

From: "ED, Special Ed Resource Acct" <ra-pdespecial@pa.gov>

Date: July 21, 2015 at 2:42:22 PM EDT

To: "'All-sd@lists.cas.psu.edu' (All-sd@lists.cas.psu.edu)" <All-sd@lists.cas.psu.edu>, "all-iu@lists.cas.psu.edu" <all-iu@lists.cas.psu.edu>, "all-iuse@lists.cas.psu.edu" <all-iuse@lists.cas.psu.edu>, "all-charter@lists.cas.psu.edu" <all-charter@lists.cas.psu.edu>, "all-aps@lists.cas.psu.edu" <all-aps@lists.cas.psu.edu>

Cc: "all-pattan@lists.cas.psu.edu" <all-pattan@lists.cas.psu.edu>, "fran.warkomski@gmail.com" <fran.warkomski@gmail.com>

Subject: Unified English Braille Transition

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

July 21, 2015

Penn*Link

TO: School District Superintendents
School District Special Education Directors
Intermediate Unit Executive Directors
Intermediate Unit Special Education Directors
Charter School Chief Executive Officers
Charter School Special Education Directors
Approved Private School Chief Executive Officers

FROM: Patricia Hozella, Director
Bureau of Special Education

SUBJECT: Unified English Braille Transition

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of the transition to the Unified English Braille code beginning January 5, 2016. The Braille Authority of North America voted on November 2, 2012 to adopt Unified English Braille as the official braille code of North America. The Braille Authority of North America is the organization charged with promoting and facilitating the uses, teaching, and production of braille. It is comprised of representatives from 18 different organizations of and for people who are blind and visually impaired, and meets twice a year to promulgate rules, make interpretations, and render opinions and decisions pertaining to all braille codes and their production.

As part of this transition, there are training and implementation issues to address for teachers of students with visual impairments, students, and transcriptionists as well as preparing the infrastructure for the production of instructional materials and state assessments in the new code.

At the recent Penn-Del Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired Conference on April 22-24, 2015, a session was provided on "Making the Move –

Strategies and Resources for the Smooth Transition to Unified English Braille”. This 70-minute information session on the Unified English Braille adoption and use of braille code changes from instruction to textbooks was presented by the Braille Authority of North America Chair, Dr. Frances Mary D’Andrea, and Vice-Chair, Mary Nelle McLennan.

The next opportunity for training for teachers of students with visual impairments is at the Low Incidence Institute 2015 to be held at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center on August 12 and 13, 2015. During this time, Dr. Frances Mary D’Andrea will present a two-day workshop titled: “Unified English Braille: Training, Updates and Implementation – A Hands-on Experience”. This workshop will be available to all visually impaired professionals including but not limited to teachers of students with visual impairments, paraprofessionals, transcribers, and consumers. The focus of this presentation will be on the changes between Unified English Braille and the current code. Participants will have the opportunity for hands-on practice of Unified English Braille examples with discussion to follow. Example documents transcribed in Unified English Braille will also be reviewed. Lastly, participants will engage in a discussion regarding Pennsylvania’s proposed state implementation plan.

The Bureau of Special Education encourages program directors to facilitate attendance at this workshop for any teachers or braille assistants on your staff. This workshop will provide practical application of the changes for student use. Registration and program information can be found at the following link:

<http://www.pattan.net/category/Training/Pennsylvania%20Low%20Incidence%20Institute>.

Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Education seeks your input on the draft plan for the implementation of Unified English Braille over the next three years. The plan will be available at the Summer Institute and online at the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network webpage at www.pattan.net.

For additional information or clarification, you may contact Lynn Dell at 717.783.2311 or the Accessible Instructional Materials Center at (800) 360-7282 or use the following link:

[http://www.pattan.net/category/Educational%20Initiatives/Accessible%20Instructional%20Materials%20\(AIM\)](http://www.pattan.net/category/Educational%20Initiatives/Accessible%20Instructional%20Materials%20(AIM)).