the ECC, other staff members can also play important roles in providing the needed instruction, including:

- Family members;
- Occupational therapists;
- Physical therapists;
- Speech-language pathologists; and
- Classroom teachers.

### Resources for the Expanded Core Curriculum

- [Expanded Core Curriculum Subjects and Skills](#) (AFB)
- [Expanded Core Curriculum Lesson Plan Template](#) (Paths to Literacy)
- [Iowa Expanded Core Curriculum Resource Guide](#) (Iowa Department of Education)
- [Understanding the Expanded Core Curriculum](#) (Perkins School for the Blind)
- [Expanded Core Curriculum](#) (Region 10 Education Service Center)
- [Resources for the Expanded Core Curriculum](#) (Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired)
- [West Virginia Expanded Core Curriculum Resource Guide](#) (West Virginia Department of Education)

## VII. Assistive Technology for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired



According to the [Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities](#) (2014, p.15), an assistive technology (AT) Device is:

“Any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device.”

AT Service is defined as, “Any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. The term includes:

- The evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child’s customary environment;
- Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by children with disabilities;
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;
- Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.

- ❑ Training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family;
- ❑ Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of that child.”

IDEA (2004) requires IEP teams to annually consider AT for every student who has an IEP. Typically, this process is part of the special factors discussion during the student’s IEP. During the discussion, the team may determine that the student needs an AT assessment. The AT assessment process begins by identifying student strengths and weaknesses, as well as the student’s environments and required tasks. The team identifies tools that contain the needed features and equipment trials should be initiated. The team should gather data during the trials to facilitate final tool and strategy selection. An implementation plan should then be developed including a plan for follow-up and follow-along as this process is ongoing.

According to [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-02: Free Appropriate Public Education](#):

“(1) Each school district must ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, are made available to a child with a disability if required as a part of the child’s IEP.

(2) On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a child’s home or in other settings is required if the child’s IEP team determines that the child needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE. “

## **AT Evaluation**

To evaluate the student’s AT needs, a technology evaluation conducted by a professional knowledgeable in the field and in AT evaluation procedures is required to determine if the student requires an AT device(s) and services and must be documented in the student’s IEP.

The AT evaluation should be an extension of the:

- ❑ [Learning Media Assessment](#) (Paths to Literacy);
- ❑ Functional Vision Assessment; and/or
  - [Perkins Learning resources](#)
  - [Family Connect resources](#)
- ❑ Low Vision Evaluation.
  - [Specific Assessments for Students with Low Vision](#)
  - [The Structured Low Vision Exam](#)

The data gathered from these assessments including visual and reading and writing functioning should be considered in the AT evaluation process. Additional information regarding assessment can be found in the [CISAM AIM Module 2: AIM & AT](#). Refer to section 3 on AT Assessment.

For further information, refer to the [Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Assistive Technology Center](#) (OCALI). OCALI provides:

- Basic AT information;
- Assessment resources;
- AT tools;
- AT implementation;
- AT professional development; and
- Assistive Technology Internet Modules (ATIM).

## **AT Equipment**

Students who are blind or visually impaired will use a variety of AT and may use a combination of AT devices in order to be successful in completing their educational tasks, participating in the general education curriculum, and in their social and leisure activities. Some of the AT devices needed by students who are blind or visually impaired will be in the following categories:

- Adaptive keyboards
- Augmentative communication devices
- Braille embossers
- Braille translation software
- Braille writing equipment
- Calculators
- Closed circuit televisions
- Daily living skills
- Portable notetakers
- Refreshable braille displays
- Scanners
- Screen magnification software
- Screen reader software

## **Additional Resources**

- [Michigan Assistive Technology Guidelines for Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) (Michigan Department of Education, Low Incidence Outreach)
- [Teaching Assistive Technology to Students with Visual Impairments](#) (Perkins Scout)
- [Teaching Students with Visual Impairments: Assistive Technology](#) (Willings, 2015)
- [Principles of Assistive Technology for Students with Visual Impairments](#) (TSBVI)
- [Assistive Technology For Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired: A Guide to Assessment](#) (AFB)
- [Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology \(ASNAT\) A Resource Manual for School District Teams](#) (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative, 2009)

## VIII. Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) and Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired



### How does the Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials (CISAM) Support Ohio School Districts?

The [Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials \(CISAM\)](#) is a statewide project funded by Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children (ODE-OEC) serving students with print disabilities, including students who are blind or visually impaired. CISAM assists school personnel in locating accessible educational materials (AEM) in a timely manner, which in Ohio is defined as “the delivery of AEM in specialized formats to students with print disabilities who require them at the same time as their peers receive their materials.”

### What are AEM?

[Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\)](#) are materials designed or converted in a way that makes them usable across the widest range of student variability, regardless of format. In relation to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the term refers to educational materials that have been transformed into the four specialized formats of audio, braille, digital text, and large print.

### What is Federal Quota?

CISAM conducts the annual Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students on behalf of ODE-OEC. [The Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind](#) enacted by Congress in 1879 provides AEM to eligible students who meet the definition of legal blindness. This annual registration of eligible students determines a per capita amount of money designated for the purchase of AEM available from the [American Printing House for the Blind \(APH\)](#). The Federal Quota Program generates funds administered by CISAM to provide educational materials produced by APH for registered students. The Federal Quota funds are supplemental. For guideline information, visit the [Federal Quota section on the CISAM website](#).

### How Do School Districts Request AEM from CISAM?

Teachers, supervisors, or administrators can request materials from CISAM on behalf of students with print disabilities including students with visual impairments. To ensure delivery of AEM to students in a timely manner, CISAM asks requestors to submit a [CISAM Materials Request Form](#) in March preceding the school year in which the AEM will be used. Production and acquisition of specialized formats requires time and timely delivery of AEM is contingent on timely submission of requests. For an explanation of the AEM request process, refer to [How the Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials \(CISAM\) Processes Requests for Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\)](#).

CISAM maintains a collection of over 57,000 audio, braille, digital text, and large print textbooks; instructional aids and tools; and specialized equipment available for students with print disabilities including students with visual impairments.

CISAM provides information on how to access these AEM via the following:

- ❑ [CISAM Services for Students with Visual Impairments](#)
- ❑ [Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\) and the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard \(NIMAS\)](#)
- ❑ [CISAM website](#)
- ❑ [Telephone or email](#)
- ❑ [Professional development/learning opportunities](#)

### **How can school-based decision-making teams ensure the provision of AEM?**

AEM provide access to educational materials that might have previously been inaccessible for the student who is blind or visually impaired. The [National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for \(NCAEM\)](#) developed a [decision-making process](#) to aid teams in ensuring that students who need materials in specialized formats have them for full participation and achievement.

### **Where can families and school staff find more information?**

Families and school personnel interested in additional information and support for their students who are blind or visually impaired, can access the [CISAM AIM Training Series](#) (CATS) and [CISAM AIM Modules](#) (CAM), which cover a variety of topics in relation to the provision of quality AEM in a timely manner throughout the state of Ohio. Refer to the [CISAM Brochure](#) for staff contacts information. The [NCAEM](#) also provides multiple resources.

## **IX. Least Restrictive Environment for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA) least restrictive environment (LRE) provisions clearly state a strong preference for educating children with disabilities in general education environments. In fact, a child's placement in the general education classroom is the *first* option the IEP team must consider when determining where a child with a disability will receive his or her special education and related services.

LRE means that a student who has a disability should have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers, to the greatest extent appropriate. They should have access to the general education curriculum, or any other program that non-disabled peers can access. The student should be provided with supplementary aids and services necessary to achieve educational goals if placed in a setting with non-disabled peers. Should the nature or severity of his or her disability prevent the student from achieving these goals in the general education setting, then the student would be placed in a more restrictive environment, such as a specialized school or classroom within the current school. Generally, the less opportunity a student has to interact and learn with



non-disabled peers, the more the placement is considered to be restrictive. Children under the age of three are served through Part C early intervention services in the setting deemed most appropriate to each family situation. The most appropriate setting is determined as the placement supporting the family in achieving desired outcomes for their child with as little disruption as possible to daily routines and family life.

For preschool and school age students, IDEA and its federal and state implementing regulations guide placement. Part B regulations require public agencies to make available a continuum of alternative placements, or a range of placement options, to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services. The options of this continuum, which may include general education classes, special education classes, separate schools and instruction in hospitals and residential schools, must be made available to the extent necessary to implement the IEP of each student with a disability (34 CFR §300.115 and §300.116).

The IEP team should determine an appropriate learning environment based upon each student's individual educational needs. By law, the team must consider the LRE for each student. To decide LRE, the IEP team must make an *individualized* inquiry into the possible range of supplementary aids and services that are needed to satisfactorily educate the child in the general education environment. If the IEP team determines that the child *can* be adequately educated in that environment, then a general education placement is the LRE for that child. However, the IEP team may determine that the child cannot be educated satisfactorily in the general education classroom, even when supplementary aids and services are provided. An alternative placement must then be considered. Accordingly, IDEA requires school systems to ensure that a "continuum of alternative placements" is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services.

Although a school district is not responsible for ensuring that every school building in the district can provide all the special education and related services necessary for all types and severities of disabilities, the school district is responsible for having the full continuum of options available. If an option is not available in the district and the LRE of a child with a disability indicates that placement, the school district must create the placement, alter an existing one, or send the child to another public or private placement that meets the child's needs. If the school district places a child in another public or private placement, the cost of that placement is paid by the school district.

After considering educational needs in both expanded core and general curricula, the IEP team must carefully select from an array of potential settings. General education classroom, collaborative setting, itinerant teacher services, resource rooms, self-contained classroom and placement at such schools as the [Ohio State School for the Blind \(OSSB\)](#) in Columbus are all options to be considered by the IEP team. Students' needs drive placement decisions. Any service delivery option may be appropriate for an individual student at any given time, and the appropriate placement option may change over time for a particular student.

#### **Related Placement Topics:**

- ❑ [Service Plans for Nonpublic School Children](#)

- [Nonpublic School Placements by Public School Districts](#)
- [Parentally Placed Nonpublic School Children](#)
- [504 Plans](#)

## **X. Inclusion: Instructional Implications in the Classroom for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

Students with visual impairments can be included in the general education classroom and participate in curricular activities alongside their sighted peers. In fact, the majority of students with visual impairments spend time in general education classrooms. Teachers need to keep high expectations and know that a visual impairment does not hinder the learning that happens in the classroom; but may only change the way in which course content is accessed and delivered.

The key is communication between the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) and the general education classroom teacher. The TVI has been trained and has expertise in making accommodations and modifications for students with visual impairments. The general education teacher should tell the TVI in advance what content is being taught in the unit and planned activities in order for the TVI to ensure that the student with a visual impairment can be included in instruction. If accessible educational materials (AEM) need to be prepared, the TVI will need time for preparation. The TVI can help the general education classroom teacher if the child will need a standard textbook or a specialized format (audio, braille, digital, and/or large print) and order the books for the student as needed. For more information, refer to [Section VIII: Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\) and Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#).

General education course content is often delivered in a very visual manner with use of posters, videos, and pictures. Students with visual impairments may not be able to access these materials. Therefore using the senses of touch and hearing should also be used. Providing students with real objects, models, or tactile diagrams to explore with their hands in tandem with verbal explanations can allow students access to pictures and posters. Providing the class with a video that is described through video voice-over can provide access to visual content not only to students with visual impairments, but can draw the attention of sighted students to details that may have been lost through only visual analysis of video content. When providing explanations about materials and objects, the teacher needs to be sure that the descriptions provide students enough detail to understand what is happening.

Students with visual impairments (or other disabilities) are not the only students who benefit from an inclusive classroom or inclusive school practices. Sighted and typically developing peers also benefit from a diversity of students in classrooms. Students learning together now, might hopefully develop into adults who will support individuals who are blind or visually impaired with career or employment opportunities, or offer other opportunities to fully participate and live together in their communities, rather than survive in isolation.

Federal Quota funds are available to order AEM produced by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) for students who are legally blind and registered in the annual Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students. For instance, if the general education science classroom is

studying the periodic table, an accessible periodic table may be available; teachers request these materials through CISAM for the eligible student. For more information refer to Federal Quota in [Section VIII: Accessible Educational Materials \(AEM\) and Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#). Each content area will have unique adaptations for the material that is being delivered.

**Core Curriculum Resources:**

- ❑ [Education of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#) (Perkins Scout)
- ❑ [Professional Development through the Perkins eLearning Portal](#) (Perkins eLearning)
- ❑ [Instructional Adaptations for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired](#) (Willings, 2015)
- ❑ [Etiquette](#) (Perkins Scout)

**English Language Arts Resources:**

- ❑ [Reading Strategies for Students with Visual Impairments](#) (Special Education Technology British Columbia)
- ❑ [Literacy Fact Sheets for the Learner who is Blind/Visually Impaired](#) (Colorado Department of Education)
- ❑ [Teaching Students with Visual Impairments](#) (Willings, 2015)
- ❑ [Paths to Literacy](#) (Perkins and TSBVI)
- ❑ [Children's Stories for the Visually Impaired](#) (Bright Hub Education)
- ❑ [Braille Bug](#) (AFB)
- ❑ [Incorporating Literacy Across the Curriculum](#) (Pinterest)

**Mathematics Resources:**

- ❑ [Math Home Page](#) (TSBVI)
- ❑ [Mathematics Made Easy for Children with Visual Impairment](#) (International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment)
- ❑ [Teaching Math to Students Who are Visually Impaired](#) (Pinterest)

**Science Resources:**

- ❑ [Accessible Science](#) (Perkins)
- ❑ [National Center for Blind Youth in Science](#) (NFB)
- ❑ [Adapting Science for Students with Visual Impairments: A Handbook for the Classroom Teacher and Teacher of the Visually Impaired](#) (APH)

**Social Studies Resources:**

- ❑ [Social Studies Resources](#) (TSBVI)
- ❑ [Geography in a Different Way](#) (Brvar, R. nd)

## **XI. Addressing the Post-Secondary Transition Needs of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

Students who are blind or have a visual impairment and receive services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the state of Ohio are required to have a formal Transition Plan by the time they are 14. The Transition Plan is meant to guide all other IEP goals and services.

The plan answers the following questions:

- What does the student want to do after graduation from high school?
- Does the student have the potential of reaching his/her plans/goals?
- How can we help him/her achieve his/her goals?
- What kind of instruction, services, related services, technology, accommodations, modifications, and supports will be needed to help him/her reach his/her goals?
- Who will be responsible for implementing the plan?
- What is the timeline?
- Are there community agencies that need to be involved to support the student before or after graduation to ensure a seamless transition from school to community, post-secondary education or employment?

### **Post-Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities**

In order to support this transition, Congress added secondary transition services requirements as a component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Post-secondary activities, based on the individual child's needs, may include:

- Post-secondary education;
- Vocational education;
- Integrated employment (including supported employment);
- Continuing and adult education;
- Adult services;
- Independent living; or
- Community participation.



Appropriate measurable post-secondary goals within the plan are intended to facilitate the student's move from special education services to community life. The IEP team should identify the "courses of study and other educational experiences along with transition services" that the student will need to move them towards their identified post-school visions, goals, or outcomes. These may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Required courses;
- Elective courses;
- Modified courses;

- Specially designed courses;
- Educational experiences in the school; and/or
- Educational experiences in the community.

As the student grows and changes, so does his/her interest in school and post-secondary outcomes. Flexibility is a major component of all aspects of transition planning and may need to be revised over time.

A comprehensive Transition Plan for a student who is blind or visually impaired must include age-appropriate assessments and instruction selected from the [Expanded Core Curriculum](#) to address the specialized needs of the student. The success of employment goals and post-secondary education goals will have some dependence on independent living goals for individuals with visual impairments. To be prepared for transition into post-secondary life, students with visual impairments may need an additional year or more of instruction to meet their core academic requirements and the expanded core curriculum. IDEA contains the provision to support students with disabilities who want to continue their public school education after they have completed their core academics by allowing them to stay in school through their 22nd birthday. This can be an opportune time to complete Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) goals.

The Ohio Department of Education recently developed a [Career Connections Framework](#). This framework integrates different career elements at different grade levels. This framework supports students with disabilities and their parents in the whole transition process beginning at a much earlier age. Students can identify their preferences, interests, and knowledge of careers much earlier than in the recent past.

### **Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments (AATA)**

Few vocational assessments are relevant for all students who are blind or visually impaired. It will be necessary to find or create assessments that address preferences, interests, needs, and strengths of each student for whom a transition plan is developed. Sometimes, interviews can give much needed information when the right questions are asked. Often, standardized assessments for speed or quality of work are irrelevant for students who are blind, since these assessments most likely have been standardized for their sighted peers. See the [National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center \(NSTTAC\)](#) website for more information.

### **Participation of State and Local Agencies**

State and local agency involvement may be appropriate to support the secondary transition services of a child with a disability. According to IDEA, school districts must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services to attend the child's IEP Team meeting.

The agency in Ohio that supports employment for individuals with disabilities is the [Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities \(OOD\)](#), previously known as the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. The bureau under OOD that specifically supports individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including individuals with multiple disabilities is the [Bureau of Services for the](#)

[Visually Impaired \(BSVI\)](#). Every student in Ohio who is eligible to receive Special Education services due to a visual impairment should be referred for services through BSVI beginning at age 14.

Social Security can be an agency that many students should be linked to as a safety net while they are pursuing post-secondary education or employment. If a student is eligible to receive services from OOD, he/she can request a Benefits Analysis from Social Security.

Many individuals who are blind, especially individuals with multiple disabilities, might qualify to receive services from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Students may be referred to their County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (CBDD), based on student needs.

Students choosing to attend any college or university should meet with the Office of Disability Services before making enrollment decisions. This office can support their educational needs as a student at the college or university.

Students and parents need to have a clear understanding of the differences between educational rights under [IDEA](#) and disability rights as an adult under [Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). Under IDEA, local and state education agencies are required to find, identify, and serve students with disabilities. Once a student leaves the education system through graduation, exceeds the school-age limit, or for some other reason, gives up a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under IDEA, the individual with a disability (or his/her guardian) is responsible for seeking out adult services through an eligibility process. This is the difference between educational entitlement and adult eligibility. For more information on the differences between IEP and 504 plans, read: [The Difference Between IEPs and 504 Plans](#) (Understood, 2014).

### **Ohio's Indicator 13 Checklist**

The Ohio's Indicator 13 Checklist is a version of the [National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center](#)'s (NSTTAC) Indicator 13 Checklist that was designed to help school districts review the secondary transition plan components of their IEPs. The Ohio Indicator 13 Checklist is available on the ODE website.

### **Transition Resources**

- [National Post-School Outcomes Center](#)
- [1-AATA-Library](#)
- [Ohio Employment First](#)
- [OhioMeansJobs](#)

### **Summary of Performance**

For a student with a disability who is graduating or exceeding the age requirement for FAPE, a [Summary of Performance](#) of the student's academic achievement and functional performance is

required that provides recommendations on how to assist students in meeting their post-secondary goals.

## **XII. Role of the Family in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

A quality education is facilitated through collaboration and an equal partnership between all stakeholders, including the family, as identified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The National Association of State Directors of Special Education identified some key features of this equal partnership in their publication, *Blind or Visually Impaired Students: Educational Service Guidelines* (Pugh & Erin, 1999). In an equal partnership, educators find value in the opinions, insights, and expertise of parents, a child's first teachers; and parents value the wealth of knowledge that educators bring to the table.

Parents of students with visual impairments have the responsibility of educating themselves on the specific needs of their children, as individuals with particular educational needs including:

- Roles of educational personnel
  - Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)
  - Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS)
  - Paraprofessionals
  - Intervention Specialist
  - General Education Teacher
- Eligibility criteria;
- Options related to accessible educational materials (AEM) and assistive technology (AT);
- Appropriate educational placements;
- Reevaluations; and
- Expanded core curriculum (ECC).

In an equal partnership, they will be provided with training options and resources from the school, if needed. Parents in Ohio may also seek the support and guidance of a Parent Mentor through the local parent training and information center, the [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities \(OCECD\)](#).

ODE provides guidance on IEP team members and their roles on their website ([Chapter 7.2: Identification of IEP Team members and Their Roles](#)). In this guidance, parents are identified as vital members of the team who have a personal stake in the discussion of their child's needs. Parents can provide information on their child's strengths, weaknesses, interests, learning styles, and preferences. Parents provide insights that are invaluable in the IEP decision-making process.

According to ODE Procedures and Guidance, "the role of parents is to:

- Verify the accuracy of personally identifying information;
- Provide information and observations about the child's level of functioning in the home and community;
- Provide information on the child's ability, interests, performance and history;

- Provide information regarding the child's medical status;
- Provide information on instructional strategies and, if appropriate, behavioral supports that have been successful;
- Assist in developing educational goals, objectives and benchmarks;
- Assist in identifying the special education and related services to be provided;
- Assist in determining the appropriate educational program and the least restrictive environment;
- Provide input on the vision statement;
- Assist in all decisions made during the IEP meeting;
- Express concerns to be considered when developing and reviewing the IEP; and
- Give consent, when required, for the initiation and implementation of the IEP."

### **XIII. Role of the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments**

Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) are team members for all students with visual impairments, including those with multiple disabilities and deafblindness. The educational needs of these students vary widely. From initial evaluation to instruction to assessment, the TVI plays a critical role in helping these students, teachers, paraprofessionals, family members and related services personnel.



TVIs have many roles, including:

#### **Assessment and Evaluation**

- Assisting other professionals in developing appropriate evaluation and assessment strategies;
- Conducting the functional vision assessment (FVA) and the learning media assessment (LMA);
- Conducting or participating in assistive technology evaluations;
- Referring students, as appropriate, for orientation and mobility (O&M) evaluations;
- Referring students for low vision exams conducted by low vision practitioners;
- Interpreting evaluation and assessment results regarding the impact of a visual impairment;
- Interpreting eye reports;
- Participating in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); and
- Evaluating student progress and providing progress notes.

#### **Direct instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)**

- Providing direct instruction in visual efficiency, tactile symbols, braille, assistive technology, auditory skills, social skills, use of near and low vision devices and other areas of the ECC, based on student need;
- Supporting families of young students as they help their children reach developmental milestones with adapted strategies specific to needs related to the visual impairment; and



- ❑ Providing support to the student to facilitate development of self-esteem, self-determination and social acceptance.

### **Supporting Educational Teams**

The TVI should be able to educate, support and collaborate with family members and other members of the instructional team who work with the student. The TVI must be able to convey professional opinions in a diplomatic, collaborative manner in order to ensure that appropriate programming is recommended for the student with a visual impairment. The TVIs supporting roles may include:

- ❑ Supporting families in developing early childhood goals and objectives related to a visual impairment;
- ❑ Supporting transitions from early intervention services to preschool, preschool to elementary school, elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school;
- ❑ Assisting in the provision of a coordinated set of activities for transitioning from school to adult life;
- ❑ Providing direct instruction, co-teaching and participating in other collaborative efforts;
- ❑ Consulting with parents, teachers and other professionals in the home, community and school on providing instruction in the ECC areas;
- ❑ Assisting in modifying the environment to accommodate specific visual needs;
- ❑ Modeling appropriate instructional techniques;
- ❑ Providing, creating and assisting in acquiring adapted materials;
- ❑ Maintaining current eye reports on each student when available and interpreting ophthalmological information to the educational team;
- ❑ Providing in-service training and consultation to the educational team in school and to professionals in applicable community setting (e.g. community-based instruction and community-based employment);
- ❑ Recommending adapted strategies for access to the general education curriculum and participation in the school community;
- ❑ Recommending that a vision-specific support system is in place for transitioning from school to adult life; and
- ❑ Building independence and success in home, community and school environments.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S. C. § 6319 (2008) (NCLB), mandates the provision of highly-qualified professionals. In cases where the TVI is not the student's highly-qualified instructor in academic content areas, the TVI may collaborate with the academic teacher of record. For information about certification requirements in Ohio, go to the [Educator Licenses](#) section of the ODE website. For more information on The Ohio State University Program in Visual Impairments, visit the [Department of Teaching and Learning: Program in Visual Impairments](#) website.

## **XIV. Role of the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist**

Movement, independent or supported, is critical learning. Orientation and Mobility (O&M) is recognized in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as a related service, which may be required to assist a child with a visual impairment to benefit from special education. Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) provide services that enable students who are visually impaired to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement in school, home and community environments. They are critical members of the team for students with visual impairments who have identified O&M needs.

COMS must have the competencies necessary to provide effective services to students. A COMS must graduate from a certified program in O&M, complete coursework, and an internship. Graduate students completing an O&M program must then pass an O&M certification exam through the [Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals \(ACVREP\)](#). In the state of Ohio, a COMS who works with preschool and school-age students is required to hold a Pupil Services: Orientation and Mobility license through the Department of Education.

The COMS has many roles. These may include:

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

- Assisting in conducting the functional vision assessment (FVA) when appropriate;
- Conducting the O&M assessment; and
- Evaluating student progress and providing progress notes as per school district/agency policy.

### **Direct instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)**

- Encouraging purposeful movement, exploration of immediate surroundings and motor development for young children with visual impairments;
- Teaching spatial and environmental concepts and use of information received by the senses (such as sound, temperature, and vibrations) to establish, maintain, or regain orientation and line of travel (e.g. using traffic sounds at an intersection to cross the street);
- Providing support to the student to facilitate development of self-esteem, self-determination, and social acceptance;
- Orienting student to unfamiliar environments;
- Instruction in efficient use of low vision for movement;
- Teaching efficient use of low vision devices;
- Teaching use of mobility tools, including the long cane and adaptive mobility devices, for safely negotiating the environment; and
- Providing travel experiences in the community, including residential and business environments and public transportation systems.

### **Supporting Educational Teams**

- Supporting families of young children in encouraging gross and fine motor skills, sensory skills, basic concepts, and other developmental milestones;
- Planning continuity from early childhood intervention services to school-age programs;
- Assisting in modifying the environment to accommodate specific mobility needs;
- Modeling appropriate O&M techniques for other team members;
- Assisting in providing, creating, and acquiring adapted materials, such as tactile maps and mobility devices;
- Providing in-service training and consultation to other team members in home, school, and community settings; and
- Recommending O&M strategies for access to the general curriculum, such as physical education class and participation in school and community extra-curricular activities.

### **Administrative/Recordkeeping Duties**

- Maintaining records on all evaluations, IEPs and progress notes; and
- Attending IEP meetings.

## **XV. Role of the Paraprofessional Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired**

The decision to assign a paraprofessional to a student is made by the school district after careful consideration of what accommodations or modifications are necessary in order for the student to make progress toward meeting standards, including specific learning goals articulated in the student's IEP. Paraprofessionals need specific and ongoing training in order to effectively support the student's learning.

Although federal and state regulations require minimum educational levels for paraprofessionals, additional specific training on the impact of visual loss is important for the provision of effective instructional support. The roles of paraprofessionals can vary with the specific student or classroom being supported; however, all paraprofessionals should work as part of an instructional team to support all students, including students with a visual impairment. In particular, paraprofessionals must work closely with their supervising teacher(s) with input from the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) and/or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS). Without proper orientation and supervision, paraprofessionals can inadvertently act as a barrier between the student and peer involvement and can detract from the student's progress toward independence. Over-reliance on a paraprofessional over time can result in students' unnecessary dependence on adults.

Educational paraprofessionals may be assigned to provide overall support to the larger class with particular duties for a student with a visual impairment. In addition to directly supporting instruction that focuses on learning outcomes, their role may include:

- Assistance for activities of daily living;

- Health and safety; and/or
- Access to the environment.

Some districts employ paraprofessionals to provide assistance with material preparation, which may include, but is not limited to copying, highlighting, enlarging, and scanning materials. In addition to developing knowledge and skills to support students with low incidence disabilities, such as visual impairment, paraprofessionals should be supported in building competencies in the following core areas:

- Essential instructional strategies related to braille, assistive technology, and tactile graphics;
- Classroom organization and [behavior management \(PBIS\)](#); and
- Team member and professional behavior.

Paraprofessional job functions differ according to role, but in general, duties include:

- Working under the direction of the supervising teacher and vision professionals to modify instructional materials, including use of braille translation or magnification software;
- Storing and distributing audio, braille, digital, and large print books under teacher supervision;
- Assisting teachers with standards-based instruction and activities;
- Reinforcing orientation and mobility (O&M) skills for movement of students between instructional locations and activities; and
- Assisting students in becoming increasingly independent.

## **XVI. Students Who are Blind or Visually Impaired with Additional Disabilities**

Students who are blind or visually impaired with additional disabilities are a complex, heterogeneous population of students. Blindness and visual impairments are low incidence disabilities and the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) providing services to students with additional disabilities may serve as a member of a trans-disciplinary team. The expertise of many professionals will be necessary to meet the diverse needs of this population of students with multiple disabilities.

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (1999) listed four factors that a TVI should consider when serving a student with visual impairments and additional disabilities:

- TVIs must collaborate with other educators regarding the impact of other disabilities on the student's education.
- Regardless of the number or severity of additional disabilities, the TVI must be involved in the student's education if the student has a visual impairment that is affecting learning.

- ❑ Teachers must acknowledge that there are times in the life of a student with multiple disabilities when the visual impairment must have primary attention. Educational service providers must be flexible so that members of a trans-disciplinary team can vary their time and commitment to the student.
- ❑ Orientation and mobility must be considered as a part of educational programming for all students who are visually impaired and have additional disabilities. This caveat includes the student with low vision. Many low vision students appear to be safe travelers in and around their schools because they may not be required to demonstrate their awareness and use of distant vision in familiar environments. For all students, including those with low vision, an assessment in orientation and mobility is essential.

The student who is blind or visually impaired with additional disabilities may require, depending on the student's disabilities and identified needs, additional services/resources in the following areas:

- ❑ Physical therapy;
- ❑ Speech therapy;
- ❑ Occupational therapy;
- ❑ Assistive technology (refer to section VII); or
- ❑ Accessible Educational Materials (refer to section VIII).

Note: Students who have a combined vision and hearing loss are considered deafblind, not visually impaired.

## **XVII. Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired and Gifted**

The U.S. government defines "Gifted & Talented" students as those... *"who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities."* 20 U.S.C. Section 7801(22).

Twice-exceptional students are gifted students of above average abilities who have special educational needs – due to an identified disability such as sensory issues including visual impairments or hearing impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, or Asperger Syndrome. Students who are both gifted and visually impaired often remain ineligible for programs and services because the visual impairment itself masks or suppresses the gifts and talents. Some school districts have refused to permit qualified students with disabilities to participate in accelerated or gifted and talented programs and/or have required these students to give up the services designed to meet their individual needs. These practices are not consistent with federal law.

According to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), if schools place a "condition" for participation in accelerated classes or programs on qualified students with disabilities by requiring these students

to forfeit their necessary special education or related aids and services, then they are denying **FAPE** (free, appropriate, public education) under Part B of the IDEA and Section 504. Special education must be provided in order for students who are gifted and visually impaired to achieve their potential through implementation of a well-planned, systematic program based on individual needs, abilities, and disabilities.

Students who are both gifted and visually impaired need programs and placement options that respond to their needs in four areas: (a) identification; (b) curricular modifications; (c) psychological needs and counseling; and (d) specially trained teachers and support services. Unfortunately, giftedness among these students generally goes unidentified.

Identifying giftedness in children in Ohio who are visually impaired is a complicated process. Appropriate measures to screen these children for intellectual giftedness have not yet been identified. Norms are not well established for adapted editions of tests (brailled or audio), and enlarged print may not reproduce graphics accurately. Lower scores may actually reflect the inability of tests to capture and recognize intelligence based on non-visual behaviors. Some states use multiple measures to identify students with visual impairments and giftedness.

Other barriers which might hamper the identification process in assessing the true potential of students with visual impairments are caused by factors such as lowered expectations for students with visual impairments, lack of self-confidence, non-challenging environments, and/or lack of learning opportunities imposed by the visual impairment itself.

The most pressing problem faced by students with visual impairments is access to the curriculum. Most educational curricula are based on the assumption that students have normal vision. Without translation into alternative formats, concepts, abstractions and synthesis of the curriculum may be lost or severely delayed in students with visual impairments. This extends as well to verbal descriptions and incidental learning which takes place daily in the classroom. While Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) cannot accompany students throughout the day, they should be involved with the students' programs, providing learning materials in adapted formats, as well as assisting the other teachers in providing non-visual examples and references.

Support services for students who are gifted and visually impaired should include instant access to materials that are available to their sighted peers. Given the quantity and pace of reading and analysis typically required in classes for students who are gifted, it is imperative that materials in appropriate alternative formats be made accessible to students with visual impairments in a timely manner. Otherwise, they may fall behind-not because they cannot read and analyze as effectively as their peers with sight, but because they simply do not have the materials in time to complete the assignments.

Students who are identified as gifted and visually impaired – twice exceptional – have unique needs that must be addressed. Education requires the nurturing of students' special gifts and talents, while simultaneously meeting the unique needs created by visual impairments. For students who are gifted and visually impaired, special education services must go beyond traditional deficit-based or compensatory approaches and toward enriching experiences, which

develop and build upon gifts and talents. Students with visual impairments should be assessed for and included in programs for students who are gifted. Once identification has occurred, decisions regarding educational options and settings, curriculum, and counseling services should address the student's giftedness, visual impairment, and individual needs.

Common characteristics of gifted students with visual impairments include:

- Fast rate of learning;
- Superior memory;
- Superior verbal communication skills and vocabulary;
- Advanced problem-solving skills;
- Creative production or thought that may progress more slowly than sighted students in some academic areas;
- Ease in learning braille;
- Great persistence and commitment to tasks;
- Motivation to know;
- Sometimes slower rate of cognitive development than sighted students;
- Excellent ability to concentrate.

The following resources provide additional information on students who are twice exceptional:

[Ohio Twice Exceptional Guide](#)

This ODE publication helps parents and educators of gifted students with disabilities recognize, understand, and meet their needs, enabling these twice-exceptional children to reach their highest potential. The guide provides examples of challenging and appropriate instructional strategies and interventions and includes case studies of twice-exceptional students that illustrate how educators can meet their dual needs.

[Twice Exceptional Children \(2e\), Wrightslaw](#)

Additional resources, publications, policy information, and articles can be found on the Wrightslaw website.

## **XVIII. Determining Service Time for the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments and/or for the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist**

To assist in determining the amount of time a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) or Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) may provide services to individual students, the use of the [Michigan Severity Rating Scales](#) is recommended for guidance. The [VISSIT: Visual Impairment Scale of Service](#) is designed to guide TVIs in determining the type and amount of itinerant services to recommend for students on their caseload.

## **XIX. Determining Workload for Service Providers of Students with Visual Impairments**

According to the Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-09(l)(2), “School-age service providers will provide specially designed instruction in accordance with the following requirement limiting the number of students per licensed professional.” Under the Ohio Administrative Code, an intervention specialist can provide services based upon the severity of each child’s need. An intervention specialist who serves students with the disabilities of hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, and/or other health impairments shall supervise no more than ten children and no more than eight during one instructional period (3301-51-09(l)(2)(c)).

In order to maintain proper workload, administrators should evaluate staffing levels periodically to ensure that caseload numbers do not exceed the maximum amount and that proper age ranges are represented in the instructional period. Careful attention to schedules, licensure and student need may affect the school’s need for additional staff to meet the requirements set forth in the Ohio Administrative Code and [Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities \(2014\)](#).

## **XX. Licensure for Vision Professionals**

Students with visual impairments should be provided educational services by an Ohio licensed Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI). Those students who are visually impaired and require orientation and mobility training or other orientation skills should be taught by an Ohio licensed Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS). Fully licensed TVIs and COMS have taken numerous hours of coursework, completed internship hours in the field with other licensed individuals in the field of visual impairment education, and successfully passed nationally recognized tests in their areas of expertise.

### **Training Program Requirements**

All individuals who are applying to be licensed as a TVI or COMS in the state of Ohio must be recommended for an initial licensure by an accredited teacher training program. A list of approved educator programs can be found on the [Students page of Ohio HigherEd](#).

### **Required Tests**

- ❑ **TVI** – The state of Ohio now requires the Ohio Educator Assessment test provided by Evaluation Systems Group of Pearson, for licensure. All those seeking to obtain an initial license as an Intervention Specialist in Visual Impairments must take the Assessment of Professional Knowledge: Multi-Age (PK-12)/004 examination and receive a minimum score of 220.

All educators seeking either initial licensure or an additional licensure as an intervention specialist in the area of Visually Impaired (PK-12) (Licensure Code 65-196109) must take the



Ohio Educator Assessment Test titled “Special Education Specialist: Visually Impaired (code number 045) and receive a minimum score of 220. This examination requires that examinees bring a braillewriter to the testing center. The test contains multiple-choice questions, constructed response questions, and a braille transcription test. [Preparation materials, payment, testing centers, and policies for the examination can be found online.](#)

- ❑ **Orientation and Mobility Specialist** – The Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Educational Professionals (ACVREP) provides the examination for licensure as a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS). A multiple-choice examination is administered to all candidates. Preparation materials, testing centers, and policies for the examination can be found on the [COMS section of the ACVREP website.](#)

### **Licensure Applications**

Anyone applying for a teaching licensure must obtain a BCI criminal background report, or if out of state, Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) background reports. These reports can be initialized at local police, sheriff, or fingerprinting stations. Some universities require that results be sent to the educator preparation office prior to student teaching or internship. The results of the reports are also shared with the Ohio Department of Education. [Applications for Ohio Licensure as either a TVI or COMS are completed online.](#)

## **XXI. Conclusion**

*The Ohio Guidelines for Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired* was designed to provide guidance and resources to decision-makers and families. Students who are blind or visually impaired have a wide range of abilities and varied and intensive needs. Due to their diverse needs, educators and families must be knowledgeable of services required and resources available to plan and implement appropriate individual educational programs for students. Further information is available from the [Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children](#); [Ohio State School for the Blind, Outreach Program and Services](#); and the [Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials.](#)



## **Appendix A - Recruitment Strategies for Teachers of Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists**

The Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) features a [Job Exchange](#), a listing of advertisements posted by school divisions, agencies, and other organizations in need of professionally trained staff. There is a fee

charged for this service.

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Visual Impairment and Deafblindness also features an [Employment Opportunities portal](#). This site features listings of positions for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs), teachers of students with deafblindness, Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists, and personnel preparation. There is no fee for this service.

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org), is a central source of information and services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired across the United States. Included is a [listing of colleges and universities offering teacher preparation programs for TVIs and COMS in the United States and Canada](#).

The Ohio State University has both TVI and O&M specialist programs. The TVI licensure program is designed for licensed teachers to gain an additional licensure as an Intervention Specialist in Visual Impairment. The O&M program allows individuals who have completed a bachelor's degree in any area to come back to school to complete an O&M licensure. Both programs are in the [College of Education and Human Ecology; Department of Teaching and Learning](#).

In addition, the Department of Teaching and Learning also offers a M.Ed. degree for individuals seeking an initial licensure as an [Intervention Specialist in Visual Impairment](#).

## **Appendix B - Additional Resources and Web Sites**

[Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals](#)

[\*A Cheat Sheet to Help You Self-Advocate for Accommodations as a College Student Who Is Blind or Visually Impaired\*](#)

[American Council of the Blind \(ACB\)](#)

[American Foundation for the Blind \(AFB\)](#)

[American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. \(APH\)](#)

[Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired \(AERBVI\)](#)

[Braille Formats \(online version\) – Principles of Print to Braille Transcription 2011](#)

[Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials \(CISAM\)](#)

[Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 \(IDEA\)](#)

[Council for Exceptional Children – Division on Visual Impairments and Deafblindness](#)

[Educational Management Information System \(EMIS\) of Ohio Department of Education \(ODE\)](#)

[FamilyConnect](#)

[The Hadley School for the Blind](#)

[National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments \(NAPVI\)](#)

[National Braille Association \(NBA\)](#)

[National Center on Accessible Educational Materials \(NCAEM\)](#)

[National Federation of the Blind \(NFB\)](#)

[Ohio Department of Education \(ODE\)](#)

[Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children \(ODE-OEC\)](#)

[Ohio State Board of Education](#)

[Ohio State School for the Blind](#)

[Ohio State School for the Blind Outreach Services](#)

[Master of Education \(MEd\) Program in Visual Impairment \(The Ohio State University\)](#)

[Orientation and Mobility and Program in Visual Impairment, Licensure-Only \(The Ohio State University\)](#)

[OSERS Dear Colleague Letter on Braille Instruction](#) (United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services)

[Perkins School for the Blind](#)

[Seedlings Braille Books for Children](#)

[Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired \(TSBVI\)](#)

[Teaching Students with Visual Impairments](#) (Willings, 2015)

[Tip Sheet #2 - The Expanded Core Curriculum](#) (New Hampshire Professional Development Center for Vision Education)



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