

State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Advisory Council
AGENDA – Meeting #88
October 22, 2025– 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
TEAMS Virtual Meeting

10:00 Call to order

[Council authority and function](#)

Council Members

Name	Council Role	Term ends	Attendance
Nettamara Doak	Certified Braille Transcriber	June 2027	x
Rachel Krogman	Parent	June 2026	x
Katie Bakke	Parent	June 2028	x
Kimberly Brown-Ubersox	Parent	June 2028	Absent
Cheryl Orgas	Member of an organization	June 2028	x
Colleen Kickbush	Member of an organization	June 2027	x
Kailee Kamps	Member of an organization	June 2028	x
PENDING	Licensed TVI	June 2027	
Jenn Raclaw	Licensed O&M	June 2028	x
Penny Kurkiewicz	Licensed Gen Ed	June 2028	Lv 12:15 x
Barbara Wuensch	School Board Member	June 2028	x

Holly Smith	School District Administrator	June 2028	x
Laurie Schmidt	School District Special Ed Director	June 2027	x
Teri Phalin	CESA Representative	June 2028	Arr Lunch time x
Julie Hapeman	Higher Ed	June 2028	x
Jennifer Ottowitz	Other - VI	June 2028	12:00-1:00 x
Guadalupe Torrijos	Other - VI	June 2026	x
Lealisa Stefl	Other	June 2028	x

DPI Representatives

Name	DPI Role	Attendance
Paul Manriquez	Assistant State Superintendent, Division for Access and Opportunity	x
Susan Piazza	Director of WI Educational Services Programs, DAO	x
Daniel Parker	Section Manager of Student Engagement, Bureau of Teaching and Learning, Division of Academics	12:30 x
Elizabeth Tomev	Director of Library Development, Bureau of Libraries, Division of School and Library Operations	x
Beth Voecks	Library Services Manager, WI Talking Book & Braille Library	x
Dan Wenzel	Director, WCBVI	x

Dawn Soto	Outreach Director, WCBVI	x
Kay Rhode	Liaison to the Advisory Council, Education Consultant, WCBVI Outreach	x
April Peissig	Secretary to the Advisory Council, WCBVI Outreach Administrative Professional	x
Amanda Jordan	Administrative Assistant to the WCBVI Center Director	x
Guest: Jolene Gruber	Grant Coordinator for WDBTAP	x

10:05 Housekeeping & Attendance

Introductions, New Members

Prior Meeting Minutes Approval

 [May 28, 2025 SS BVI Ed Advisory Council Minutes.docx](#)

Motion to approve – Laurie Schmidt

Second – Cheryl Orgas

Passed - yes

10:30 Public Comment

[Public Appearances.pdf](#)

[Special Education Acronym Glossary](#) Also found in the Orientation power point
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/educators/initiatives/regional-special-education-network>

10:35 Orientation [NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS ORIENTATION 2025 \(1\).docx](#)
[Council New Members Orientation September 2025.pptx](#)

[DRAFT 2024-25 Annual Report Advisory Council BVI.docx](#)

10:55 Follow up on Action items

[WCBVI Family Resources](#) posted in Outreach Weekly Update

WCBVI Resource Fair. May 21, 2026. The WCBVI College and Career Readiness (CCR) Program will host the third annual Resource Fair. Last year, 25 Students visited WCBVI with representatives from 42 organizations

WESPDHH/WDBTAP Interveners update Jolene Gruber

Grant Coordinator WDBTAP. [WDBTAP-Jolene Gruber Intervener Notes](#)

Jenn Raclaw, as member of the WAER legislative committee that brought Intervener concern to Council, will connect with Jolene.

11:15-11:45 Subcommittee Updates and Discussion

1. The VI Para subcommittee and WCBVI Outreach Consultants reconvened in spring to continue the work to organize a resource that promotes the specialized skill set of Special Education paraprofessionals who are working with students who are blind and visually impaired. This resource will be published on 2 DPI pages and linked to the WCBVI site. Like the Family Resources page, it will be shared in the Division of Learning Support Newsletter, WCBVI Outreach Weekly update, and with Itinerant Coordinators and Regional Support Network. The resource will be on the [Special Education Paraprofessionals](#) page under additional resources

2. Braille Needs Subcommittee. Dawn

https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/ela/ELA_Standards_w._Braille_Considerations_Appendix_9.25.2025.pdf Page 142

After discussion with DPI leadership, it was decided that the name Braille Framework needed to change to align better with other appendices in the standards. The Braille Framework is now called *Considerations for Students Who Use or are Learning to Use Braille*. These considerations can be found as Appendix 6 in the Wisconsin English Language Arts Standards. We are excited to announce that they will be made available in the Standards document on September 26, 2025. Bianca and Jessie are hosting a webinar for general educators on November 13, 2025, from 4-5 PM via Teams to give an overview of the considerations and answer any questions. They are also providing professional development for WSBVI around the considerations. The following objectives were written for the subcommittee to address. Does the council want the subcommittee to continue working on b, c, d? Does anyone want to join this subcommittee?

- a. Evaluate other states' standards in braille for English Language to give WI TVIs guidelines/standards.
- b. Evaluate WI Math standards and decide what is missing for braille users.
- c. Create a list of barriers for students getting braille in their hands at same time as peers. Begin brainstorming additional recommendations/solutions. (agenda item for committee)
- d. Determine and make recommendations for Learning Media Assessment (LMA) (agenda item for committee)

The subcommittee will reconvene to review c and d. Dawn shared that the updated Roles & Responsibilities document has information on LMA and Outreach can train on an LMA item.

Holly Smith: Will this be included in the Essential Elements?

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/topics/essential-elements>

Dawn: Jessie Grober works with the Standards committee and when any standards open such as Math or the Essential Elements, she will be involved and share in the Outreach Weekly if there are ways for professionals to be involved.

3. O&M shortages Subcommittee. Julie Hapeman. I am very excited to report that we have our first cohort of students in Wisconsin participating in an orientation & mobility certification program through Northern Illinois University. This program was made possible through a partnership with Vision Forward Association, which is the host site for the in-person component of the classes. This semester, the students are taking Beginning O&M, which meets via Zoom every 2-3 weeks and in-person for 6 hours on 5 Saturdays. Next semester, the students will take Advance O&M, which will meet weekly on Zoom and approximately every 2 weeks in-person at the new Vision Forward location. The students will also participate in a seminar at The Seeing Eye in Morristown, NJ and will plan and complete a trip to Chicago to use different forms of public transportation, with many of the same goals as the annual high school O&M lesson to Chicago. The summer will be Orientation & Mobility for learners with Additional Disabilities, which will meet for 7 in-person sessions. Upon completion of all the coursework, the students will be prepared to begin their internships, which, upon successful completion, should qualify them to sit for the Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS) exam. NIU is extremely excited about this collaboration across state lines and sent a representative to observe and take photos of our first in-person class. It is the hope of the Advisory Council and NIU that this will be the first step in a partnership that will bring additional NIU courses to Wisconsin to increase the number of vision professionals via the established curriculum that has made NIU a program that has been in existence for more than 60 years. If you have questions or general comments about this program, please contact Julie Hapeman at JHapeman1@niu.edu. Please share your hopes and expectations for the development of this program so Julie can share them with both the Advisory Council and NIU. The motto for Wisconsin is "Forward," and the motto for NIU is "Forward, Together Forward."

15 min BREAK

Noon-12:30

Election of Officers

Chair – Julie Hapeman

Vice Chair - Jenn Raclaw

Council Representative Updates

WAER, Kailee Kamps, Organization Representative-

[WAER Advisory Council Update 10.22.2025.docx](#)

Vision Forward-Colleen Kickbush, Organization Representative-[Vision Forward Updates Oct 22, 2025.docx](#)

National Federation of the Blind, Cheryl Orgas, Organization Representative-Parents and Family Division at Lions Camp was Oct 10-12; Milwaukee chapter involved in Transit issue that is dismantling same day service for transit riders, cutting and eliminating routes. This puts more pressure on paratransit services

State Convention National Federation of the Blind March 27-29, 2026, Hilton Madison

Thank you to the PwC Foundation Reimagine Grant Program for funding braille copies of *National Geographic Kids: Rocks and Minerals* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld

Thank you to the Herb Kohl Philanthropies for funding braille copies of *Brownie the War Dog: Veterans' Best Friend* by Kelly Nelson, Illustrated by Aaron Boyd

Council Member, Jennifer Ottowitz- The National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision created the 4to24 app for parents and caregivers to help prepare children for college, work, and life after school. Topics include: building social skills, literacy, technology, academics, and daily living skills. The app covers activities for ages 4 to 24 years. Students in high school may use the app and there is a version for parents/caregivers of children who are DeafBlind. Professionals may access the complete content through an online professional portal.

Council Chair and Higher Ed Rep, Julie Hapeman – promoting the profession of Blindness Education with a vendor table at Milwaukee Public Schools events.

Rachel Krogman, Parent Representative- The House Energy & Commerce Committee passed this bill out of committee in September 2025, now pushing for House and

Senate. House Energy & Commerce Committee is considering H.R.1262, the Give Kids a Chance Act, which would reauthorize the Rare Pediatric Disease Priority Review Voucher (PRV) Program / amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to molecularly targeted pediatric cancer investigations, and for other purposes. This program is a proven, taxpayer-neutral incentive that drives investment in treatments for rare childhood conditions – including inherited retinal diseases (IRDs). For children living with conditions such as Leber congenital amaurosis or early-onset retinitis pigmentosa, time is vision. The PRV program helps level the playing field by:

- Encouraging companies to pursue therapies for small patient populations that might otherwise be overlooked.
- Speeding FDA review of potential treatments while upholding rigorous safety and efficacy standards.
- Providing families hope that innovation will reach them sooner.

Please consider urging Congress to pass the Give Kids a Chance Act and restore this critical lifeline for kids living with rare diseases. Here is a site to help track progress: [Give Kids a Chance Act of 2025 \(H.R. 1262\) - GovTrack.us](#)

12:30-1:30 DPI representative updates

1. Director of Library Development, Bureau of Libraries, Division of School and Library Operations, Beth Tomev [DPI Bureau of Libraries Update 10.22.25.pdf](#)

2. WI Talking Book & Braille Library, Library Services Manager, WI Talking Book & Braille Library, Beth Voecks [WTBBL BVI Council October 22nd, 2025 Updates.docx](#)

3. Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired Departmental Updates:

Center Director, Dan Wenzel [WCBVI Update Education and Residential Template.docx](#)

Outreach Director, Dawn Soto [WCBVI Update Outreach.docx](#)

4. Department of Public Instruction (DPI) IDEA updates and DPI resources for students with disabilities. Section Manager of Student Engagement, Bureau of Teaching and Learning, Division of Academics, Daniel Parker are also applicable to this council:

[Copy of 2025 10 October Council Administrative Updates.pdf - Google Drive](#)

1:30 Action Items Jenn Raclaw

Let Kay know if you would like to join the Braille Needs Subcommittee

Colleen Kickbush: ask people do research about EDVI Act and send a letter, advocate, share stories. Will have information in link being sent to Kay.

Recruitment

We almost have a full council--our TVI rep nominee is pending approval! If you know of someone who wants to join, they can let Kay know and she will contact them when a position is open.

We will continue recruitment efforts through these channels: Special Education and Pupil Services Newsletter (formerly Division of Learning Support Newsletter), the WAER digital community and the WCBVI Outreach Weekly update and, of course, word of mouth! Please reach out to your groups, including social media! Recruitment will be posted on WCBVI's Facebook page. As you learned in the orientation, the Wisconsin CENTER for the Blind and Visually Impaired is under the umbrella of the Department of Instruction and will be the homebase for the recruitment efforts. Follow WCBVI Facebook page and share from there! Keep in mind, we want and need to have equitable representation of the racial and ethnic diversity within our state.

Reminder: Nominations, including new appointees, reappointments, and replacements mid-year, all go through the same process nomination process.

Reminders Julie Hapeman

Attendance. Statutes require two meetings. Please make your best effort to attend all meetings. We have 17 seats and quorum is thus, 9. We planned meetings in advance to reduce absenteeism.

2025-2026 Meeting Dates February 4th, May 13th.

Communication: Share what you learn here with your groups! Minutes from this meeting need to be approved at the next meeting before they are posted so it's important that you relay what you learn earlier!

This Council uses the TEAMS platform. Please accept TEAMS invitation and share the website with those who might want to attend. [State Superintendent's Blind and Visual Impairment Education Advisory Council](#)

Use council email! bvi.advisorycouncil@wcbvi.k12.wi.us

Please send category and DPI updates and any informational documents, two weeks before the meeting, and they will be added to the minutes. Please make your updates and any other documents accessible. If you can't send them ahead of time, consider sending documents after the meeting so that information is shared equitably.

Public comment

Motion to adjourn Laurie Schmidt

2nd Penny Kurkiewicz