May 2, 2019
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>> Hi, we want to welcome you today to today's webinar that's being recorded, for purpose of today's webinar, it's just do be able to offer this day to technical assistance and so for this particular webinar, CEU's will not be offered after the viewing.
I'm Amy Campbell, and I'm an education consultant for visual impairment, I serve the eastern part of the state, regions 1, 2, 3 and 4.
>> I'm Crystal Patrick, I'm an educational consultant and I serve the western half, regions 5, 6, 7, 8.
>> Great.
>> So we hope that today's webinar is going to be helpful to all of you, and to give you another chance to just to kind of view a quote that I came across recently that says the adoption of the UEB is an opportunity for renewed focus on the importance of braille literacy. So we've got a lot of information to share and we're going to get going.
So what you see here is the BANA press release from 2014, and what it says is just the information that on November 2nd, 2012, the United States members of the braille authority of north America, BANA, voted to adopt the Unified English Braille to replace the English braille, American edition, in the United States, so based on extensive dialogue and planning, that involved more than 30 organizations as well as individual consumers and teachers and transcribers, BANA established that January 4th, 2016, as the date of which the United States would implement UEB. And so first, we want to offer some background information
just to give you context to what we're talking about with this particular press release. The braille authority of north America is an organization that is responsible for setting the rules for the braille codes and the guidelines that we follow, that's used in the United States and Canada. I'll use the acronym BANA, currently, consists of 18 member organizations, that come together and represent not only braille readers but educators, transcribers and producers. The mission of BANA as it's stated on their website is to assure that literacy for readers, their standard. However, this decision to adopt UEB in the United States occurred in 2012, its decision really started the discussion, rather, started many years prior. There was a concern as early as the 1980s about the number of braille codes and symbols that were used in the United States. And so this discussion was generated actually by 1991, Dr. Abraham Nemeth and Tim cramNER presented a paper to the BANA board, discussing the urgency that they felt to unify the various braille codes that were being used in north America. At the heart of the decision to switch codes was the desire to create a unified code because of the complexity of having so many multiple symbols that would be used for the same meaning. And another important factor in considering of the revision to the braille codes was increasing the increasing use of computers, but not only translation of print files into braille and for access to information, using portable braille devices, you know, the accurate and unambiguous translation of material into braille and what we call, quote, back translation for braille back into print is a major goals that were being developed and talked about as a unified code is being discussed. By 2015, a real division occurred in the United States over whether or not to use Nemeth, and people were confused what BANA was recommending and so in 2015, the statement that we have on the slide right now is from BANA was released and it reads, the braille authority of north America recognizes and appreciates the genuine concerns from the braille community regarding the transition to UEB. BANA stands by our original motion to adopt UEB as a
complete code as well as the implementation statement used in 2014 that expressed that the Nemeth code remains integral to braille in the United States. So the intent of the press release was really to bring about an intentional focus that the United States did not only adopt the literary part of UEB, but adopted it in its entirety. So in essence, we can say UEB was designed to be a complete and general purpose code and it includes symbols and rules for any type of material, including math and science and it can be used for all grades, including college. Because of the varied needs that were really unique to each state, BANA encouraged each states to develop individual transition plans that aligned with the national roll out and it was for January of 2016. And so also within these state plans to address the unique needs of each state.

In North Carolina, a process of discussing the transition to UEB was actually very thoughtful and meaningful. What you see here are two separate groups that were formed. The stakeholder groups were well-rounded and consisted of various professionals in the field of visual impairment, so they included parents, we have consumers, invitations to leaders of particular consumer groups, perhaps some of you that are on this webinar today were invited to be a part of one of those early stakeholder meetings. So we see in December of 2014, we had a stakeholder group that really focused on the literary portion, we came together to discuss and that discussion helped to guide the development of our North Carolina plan. We reviewed it again in February of 2015 and made drafted changes.

What is you see that by December of 2015, we had another stakeholder group that came together to discuss the math and technical parts of the braille. So in order to effectively and efficiently address the state's decision of how to handle the math, the science and other technical materials, this particular stakeholder group, discussion was facilitated using what we call a decision analysis frame work. When the stakeholders gathered, on September 11th, 2015, the discussion centered around the question of when we
think about a braille code, what is important? What does it mean to do? The bullets and points on the slide were agreed upon as what we are calling our musts. And these musts were agreed upon by all members of the stakeholder committee for the future of braille use and instruction for technical materials. The other objectives were then weighted with importance and the next step was to measure whether or not each of these bulleted musts held to be true with each braille option. So the two braille options we talked about was what we could call the full UEB or we could call it UEB technical, and the second item as Nemeth was embedded UEB. When using the decision analysis frame work, a decision is made when one of the options that we're looking at fails to meet the agreed upon must. Of all of the musts that we have there, Nemeth code was not capable of supporting that toward and backward translation within an all-digital environment. The outcome, then, was stakeholder approval of using UEB for technical materials. But it's important to note that the stakeholder group that went through all of the musts, they went through all of the musts to ensure that each of those bulleted points held to be true as well for the full UEB.

>> let's take a look at the global perspective, on the screen, you'll see that's listed, UEB exclusive countries. With that, we're talking about the U.S. was the last English-speaking country to adopt UEB. So the countries that you're seeing on the screen had already adopted the UEB prior to the U.S. coming on board. Unlike the other countries, the United States also maintained its current code for math which we referred to as Nemeth.

The other countries used them except for music. Including Canada and New Zealand, which just previously switched from using Nemeth code to the full UEB. Looking at a national perspective, these are UEB inclusive states. So you may have heard that North Carolina is one of six states, well, that's a little misleading information. A survey went out to all of the states and gathered an
informal survey of sorts and gathered some information to see what four states offering, what were students using in states? And are there time lines in other states? Being inclusive means that they include the full UEB and the previous code. But several have implementation plans to move to the full UEB and some even were reporting that they have students who are using the full UEB and nearly all of their students on their state and national tests are using the full UEB.

>> Crystal, would you be able to move your closed caption down just a tiny bit for a so that all of the states could be viewed? Oh, I see. We're there. Thanks.

>> Looking at TT professional development that's been offered in North Carolina over the years, starting back in 2014, the state started with the introduction to the transition and implementation plan. Throughout the years, professional development has been offered for a variety of areas for UEB from UEB math and technical for elementary to UEB math and technical for middle and high school. Previously, the DPI -- voices from the field. In which teachers could write about UEB in and write about experiences and research that they were finding. Julie, a teacher of students with visual impairment, also an instructor at institutes of higher learning was collecting data on the transition of a 5th grade student from to UEB and on the left-hand side of your screen, you'll see that she was just feeling fears because the student actually surpassed her baseline of words per minute and increased her reading comprehension. Research, that encouraged the use of the UEB for technical purposes. Because it was a unified code, the symbols aren't reused. A blind scientist even reported that it was easier to read for him than Nemeth because it felt roomier. So let's go to the field and hear from some of the teachers in the field now. We'll hear first from Holly Jeffrey, giving us an elementary
perspective from when she started the implementation process.
So I am going to start the video now, and you can hear directly from Holly.
>> Hi, we're here with Holly Jeffries, and Holly, can you just tell us a little bit about how long you've been teaching and where you teach?
>> Okay.
I teach at in Charlotte, North Carolina, I've been teaching about 30 years.
And 12 of those years in the BI department.
>> And what have you done professionally, what has your team done professionally to prepare for North Carolina's transition to UEB 2020?
>> Okay, well, first of all, the literary UEB we took several classes online, the UEB online through the Australian center, and we also have prepared with several of the North Carolina department of public instruction workshops and at some of the conferences, they've had sessions on that.
For the math, we prepared by -- there's an UEB online, also for the math tutorial, for the UEB there, so we have all of the staff working on that.
Including the braille and my assistance.
We also have done several of the workshops with Julie Barton and DPI.
>> So your transition, when you were transitioning your students, you had some students who had already started learning and you had to transition, so how did that transition go, was it smooth, rocky, what was it like?
>> Well, the literary part was smoother because there wasn't that match, you know, changes and we explained why we had code sessions where I explained to the students why things were changing in literary.
In the math, it was a little bit more difficult because they had started with Nemeth, so my third and fourth graders had started with Nemeth and what we ended up doing there was the first year we took it based on their content. And we taught them the code, we also did read aloud so that it would level the playing field as this were learning the new code, we could read everything to them so that they could learn the braille code for full UEB.
>> How has your perspective changed about full UEB, since the time that you were handed the time line and said, okay,
this is North Carolina's time line, this is our transition plan.
>> Right.
>> I know you were a little apprehensive when you got that piece of paper.
How has your perspective changed?
>> Okay.
First of all, I looked at it as a process. It's not going to be perfect, it's going to take us a while to figure this out, so we started just cutting ourselves some slack and we started in 2015, you know, with teaching my new kindergartners the inbound, with my older group, 3rd, 4th, and 5th that had started with Nemeth, what we did is we based their code, tried to teach them the symbols, had flash cards, things like that made up, with the math code.
You know, UEB math code.
And we just worked with them every day.
We changed the EM bosser to just print out UEB.
>> How did this change your perspective?
>> My perspective, at first I didn't want to learn a new thing, but it's easier, and it follows print, once the students know the code, whether like it's a decimal, is a period, is a, you know, it's a low D, it's an across the board.
It follows print, it's easier for us and also my assistants to help them in the classroom.
We use the math window with UEB math tiles, whether they're numbers and operations.
We also prepare a kit for the parents so they can help their student with home work and they can set the problem up exactly like it is in print and they can solve it.
We also send them a teaching.
>> What would be your advice to a new teacher coming on?
>> Okay.
First of all, print out the cheat sheets, those are your guides.
Also the technical manual we have here in the braille room for referencing and also creating new materials in the prep code.
We also want to make sure that our students have complete UEB materials available to them in their content.
And the advice I would say is it's easier, you can explain it to the student, they follow along with you, and I love it.
I love UEB.
>> And I'm just going to let everybody see, so this is your materials storehouse that you have here, you have ten
braille readers.

>> Correct.

>> And so you have this organized by grade level and all of this material is what you used in-house for your UEB for your braille readers, is that correct?

>> Correc.

And we have it organized so we can pull it off the shelf in the moment's notice.

Any of our teachers are prepared, but many sometimes pull things from -- they need something that's just comprehension or want something with math addition or math subtraction, or long division, so we have that also organized according to that.

And we can just pull it off the shelf at the moment's notice, which is very handy.

>> Perfect.

Well, Holly, thank you so much for your time.

>> Thank you.

>> Okay. And now I'm going to turn it over to Amy to introduce our secondary perspective, ill like to also -- I would like to also note before I turn it over, you heard Holly mention Julie Barden again, and just wanted to FSH if there was any confusion, Julie was contracted through DPI to provide training, she is not a DPI employee.

Amy.

>> So you see Heather Livingston and she is a fabulous teacher of the visually impaired serving high school students that are in Wake County and so she's here to offer us some of her perspective from a secondary thought process.

So Heather, we would love to hear from you.

>> All right.

Heather, I am so glad that you agreed to come and have a conversation about how things are going with the transition to braille and where you are at.

Would you introduce yourself to everyone and just let us know where you work at and the population of students that you serve.

>> Sure.

Hello, everybody.

I'm Heather Livingston, I am an IEP in Wake County. I have my masters from Florida state university, go NOLS. The last five have been consecutive.
We have a resource program with ten students and currently, three brailles.

>> That's great.

So I love getting the opportunity be able to hear about how this transition has gone for you. And the students that you've been working with, your staff of your brailleists, as we transition into Unified English Braille.

I would love for a moment if you could just share about what you decided to do professionally for you to help prepare for this transition?

>> At first it was panic.

[ LAUGHTER ]

>> I love that honesty.

It really is.

>> So it's been so many years learning Nemeth and then all of the other ancillary codes that go along with it. But then, we came together as a team. We're lucky we have a large team and had some discussions. That was the first step was this is happening, this is coming, what are we going to do about it? Worried about, we can do reasonably? And then just started signing up for any professional development opportunities that came through, summer institutes about UEB, the transitions to UEB, that was a big, big -- for me.

>> you did the Hadley?

>> I did.

It broke the lessons up so you could go through it at your own pace and easy to understand.

I focused a lot on what was eliminated at first because that kind of helped my process of this is actually less I have to know so I'm going to remember that it doesn't exist anymore. And I can't remember exactly which conference, there were sessions at a couple of conferences about UEB and I went to anything.

>> So joust dived right in?

>> Yeah.

>> And just kind of embraced that transition and to get yourself prepared.

How did your students handle this transition time, so we're
just kind of closing out of a five-year transition and you serve students that are high school level, you said, and how did you help your students to transition knowing that you served the older population and, you know, depending on where they are at in the transition plan? Could you speak a little bit about that?

>> Well, I went into panic mode the first time I heard about it. The kids were completely flexible. We were more worried about it than they were. They were more concerned with whether or not they'd be able to keep up in class.

So the first year of it, was a lot of reminding them, we're not going to let you fail, we're not going to introduce -- (Inaudible) -- implement any of these changes until you're comfortable with it.

We're going to work on building up the skills. We have resources here and spend time going over the lessons. And I definitely shared with them my own troubles and struggles with it.

Because with the older kids, that door for the conversation of you're not alone in this. I'm also learning. I'm also having problems.

I really didn't (Inaudible) talk about how I missed snuggling contraction, I love to snuggle contractions. When they came to something that was harder for them, they were able to be more descriptive and what was difficult.

It wasn't just well, I don't know, I forgot. It was well, well, I confused this contraction for that contraction.

Or whatever it was, it was more descriptive, we could have more I guess directed conversation to really address those needs as they came up.

>> I like that.

Well, how has your perspective, I want to get on more of a personal level, changed with Unified English Braille, especially in the fact that a stakeholder group here in North Carolina, you know, went forth with implementing what we call the full UEB?

>> Uh-huh.
So how has your perspective changed? Or maybe it hadn't. This whole transition of thinking through what that's like?

It has changed some. It loved Nemeth, it took a long time to learn it, once I got it, I really enjoyed it. It made sense to me. Once I found out that Nemeth was going away, I was beside myself. But then I had to remind myself, looking at all of the UEB, how long it took to get that comfortable with Nemeth. I was probably in my fourth or fifth year teaching, I was fine not looking everything up in the book. And so this is -- I imagine as we move forward, this is going to be the same thing, refer to our reference tables and books, rely on each other. And just push through.

I love that. I like that positivity of it. So I really appreciate that. So what piece of advice do you think you could offer to other teachers of the visually impaired that are teaching the full UEB to students? Is there in advice that you would give to them, especially because you've been -- you've been in this career a long time, and you've seen a lot of things, experienced a lot. So there advice that you would offer?

If you're still not comfortable with it, find those professional development opportunities, sign up, don't be afraid to show up, all of your books and all of your reference tables. Found online digital resources that I pull up as I'm going through, I can prepare here. When you learned braille the first time, it wasn't easy. And going through the technical part of UEB, it's going to make sense the more you do it, you just have to stay with it.

So with kind of tagging on with what Heather was mentioning, the professional development opportunities, I just wanted to -- just wanted to tag this on the end. One of the things that she had mentioned she had did is taking a Hadley course, and if this is still something that you would like to get more information on, just a shout-out to
Hadley institute for professional studies, there are three courses that are offered. One, two out of the three are actually free. One that's called introduction to braille. UEB edition. That's free. A second one that's called contracted braille UEB edition and the third one is called transitioning to Unified English Braille. That particular course will cost $99. For that third one. And you receive three CEU's for completing that. So I just wanted to tag that on the end if you were still looking for some professional development, that was something that she had mentioned. So now we are on to questions from the field. And a little over a month ago, a question survey link was sent out statewide to teachers of the visually impaired, it was RAEFLy a way -- really a way to offer all of you teachers in the field an opportunity to ask questions related to the UEB transition. Teachers were encouraged also just to review the North Carolina time line. So today, we get the opportunity to share the questions that were submitted and offer answers to what was asked. >> So the first question that we have. Since North Carolina is the only one of six states that have decided to use UEB math, what happens when a student or students move to North Carolina from the other 44 states that use Nemeth? So what we have on the screen here is policy that addresses the answer to the question. So in our policy manual, it specifically says IEPs for children who transfer from another state, if a child with a disability who has a current IEP that was in effect at a previous state, transfers to here in North Carolina, with consultation with the parents, that that school, new school here in North Carolina, needs to provide the child with FAIP, a free and appropriate public education, which includes services that are comparable to those in the child's IEP from the previous public agency. And those comparable services are provided until the new LEA is able to conduct a new evaluation and is able to
develop and implement a new IEP.
So with this policy, while North Carolina's decision to transfer to the full UEB may feel like we are a minority, going back to a previous slide that Crystal spoke on, it included the names of the states that offer the full UEB, whether it's a default or it's a choice by a team, it shows how alike North Carolina is with at least 20 other states.

The next question.
What exceptions are in place for older students who will not be making the transition to the full UEB?
According to the North Carolina transition time line, the students that began introduction to UEB as a complete code started in 2015-2016.
If an older student did not start the transition with the full UEB based on an IEP, a special accommodations request can be presented to the accountability division to request state-mandated tests to be provided with Nemeth with the UEB embedded.
So the transition time line took into account the impact that learning a new code would have on an older student who may have been proficient in their current code in order to not disrupt their learning.

So on this slide, there are two questions and they're grouped together because of similarity.
On the left side, the college board is using UEB for literary and Nemeth for the math sections of the SAT and AP exams.
How do we address this issue with future students who have only been taught UEB math?
And the second question, is North Carolina aware that the SAT and other college board tests only offer Nemeth?
So we are certainly aware of information the college board has released about the accommodation of braille.
On their website, the college board encourages students to request accommodations that are needed, which includes braille, and the college board also emphasizes that the accommodations that are listed and that you see on your screen are not limited to those.
And that they will consider any accommodation for any disability.
Previously, kind of good to note, and to know, that the ACT made the change to include the full UEB after they were made aware through submitted requests that a choice in
braille for technical materials was needed. The WIDA consortium is another example, actively working to respond to written requests.

And it's also helpful to know that BANA and an UEB task force that's affiliated with the association of education and rehabilitation of the blind and visually impaired, are both actively communicating with the college board.

The next question, what material will and will not be provided in modalities other than UEB? According to the North Carolina transition time line, all stated adopted next textbooks and assessments are produced in the full UEB.

If a different math and technical code is needed to meet a student's unique needs, and is documented on the IEP, the modified textbook order form is completed for adopted textbooks and submitted to Judy Blount at the textbook warehouse.

The special accommodations request is completed when the state mandated assessment is needed in Nemeth and submitted to NCDPI.

Additional accessible materials can be located following the modified textbook flowchart.

Again, this is for state adopted materials. Should an LEA choose to go off adoption, the LEA would be responsible for providing the materials in another modality.

Isn't it true that if a student has already mastered Nemeth code in high school, he can continue to ask for, make a special request, Nemeth, within UEB through to graduation?

So here, we have, you know, according to the North Carolina transition time line, beginning in 2015-2016 school year, all students in North Carolina would begin some sort of introduction to UEB as a complete code.

If an older student did not transition to the full UEB, based on an IEP team decision, a special accommodation's request form can be submitted to the accountability division.

Requesting a state mandated test be provided in Nemeth, with UEB embedded.

And just so that you know, on this webinar, there are three attachments that you can access, one of them is the special accommodation request form, however, it's embedded within the overall testing with students with disabilities manual.
So when you open up that manual, it's a PDF, you would scroll to the very bottom of the appendix and find what page number it is to print out with that. So just wanted to let you know so that if you went into open it up and print, if you print without doing -- print all of the pages, you might end up with 70 or more pages printed. But that is accessible through a handout on this webinar.

What will be the process of requesting materials in Nemeth?
The modified textbook order form is completed for state adopted textbooks and submitted to Judy Blount at the textbook warehouse, special accommodations request form is completed when state mandated assessments are needed in Nemeth meth and submitted to DPI. -- Nemeth and submitted to DPI.

And just to let you know, that modified textbook order form is also attached to this webinar as a Word document handout.

Can students' parents have the option to request Nemeth on the IEP so that they are prepared for it when taking the SAT/ACT?
So any concern or request brought before the IEP team must be considered. And the IEP needs -- the IEP team needs to have knowledgeable members at that meeting or if there's multiple meetings, each meeting. In order to be able to explain any possible impact of the request on the student. When a decision is made, it must be clearly documented on the prior written notice. And that entails giving detail of what was requested, what the team decided and the reason or reasons, if there's multiple reasons, why the decision was made.

Now, moving forward. You will receive a bitly link to ask about professional development. We will also be sharing -- and this is a sample -- of some information we will also be sharing, that can be shared with parents and teachers, we'll have a parent-friendly version and then a professional version of a flier that gives a little bit more information for rationale, training and impact and instruction. So just moving forward, developing a flier that we will be
able to get out to EC directors and to teachers that hopefully will have a parent version that will also be able to be shared with the students in the following weeks. For the fall of 2019, our professional development, we're wanting to hear from you, we node to hear from you -- need to hear from you in order to design the professional development around UEB that best meets your needs. On the screen, you will see a bitly, which i bitly backlash NCUEB.
If you're watching, from your computer, you've got a QR reader on your phone, you can access that, you can copy the QR reader and access it later from a QR code. So please, let us know what you need and how we can best serve you in the fall of 2019.

>> So we are at the close of our webinar and the content information and we know that you are really busy, and that you are pulled in a lot of different places at one time. And that perhaps this was difficult in order to have you be able to be with us today to hear this content, so just want to let you know that we appreciate you being able to attend. We hope that this information was helpful.
And there is the question box is still open, if there's something that you would like answered that hasn't been able to be addressed today, put it in the question box and then we can respond directly to you.
With information as a followup.
We hope in our on the screen is our contact information, if you wanted to get in touch with us, you can send us an e-mail and you can see where we are serving in the parts of the state, so you know who to contact, whether it be myself or Crystal.
So we will, with that, in close, we will continue to stay on just a little bit longer, it is early, not even 4:15.
So we'll keep this open in case you think of a question that we can answer for you.

>> Thank you for the hearts that are popping up.
I'm checking -- oh, I got -- we have three hearts now, thank you, I love to see the hearts pop up from the webinars. Letting us know that you're appreciating what we're putting out.
So please, if you have any questions, as always, you are not able to get the links, you need some information, please reach out O to us, our e-mails are on the screen. You know how to contact us via phone. And if you notice in the background, that's my miner from UNC Charlotte, just keeping everybody in our thoughts. Yes, I'll be glad to put the bit.ly back up for anyone who needs the bit.ly. Let me move this in case someone is trying to use their QR reader. You're welcome. I just saw another heart populate. This webinar was offered as technical assistance, not as a professional development, therefore, there's not a link for credit for CEUs. So I do apologize for that. There is not a link for credit for CEUs today. If you missed that at the beginning. The hearts that I'm referring to, if someone is watching on an iPad, or if you're with us on your iPhone, there's an option like to have a like, like on FaceBook or Instagram or Twitter, there's a like and that's what the hearts are. So thank you for wanting to send us a heart. We're staying on just a few minutes in case anyone has any questions or comments. But if not, please feel free to log off and we will join you next week. The special accommodations request is in the testing students with disabilities manuals and penny, I believe, you asked that question, if you want to shoot me an e-mail to Crystal.Patrick@dPl@nC.GOV, I'll be happy to send back and there's my e-mail. I'll be glad to send you a link for that special accommodations request or you can e-mail Amy, either one. Andy, I'll go back to the previous -- to a previous screen we had where we were talking about the other 20 states that are offering UEB. So maybe that will help. >> I know that Maine and Massachusetts and Virginia and we here in North Carolina are full implementation states that implement UEB as a default. And Utah has used to be considered -- was in the mix of being a full UEB implementation state, but they have our,
what you call -- it's an IEP team decision from the very beginning in Utah.
So some of the numbers have gone back and forth a bit with where states rest with that.
>> We still have 24 people online.
So if you have questions that we can answer here, that would be great.
If not, put them in the question box, please, and we'll do our best to get back to you.
I'm going to go back to our information, our contact information.
And the bit.ly.
One more time for the bit.ly.
I'll put that down.
So bit.ly information, QR, for letting us know what you need.
There's always a starting point and then the next step and the next step, and then maybe we've got new teachers who are moving in, maybe you've got a new braille reader that you weren't anticipating on having.
Maybe you've got a new brailleist and you want to trail with your braille.
Please let us know what you need so we can design the professional development around your needs.
Amy, I'm putting our contact information up one last time, if anybody needs to reach out to us.
I have 4:21 and I think the majority of our attendees have logged off.
All right.
If there's no other questions or concerns, that we can answer today, thank you so much for your time and attention and we look forward to hearing from you in our bit.ly.
Have a great day, everyone.