**Resolution of the**

**Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the**

**Blind and Visually Impaired, July 2014**

**Literacy Media Decisions for Students with Visual Impairments**

**Resolution 2014-1**

Whereas AER's mission is to develop and promote professional excellence through support of those who provide services to persons with visual impairments, and…

Whereas the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) is dedicated to serving its members needs by implementing and maintaining high professional standards while being a strong advocate for people who are blind or visually impaired, and…

Whereas the AER Board of Directors has adopted the position paper entitled, Literacy Media Decisions for Students with Visual Impairments (Lusk, Lawson, & McCarthy, 2013), and…

Whereas the choices for conventional literacy instruction include one of the following as stated in the position paper:

1. *Instruction in braille* and the use of braille unless the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team determines, after an evaluation of the student's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the student's future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille), that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate for the child. This is identical to the wording regarding the provision of braille in IDEIA. or
2. *Instruction in print* with or without optical and/or electronic devices after a clinical low vision evaluation of the student’s potential for using vision to access appropriate general education reading and writing materials at near and at a distance; or
3. *Instruction in both braille and print* (known as dual media) with or without prescribed optical and/or electronic devices, after evaluations described above in (I) and (II), and combining the instructional approaches defined above in (I) and (II). The second and third options are modeled after the braille-specific wording in IDEIA, but encompass other literacy media or combinations of media. These options are taken from the AER adopted position paper.

Whereas the Recommendations for Practice from the position paper are stated as follows:

“A variety of assessments from a wide range of medical and educational professionals is needed to fully assess a student with a visual impairment and provide individualized “conventional literacy” programming. Beyond determining if the student requires braille, print, or a combination of print and braille, there are additional factors that must be continually evaluated. Information on how these factors impact the acquisition of literacy skills must be recorded and charted to determine the rate of progress, or a lack thereof. The Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) also needs to address new technologies and instructional methods as they emerge. This ensures that future changes or additions to the student’s literacy programming are individualized and data-based.”

Therefore, be it resolved that AER will advocate for and include this language within future efforts toward re-authorization of IDEA, or any other federal law that has the potential to impact literacy decisions for children with visual impairments.

Reference:

Lusk, K., Lawson, H., & McCarthy, T. (2013). *Literacy Media Decisions for Students with Visual Impairments*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Available from <http://lowvision.aerbvi.org/>