Resolution of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired: July 2018

**Assessment, Services, and Personnel Preparation to Support Students with CVI and their Families**

**Resolution Number 2018-001**

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Whereas to receive a truly free and appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all children and youth with visual impairment, including those who may have additional disabilities, should be properly evaluated by teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) who are equipped with and use multiple assessment tools to determine such students' individual sensory channels, functional vision, and learning media needs;

Whereas these types of evaluations are especially critical for the large and growing population of students who experience neurological visual impairment (frequently otherwise known as cortical or cerebral visual impairment; hereinafter, children with CVI);

Whereas TVIs must also have access to resources and participate in professional development opportunities in order to keep up with the changes in the diagnosis and assessment of CVI and appropriate interventions to minimize its effect;

Whereas whenever possible, assessments conducted by TVIs should include (as called for in IDEA) a variety of research-based, data-driven, and validated tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information;

Whereas there are currently no assessments available to TVIs that adequately address all the possible effects of CVI and/or meet the exacting scientific standards for research-base, and validated evidence;

Whereas frameworks for functional vision and learning media assessments commonly used by TVIs today are nevertheless based upon recommended practices in the field;

Whereas there are multiple assessment tools, frameworks and strategies available for use by TVIs when conducting a comprehensive assessment of the visual functioning and sensory channels of children with CVI, the use of which serve to support of IDEA’s mandate for the use of multiple assessment tools; and

Whereas the CVI Range by Christine Roman-Lantzy is but one assessment designed to provide information on the visual and sensory functioning of children with CVI;

Whereas, the Perkins-Roman CVE Range Endorsement and other continuing

education opportunities on the Perkins eLearning website are valuable resources to teachers and others who wish to hone and test their skills in the administration of the CVI Range;

Whereas some proponents of the CVI Range and the related endorsement are seeking to have policymakers and state and local education agencies require the use of the CVI Range and to require TVIs to obtain the endorsement as a condition on such TVIs' provision of special education to children with CVI;

Whereas a TVI's failure to obtain specifically branded continuing education opportunities, even if such opportunities are marketed as an endorsement, and completion of professional training in an assessment tool alone is no indicator of a provider’s preparedness to conduct appropriate comprehensive assessment or provide appropriate special education programming to children with CVI or any other students with visual impairment;

Whereas university teacher preparation programs are addressing the needs of children with CVI and their graduates have beginning-level competencies and skills, which can be honed through experience, mentoring, and additional professional development;

Whereas some states allow for individuals to circumvent university preparation teacher training and permit licensure of TVIs via (a) minimal coursework or a (b) test-only credential and functionally allowing individuals without adequate training in assessment of children with ocular and/or neurological-based visual impairment, or program development to assess, plan, and deliver services to children with visual impairments including those with CVI;

Whereas individuals gaining TVI licensure via a test-only modality are not prepared to assess, plan, and deliver services to students with visual impairment, including those youngsters with complex disorders, such as CVI;

Whereas it is imperative that parents and guardians of such students with CVI have accurate, complete, and unbiased information about the professional training and qualifications possessed by TVIs today who are evaluating and developing individualized education programs (IEPs) to meet such students' unique needs;

Whereas knowledge about neurological visual impairment and children with CVI is evolving rapidly, and a rich body of research and related developments from around the world promises to further enlighten and change educational practice over time; and

Whereas requiring the use of a single specific assessment today, or the express or implied imposition of brand-specific endorsement requirements on TVIs beyond state licensure and adherence to nationally recognized TVI standards puts students at risk of being denied the most up-to-date assessments and services and needlessly locks state and local educational agencies into practices and purported credentials with a limited shelf life that do not align with federal and state law and policy; now therefore be it

*Resolved,* that the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER):

1. encourages personnel preparation programs training new and pre-service TVIs and O&M specialists to include coursework in assessment tools, learning needs, and instructional methodologies to support the diverse needs inherent in the heterogeneous population of students with visual impairment, including those students with neurological-based vision impairment and those with additional disabilities;
2. encourages parents and teachers in all states to educate lawmakers and call for the abolition of “test-only” pathways to TVI licensure and require rigorous university preparation as the only option to gain licensure as a TVI;
3. encourages current and new TVIs to pursue continuing education and/or professional development opportunities and training to keep abreast of the ever-changing practices related to students with neurological visual impairment in order to effectively meet the unique needs of children with CVI;
4. encourages state chapters and divisions of AER to advocate for and promote the appropriate use of multiple comprehensive assessments, as mandated by IDEA, thereby honoring all students' unique needs for appropriate and reasonable accommodations  that recognize the diversity of functional vision, learning media, and literacy characteristics inherent in the heterogeneous population of students with visual impairment, including those students with neurological-based vision impairment and those with additional disabilities;
5. urges the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, and state and local educational agencies to protect the integrity of comprehensive assessments conducted by TVIs both by rejecting calls that expressly or implicitly require the use of any single specific assessment tool or technique with specific populations of students with visual impairment and by refusing to impose specifically-branded in-service training requirements on state-licensed TVIs (prepared in accordance with nationally recognized TVI standards; Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI) as a precondition for providing special education to children with CVI or any other students with visual impairment;
6. calls upon the U.S. Congress to promptly enact the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act, which, among other critical policy objectives, would significantly increase investment in quantitative and qualitative research, allowing our field to identify evidence-based practices in assessment and instruction for children with CVI and all other students who are blind, have low vision, are deafblind, or may have these conditions and additional disabilities; and
7. shall disseminate this resolution online and using any other appropriate means to make it widely available to parents, TVIs, and all other stakeholders to ensure national, state and local communication of these matters.