

Canadian Braille Authority

Standards for Teachers of Braille Reading and Writing

Introduction

The Canadian Braille Authority (CBA) has established standards for teachers of braille reading and writing. These standards should apply to the person who is providing direct, on-going (i.e., daily, several times a week) instruction in braille reading and writing for children and youth. The Canadian Braille Authority is committed to quality literacy instruction for students who read and write braille.

Standards

CBA recommends the following standards for braille teachers throughout Canada:

Qualification	CBA Standard (minimum requirement)
University degree	Teachers of braille reading and writing must hold at least a bachelor's of education degree
Certification	Teachers of braille reading and writing must hold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic teacher certification, and • Qualifications for certification as a teacher of students with visual impairments as outlined by the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
Specific related coursework	As a part of, or in addition to, courses taken for teacher certification, teachers of braille reading and writing must have successfully completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • university coursework on basic methods of teaching reading, • university coursework focusing on the literary braille code, and • university coursework focusing on teaching braille reading and writing.

Explanation of Standards

The following section of the standards report will serve as further explanation of the standards set forth by the Canadian Braille Authority for teachers who provide instruction in braille reading and writing. Each aspect of the standards is explained below.

Direct Instruction

The standards delineated in this report apply to the person who is providing direct, daily (or almost daily) instruction in braille reading and writing. The CBA does not address service delivery models in these standards. In other words, the standards contained in this report relate to teacher qualification, not type of service delivery. However, it is important to note that these standards apply to the person who is providing direct instruction regardless of who that person is. In some situations, paraprofessionals are given the responsibility of providing the majority of direct literacy instruction with consultation by a teacher of students with visual impairments. This practice is not acceptable given the standards in this report unless the paraprofessional meets all standards (bachelor's degree, basic teacher certification, qualifications for certification as a teacher of students with visual impairments, and successful completion of coursework).

University degree

CBA standards for a teacher providing direct instruction in braille reading and writing require that the teacher possess at least a bachelor's of education degree.

Certification

Teachers of braille reading and writing must meet two levels of certification. They must hold initial certification in some area of education. Initial certification in elementary education, or special education may provide a solid basis for teaching literacy skills, however CBA standards hold that any initial teacher certificate is acceptable.

In addition, teachers of braille reading and writing must meet the requirements for certification as a teacher of students with visual impairments as outlined by the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Teachers holding certification as a teacher of students with visual impairments from any certifying body (e.g. province or state) will be accepted as certified in this area.

Coursework

Coursework in visual impairment may be taken as a part of a degree program or as a part of specialized training. In order to qualify as a teacher of braille reading and writing, coursework must include:

- a three credit course (or the equivalent) focusing on basic methods of teaching reading;
- a three credit course (or the equivalent) focusing on the literary braille code;
- a three credit course (or the equivalent) focusing on teaching braille reading and writing.

Evidence of coursework will be a university transcript or certificate of completion.



**THE CANADIAN BRAILLE AUTHORITY
L'AUTORITÉ CANADIENNE DU BRAILLE**

**"Promoting braille as a primary medium for persons who are blind"
"Favoriser le braille comme média privilégié des personnes aveugles"**

RE: CANADIAN BRAILLE AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP

On January 4, 2002, World Braille Day was celebrated to commemorate Louis Braille who invented the system of dots used by many people with visual impairments or blindness to read, write and communicate in general throughout the world.

Contrary to many popular beliefs, braille is experiencing a new renaissance with the development of technological tools and new communication methods. Many blind people use braille in their everyday lives to communicate on a one to one level like everyone else, to be as informed as possible about things that matter to them, and to have the joy of reading poetry, learning music or reading books in the language of choice. In addition, research shows a direct correlation between the use of braille and employability levels for people with visual impairments.

Our organization, the Canadian Braille Authority, is a unique umbrella group with charitable status in Canada. The membership includes a broad range of English and French speaking braille users, producers, educators, and advocates interested in the development and promotion of braille across the country.

One of our accomplishments last year was the development of a set of braille teaching and learning standards. The standards have already attracted a positive response from teachers across Canada. They are attached for your information. Also, the Canadian Braille Authority has been a significant partner in the development of the Unified English Braille Code.

We want you to be "in touch" with the exciting developments in Canada by joining us in the promotion of braille, the research into major topics on braille, and the development of tools for the more effective use of braille. You will be proud to be a partner in an internationally recognized organization that specializes in braille, founded right here in Canada. We also need your expertise in the many innovative projects we are undertaking. Our most recent projects include research on tactile graphics.

As you can see from the enclosed brochure, your nominal membership fee goes a long way. You can keep up on the developments in Canada through newsletters, the Web site, and promotional material. The CBA Website is hosted by Langara College in Vancouver, B.C. at www.langara.bc.ca/cba. CBA is also a registered charity (Number #889010799-RR001).

We look forward to welcoming you to our organization.


Mary Anne Epp

Past President, Canadian Braille Authority

Attach: Membership Form
Braille Teaching and Learning Standards