

**Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)**  
**Education Committee Meeting Minutes**  
September 21, 2020

**Members Present**

Bob Kresmer, Chair  
Doris Woltman  
Lisa Jackson  
Julie Urban  
Jared Kittelson  
Ed House  
Colin Wong

**Members Absent**

Lisa Yencarelli

**Staff Present**

Lindsey Powers

**Guests Present**

Julie Oliver

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**Call to Order and Introductions**

Bob Kresmer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Introductions were made and a quorum was present.

**Approval of August 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Doris Woltman motioned to approve the minutes from the August 17, 2020 meeting. Colin Wong seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**ASDB Update**

Bob Kresmer stated that GCBVI Assistive Technology (AT) Committee sent out a survey to Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)s inquiring regarding potential training topics. Mr. Kresmer stated the AT Committee intended to offer a virtual training to TVIs and professionals that worked with blind and visually impaired students in the Fall. Bob Kresmer stated at the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) State Convention, during the Legislative Seminar, attendees received an update regarding the state's budget. Bob Kresmer stated that at the beginning of the pandemic, the

State predicted a 1.18 billion shortfall in the state budget, a sweep of available funds, and a reduction in state employees. Bob Kresmer stated that previously, Arizona had passed the Wayfair Act, which included a sales tax for all state online purchases. Bob Kresmer stated that due to the pandemic, individuals were making more online purchases, which offset the initial projected shortfall. He noted that instead, the state shortfall would potentially be 50 million, which would not require budget sweeps or a reduction in employees.

Bob Kresmer stated the NFB of Arizona was revitalizing the Parent of a Blind Child organization and requested an update. Colin Wong stated the Arizona Parents of Blind Children was run under the NFB and was revitalizing the state division. He noted the organization would offer education and resources to parents of blind children, and to offer support to parents during the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) development. Mr. Wong stated that Ashley Moon would be the President of the division and was recruiting parents that were looking for resources. Bob Kresmer requested that Colin Wong send any information regarding the division to Lindsey Powers to be distributed to the committee. Colin Wong stated the NFB Education Committee was interested in holding a seminar, where a professor would educate parents, and anyone interested in learning more about the IEP process. Bob Kresmer inquired whether TVIs would be invited to participate in those trainings. Colin Wong stated TVS and teachers would be welcome to participate in the training.

Bob Kresmer stated that Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB) Superintendent, Annette Reichman, provided an update at the NFB State Convention regarding the distance learning efforts. Mr. Kresmer stated Ms. Reichman stated that ASDB was offering hot spots and any necessary technology to ensure that students could participate in their online learning. He noted that Annette Reichman indicated that at the end of the previous school year, some school districts continued to provide classes, take attendance, and hand out homework and resources, while other school districts-maintained contact with families but did not hold actual classes with students. Bob Kresmer stated Annette Reichman indicated that ASDB would offer full education to students and that all reasonable efforts would be made to ensure that schools remained in contact with the families. He noted that ASDB would offer the necessary technology so that students could participate remotely, or students could attend classes virtually from the ASDB dorms in Tucson. Bob Kresmer stated that Annette Reichman reported that there were 41 blind and visually students receiving education at the ASDB Tucson campus and there were 300+ students statewide, which seemed like a low number compared to previous years. Lisa Jackson stated

that number did sound low, and she would check the ASDB enrollment report and report back to Mr. Kresmer.

Bob Kresmer inquired whether students in the co-operatives were participating in classroom the virtual learning. Doris Woltman stated that some blind and visually impaired students in Cochise County were attending classes in person, Pima County students were attending virtually and students in Vail were attending in person and through virtual learning. Doris Woltman stated that some parents were hesitant to send their children back to the campuses, and the co-operatives continued to offer classes through Zoom or Google classrooms. Ms. Woltman stated the production center was busy providing Braille documents to students or sending the information to their devices. Doris Woltman stated the co-operatives continued to offer formative testing to test students' benchmark learning. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the virtual learning would enable TVIs to provide more virtual resources to students. Doris Woltman stated there were challenges due to the different platforms that each district used, and the accessibility of the platforms. She noted that teachers struggled to teach Braille remotely, and to engage the student to learn Braille.

Bob Kresmer inquired regarding the Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) TVI program through the Arizona State University (ASU). Jared Kittelson stated that 13 students were participating in the program in which about half were participating in person and the rest were virtual. Bob Kresmer inquired whether FBC had any conversations with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) regarding a separate endorsement for TVIs, so they would not require a master's degree. Jared Kittelson stated that FBC staff were in contact with the ADE regarding that. Bob Kresmer inquired how the FBC had adapted the early childhood program to offer services remotely. Mr. Kittelson stated FBC provided virtual services for families participating in the Early Intervention Program as a contractor of ASDB. Jared Kittelson stated FBC was in contact with ASDB regarding the plan to offer in-person services. Bob Kresmer stated his understanding that some families preferred to delay those services temporarily. Jared Kittelson stated some children experienced Zoom fatigue, and families had other things occurring in their lives and struggled to participate in virtual services. Bob Kresmer inquired when FBC would begin offering those services in person. Jared Kittelson stated FBC would align with ASDB regarding when the organization would offer in-person services. He noted that FBC would continue to offer choices to families on whether they preferred in-person or virtual learning. Jared Kittelson stated FBC continued to recruit students through conferences such as Educator's Rising, community colleges, and to ASU's undeclared Sophomores. Jared Kittelson stated the program would continue to be offered as a bachelor's for Juniors, although FBC was working with ASU to

offer a post-bachelor's program as well. Colin Wong inquired how FBC was observing the students enrolled in the program. Jared Kittelson stated the Clinical Coordinator observed the 50-75 hours in virtual classrooms. Julie Urban inquired whether the students were participating in public schools also. Jared Kittelson stated that in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, students were participating in the classrooms, the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, students were shadowing itinerant TVIs in public schools, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, students could spend time with an itinerant teacher or student teaching.

### **VRATE Update**

Bob Kresmer stated the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) typically struggled to attract teachers and students to attend the conference in person. Bob Kresmer stated that VRATE would be held virtually and inquired how the Education Committee could encourage teachers and students to attend the conference. Julie Urban stated the GCBVI should send a letter to the Special Education Directors, explaining the importance of participating in the conference. Colin Wong inquired whether VRATE offered CEUs to teachers. Bob Kresmer stated his understanding that the VRATE Board had discussed offering CEUs in the past but was unsure whether they were offered. Julie Urban stated that in previous years, teachers were offered a code that could be presented to obtain CEUs. Julie Oliver suggested the Education Committee highlight the sections that would attract parents or students, to encourage their attendance. Bob Kresmer inquired how VRATE intended to manage the exhibit hall virtually. Colin Wong stated that he would be presenting to the VRATE Board regarding how the NFB State Convention handled their exhibit hall and would offer guidance on that process. Bob Kresmer noted that information would be useful for individuals interested in participating in VRATE and obtaining information from the vendors.

### **High Stakes Testing Discussion**

Lisa Jackson stated she would be attending a meeting with the ADE regarding the high stakes testing, and she would be able to offer an update after that meeting.

Bob Kresmer stated the Education Committee members should be thinking about recommendations to make to the GCBVI regarding any recommendations to make to the Legislature. Julie Urban inquired whether any committee members had received an update regarding the survey from the ADE regarding a potential endorsement for TVIs. Bob Kresmer stated he had been in contact with several ADE contacts and had not received a definite answer but would continue to follow up.

## **Date and Agenda for Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Education Committee will be determined. Agenda items are as follows:

- ASDB Update
- FBC/ASU Program
- VRATE Update
- High Stakes Testing Discussion

## **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

## **Public Comment**

A call to the public was made with no response's forthcoming.

## **Adjournment of Meeting**

Julie Urban motioned to adjourn the meeting. Lisa Jackson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.