National Federation of the Blind of Arizona

Requesting amendment to ARS 15-214, blindness literacy law

2023 NFBA Phoenix Legislative Seminar Fact Sheet

* In 2014, The Braille Authority of North America (BANA) adopted the Unified English Braille code as the standard for Braille Writing transitioning from literary braille code.

* The current law is out of date and requires the standard of the Literacy Braille code. additionally, the National Certification in Unified English Braille is the only nationwide certification for competency and ongoing professional development in the teaching of Braille.
* Finally, there are two professional certifying bodies validating the competency of core blindness training areas including orientation and mobility, access technology, Rehabilitation Teaching, and other expanded core curriculum skills mandated by a blind child’s individualized education plan: The National Blindness Professionals Certification Board, (NBPCB), and the Academy of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals, (ACVREP). Currently, school districts, including the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind, as well as training centers serving individuals who are blind or have low vision struggle to fill vacancies for teachers of blind/visually impaired students and currently only accept the specialized teaching positions for the blind offered by the certification from the ACVREP.

The National Federation of the Blind of Arizona and supporting blindness community organizations is seeking an amendment to:

* Amend the language of the Braille standard to the updated Unified English Braille, and
* Include the National Unified English Braille Certification as the updated standard of qualification for Braille teachers. And
* Update the qualifications for teachers of blind students to include the National Orientation and Mobility Certification (NOMC), National Certification in Rehabilitation Teaching for the Blind (NCRTB), National Certification in Access Technology for the Blind (NCATB), along with the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS), and Certified Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT)

Please contact our legislative director, Joanne Williams, at 318-497-2782, or by email at jwilliams@saavi.us should you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

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