



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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TO: Directors, Exceptional Children
Lead Coordinators, Charter Schools
Directors, State Operated Programs

FROM: Dr. Maria Pitre-Martin, Ph.D. *MPM*
Deputy State Superintendent of District Supports

Sherry H. Thomas, Interim Director *ST*
Exceptional Children Division

SUBJECT: American Printing House for the Blind Funding and Registration

The provision of funding to LEAs to support the education of students who are legally blind through the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) meets a critical need for LEAs. Within this memo two important changes will be identified: allotted funding and the registration of students who have eye reports without visual acuities and/or field measurements included.

Allotted funding

Each year Federal Quota Funds are allotted to states by APH through the federal law entitled, *The Act to Promote the Education for the Blind*. Through it, schools have access to educational materials at no cost. The amount of allotted funding offered to the state is dependent upon the total number of eligible legally blind students registered. The Quota Fund fiscal year runs October 1st through September 30th of the following year. For the past several years, North Carolina has disseminated funding to LEAs based on the number of students registered in each LEA. The result demonstrated a disparity of access to materials among LEAs. While some LEAs had access to an abundance of funding, other LEAs struggled to support a single braille student on allotted funding.

After careful review of the existing process, it has been determined to lift the existing LEA-based allotment and, instead, guide LEAs to order what is immediately needed. This change will allow all LEAs to submit orders regardless of cost, providing it is for a student listed on the Registration and the item directly meets a unique need of the student. All orders will continue to be monitored and approved by the Ex-Officio Trustee.

Registration of students

In January and February, LEAs across the state participate in the annual APH Legally Blind Registration. While the 2019 Registration will not open until January 7, 2019, there is an important previous change to reiterate and a new procedure to share. Both of these changes are the result of decisions made by APH, not the Exceptional Children Division.

As you may recall, last year all eligible students placed on the Registration needed to have a signed *Parent Permission Form*, allowing the exchange of personal information from the LEA to

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

NCDPI to APH. This form only needs to be signed once, provided the student remains in your LEA. All new, eligible students placed on the Registration will need a signed *Parent Permission Form* prior to exchanging information. If there were students dropped from the Registration in January 2018 because of no signed form, please use the end of this calendar year to secure signed forms for eligible students. A *Parent Permission Form* is attached.

New to the forthcoming Registration in January 2019 is the *Medical Addendum Form*. If the LEA has an eye report that does not indicate specific acuity and/or field measurements, but the educational staff believes the student meets APH's criteria for "Meets the Definition of Blindness" or "Functions at the Definition of Blindness", this new form must be completed by an authorized medical professional in order to place the student on the Registration. Authorized medical professionals include: optometrists, ophthalmologists, neurologists.

Examples of when the Medical Addendum Form might be needed include: (1) the eye report indicates "Fix and Follow" but no visual acuity measurement is reported; (2) report from neurologist indicating Cortical or Cerebral Visual Impairment but no visual acuity measurement is reported. A *Medical Addendum Form* is attached.

Please note that the *Parent Permission Form* and the *Medical Addendum Form* (if needed), are not collected by NCDPI; rather, they are kept in the child's educational file within the LEA. If an LEA places students on the registry, it is important that these forms can be made available if audited by APH.

For additional clarification of this information, a webinar entitled *Moving Forward with New APH Procedures* will occur on October 25, 2018 from 3:30-4:30pm. To register, please go to: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3034108228419273218>. Please contact Amy Campbell, APH Ex-Officio Trustee, at 919-807-3988, ncaph@dpi.nc.gov for questions or concerns.

Attachments