

### **Welcome back to the new school year!**

Change (CHānj), used as a verb is defined as, “make or become different. ‘a proposal to change the law’.” Winston Churchill said, “To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.” This fall we have an opportunity to work toward perfection as we learn how new state legislation will impact our lives and work. Consultants at Region 10 ESC who stay abreast of legislative changes have graciously collaborated to contribute critical information about the new laws that will impact TVIs, COMS, and our students. There have been other changes in our field, our districts, and our lives, so we must be working toward perfection. Have a great school year, and do not hesitate to contact Region 10 ESC if you have any questions about these or other issues or if you need technical assistance. Call 972-348-1568, and you will be directed to the appropriate person.

### **Assistive Technology**

By Belinda Rudinger

Welcome back, VI Teachers! Check out our new VI Assistive Technology website filled with resources and links:

<http://www.region10.org/supplementary-services/programs/vi-assistive-technology/>

This fall, Region 10 ESC is offering iPads for Students with Visual Impairments training in three locations: Grand Prairie, McKinney, and here at Region 10 ESC. In September, I'll be sending out Technology Request Lists that will be due in October, so start thinking about what your students may need for the 2013-2014 year.

As you are getting organized for the year, check out my new favorite app: Springpad! It's free, available for computer/iOS/Android, and it's been helping me keep track of everything as this busy year commences.

In the meantime, remember that I'm always available for technical assistance. Email or call for more information: [Belinda.rudinger@region10.org](mailto:Belinda.rudinger@region10.org) or 972-348-1676. Hope your year gets off to a great start!

## **Legislative Updates Impacting Special Education**

### **Evaluation Timeline Changes**

Senate Bill 816 is an amendment to the education code which changes the timeline for initial evaluations. Evaluations must now be completed within 45 school days from the date the district receives consent rather than 60 calendar days. However, if a student is absent during the 45 days for three or more days (absences do not have to be consecutive), then the timeline is extended by the number of days the student is absent during the 45 days. It will be important to work with school staff to accurately keep up with this moving timeline. “School day” does not include a day that falls after the last instructional day of the spring school term and before the first instructional day of the subsequent fall school term.

When consent is received at least 35 days before school is out but fewer than 45 days, the evaluation will need to be completed and a written report provided to the parents by June 30. An ARD must be held by the 15<sup>th</sup> school day of the following year.

When consent is received with less than 35 instructional school days left in the spring semester, the written evaluation report must be completed no later than the 45<sup>th</sup> school day from the day of signed consent. If the student is absent more than 3 days during the 45 days, this timeline can be extended by the number of days the student is absent. Thus, the report can be completed after school begins the subsequent year.

In addition, when a written request for an evaluation is received by the special education director or district administrative employee, the district must respond within 15 days to offer the parent the opportunity to provide written consent for evaluation or refuse evaluation with notice of procedural safeguards.

If a student is under 5 and not enrolled in public school and not receiving ECI services, the student will need to be evaluated 45 school days after the date that consent is received. However, if an infant is being served by ECI, this law “does not impair any rights of an infant...” The timeline does not change for infants served by ECI—three is three.

### **STARR-ALT**

There are two new laws which address students who take STARR-ALT. According to HB 5, Section 31, TEA will need to develop a new alternate assessment that does not require “teachers to prepare materials”. This new assessment will be given during the 2014-15 school year. In addition, SB 906 indicates that there can no longer be automatic failure students taking level one because the standards are set too high for them to mathematically pass even if they perform at the highest level. These students will at least rate “Developing Academic Performance” rather than rated as a failure.

### **HB 5**

It is important that every VI teacher become familiar with HB 5 as the changes in the STARR testing and graduation requirements will impact every student you serve. The changes are too numerous to mention here.

Briefing book with all education laws from 2013 year can be found at:

[http://www.tea.state.tx.us/Communications/Annual\\_Reports/Legislative\\_Briefing\\_Book/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/Communications/Annual_Reports/Legislative_Briefing_Book/)

House Bill 5 information can be found at:

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=25769806149>

### **SB 39**

*Effective immediately*, this bill requires the evaluation and subsequent instruction in all 9 areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum [Braille, concept development, social interaction skills, career planning, assistive technology (including optical devices), independent living skills, recreation and leisure enjoyment, self-determination, and sensory efficiency] “before being placed in a classroom, or within a reasonable time after placement.”

What does this mean for the CTVI and COMS? All FVE/LMAs will need to include information on evaluation of the Expanded Core Curriculum and provisions must be made to provide instruction as required by the evaluation.

### **HB 590**

Effective September 1, 2014, this bill requires an orientation and mobility evaluation performed by a certified O&M specialist (COMS) as part of the special education eligibility considerations for children with a suspected or diagnosed visual impairment.

What does this mean for the CTVI and COMS? Commissioner's rules should provide additional clarification in January 2014. However, current interpretation includes:

- O&M evaluation will be required (along with FVE/LMA, medical eye report, etc.) when determining eligibility as student with a visual impairment.
- Person conducting evaluation must be certified as an orientation and mobility instructor, as determined under commissioner rules (ACVREP certified).
- O&M evaluation must be conducted "in a variety of lighting conditions and in a variety of settings, including in the student's home, school, and community and in settings unfamiliar to the student."
- COMS must be a part of the multidisciplinary team that looks at data to determine eligibility and also a part of the multi-disciplinary team that considers re-evaluation for consideration of continued eligibility.

### **Ordering materials from APH...IT'S ALL NEW!**

Submitted by Sue Enoch

Last year TSBVI Outreach began installing a new software system to make inventory, processing of orders and data storage more reliable and easier. We've had some bumps in the road, but feel pretty confident that we've got our in-house use of the Keystone Library System, better known as KLAS, working smoothly. Now it's time to share the joy with the field.

The system is very easy. You can log into the system from anywhere, anytime, as long as you have web access. Your information is in the teacher and district data module if you've ordered from APH before. You will have a simple materials request to complete either with a number you already know, or by browsing the APH catalogue which is available on this application. Put in your list of requests and touch the submit button and you're done. There are no other forms to complete, no other connections you will need. If you've got 5 minutes in a parking lot and an iPhone with internet, you can order from the parking lot!

Thursday, August 29, at 3:15, we hosted a TETN to introduce the web-ordering system to everyone. If you were unable to attend the TETN, it is archived on our website, so you can watch on your schedule. The instructions will be on the website for you to read and download or print if you choose. There will be some transition time. We will keep the old system open until September 12, 2013. That gives you time to familiarize yourself with the new system and even go to the training module to play around without fear of error. And you can always call me, Sue Enoch at 512-206-9270, or Randall McAlister at 512-206-9344 if you need assistance. We're excited about the new system and hope you will be, too.

### **Getting started with the new APH ordering system!**

By Hillary P. Keys

First, download the handouts from the TETN #20432 titled Changes in the APH Materials Ordering Process, then go to this link <http://www.tsbvi.edu/tetn-broadcasts> in order to download handouts. This link also is where you will find information on getting a certificate from TSBVI.

Next, to stream the video, go to this link <http://205.132.48.21/streaming.html> and the recording ID will be 20432062. There is no PIN, leave that blank, and click on "stream this recording". You will have 30 days from 8/29/2013, to stream the video.

Please note that you will need Quick Time or Media Player to stream the video. If you download these in order to stream the TETN, you will need to restart your computer, and you may have to disable your firewall.

## 15th Annual Sports Extravaganza

Sports Extravaganza will take place on October 18 & 19, 2013. This multi-sport event for students with visual identified with impairments **ages 0-22** and is held each October in Irving, TX, and has sports and activities for students with visual impairments of **all ages and abilities**. Events include competitive and non-competitive activities:

Competitive:

- track and field for 6-11 & 12-22 year olds
- goalball & beep baseball skills
- goalball tournament for beginner and intermediate players
- modified track and field for athletes with visual and multiple impairments

Non-Competitive:

- archery
- golf hit-for-distance
- beep kick ball (*New!*)
- geocaching
- low organized games for infants and toddlers ages 0-5
- sports and leisure skills for athletes with visual and multiple impairments ages 6 -22

You will find Sports Extravaganza applications in English and Spanish as well as a volunteer form for all who wish to help at the event on the Region 10 ESC website at:

<http://www.region10.org/supplementary-services/events/sports-extravaganza/>

## Lilli Nielsen

A pioneer in the field of educating children with visual impairments, deaf-blindness, and multiple disabilities passed away in June of this year at the age of 87 in Denmark. To learn more about her and her approaches that are encompassed by the term "Active Learning," follow the link or Google her. <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/lilli-nielsen-and-active-learning>

## October is Art Beyond Sight Awareness month at the Dallas Museum of Art!

By Amanda Blake of the DMA

In celebration of visual awareness, the Dallas Museum of Art will have a variety of programming that will include hands-on activities, gallery discussions, art making experiences, and artist demonstrations that focus on ways to experience art using senses other than vision. Artist John Bramblitt will join several Art Beyond Sight programs throughout the month of October to talk about his process as a blind painter and will lead workshops that include adaptive techniques for people with disabilities.

For general questions, please call 214-922-1251 or e-mail [access@DallasMuseumofArt.org](mailto:access@DallasMuseumofArt.org). Visit and explore our website for information about these and other programs. <http://www.dallasmuseumofart.org/>. All programs are free with paid admission unless otherwise noted.

## Adobe Reader XI

By Donna Clemmons

Adobe Reader XI allows pdf files to be efficiently converted into Word documents that are formatted in such a way that translation for embossing is much, much easier. It only takes a few simple steps to get started.

1. Download Adobe Reader XI <http://get.adobe.com/reader/?promoid=JZEFU>
2. Open your PDF document in Adobe Reader
3. In the right panel Choose Convert to Word and click Convert (If you do not have an account you will be prompted and walked through the processes of setting up.)
4. If you want to set up the account without a document you can go to [https://www.acrobat.com/welcome/en/home1.html?s\\_tnt=62501:1:0](https://www.acrobat.com/welcome/en/home1.html?s_tnt=62501:1:0). The price for Adobe Export PDF is \$21.31 per yr.

Note that if you are using Tiger Software Suite you can go directly to translate and emboss. If you are using another type of translation software you will have to tweak it a bit based on what your software will accept.

## **VI Professional Development Calendar for 2013-14**

*Registration now open!*

- **Sept 4, 2013** New TVI/COMS 101
- **Sept 30, 2013** The How to for SAM (Symbols and Meaning – new APH product)  
Teams of TVI and MIVI classroom teachers encouraged to attend together.
- **November 13, 2013** Orientation and Mobility Evaluations for All: Infants, MIVI, and Academic Students
- **December 10, 2013** New TVI/COMS Follow-up
- **Dec. 11-14, 2013** AER International Orientation and Mobility Conference  
New Orleans, LA (New Orleans Hilton Riverside Hotel)
- **January 27, 2014** Cortical Visual Impairment: Identification, Assessment and Intervention (with Diane Sheline)
- **April 29, 2014** We're Growing Up: Targeted Instruction to Address Needs of Typically Developing 3-5 Year Olds with Visual Impairments
- **July 30 - Aug. 3** AER International Conference 2014, Grand Hyatt San Antonio.
- **Various dates** TSBVI TETN presentations. Follow this link for more information:  
<http://www.tsbvi.edu/tetn-broadcasts>

## **Schedule of ECC Events for 2013 – 2014 school year**

- **October 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>** Sports Extravaganza (all ages and ability levels)
- **October 28, 2013** Babies' Day Out (Birth through 2 years)
- **February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014** Iron Chef (ages 10 – 22) *New event!*  
(Students will prep and cook food that they and their guest will eat and then students will clean up.)
- **March 21-23, 2014** Transition Camp (ages 14 – 22)
- **April 11, 2014** Technology Olympics (Grades 3 and up)
- **May 5, 2014** Discovery Day at Heritage Village (Grades 1<sup>st</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> academic students)

You will find more information and links to registration forms on our website at <http://www.region10.org/supplementary-services/programs/expanded-core-curriculum-ecc/>