

# Unified English Braille UEB

Julie Johnson, Educational Services Coordinator  
New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
[jjohnson@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:jjohnson@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us)  
Office (575)439-4432

# Braille Codes

- **English Braille American Edition (EBAE):** This is the current literary braille code.
- **Nemeth Braille:** This is a math code used in mathematics and science.
- **Unified English Braille (UEB):** This is the code we will be transitioning to.
- Note: there is also a computer braille code, which is replaced by UEB.

# Why are we changing?

- Braille Authority of North America (BANA) voted to adopt UEB for literary braille. Their plan is to have it be fully implemented in 2016. <http://www.brailleauthority.org/>
- In a nutshell, the new code clears up confusion in back translation. There were instances where a phrase or word in braille could be translated more than one way. Now, when someone inputs braille into a device, it is more accurately translated back into print. Helps with issues related to technology like websites and email addresses.
- Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa and the U.K. have already implemented UEB.

# BANA's Implementation Plan

- 2015 – Instructional year. Teachers, students, transcribers would become proficient in UEB.
- 2016 – Implementation year. All new materials produced in UEB. Devices switched over to UEB.

## **New Mexico Plan**

- SY 2015-2016 – provide trainings to teachers, transcribers.
- However, transcribers are learning UEB, there are very few people certified to transcribe UEB right now. Some of the courses that are available were very overwhelmed at first and there was a back log to sign up.
- Transcribers are currently taking course, certification should be available in spring 2016. Until they are certified, they cannot produce textbooks in UEB.

# The Math Issue

- UEB math or Nemeth Math
- New Mexico has made the decision to retain the Nemeth code for math. In a math text, the words will be UEB and the math problems in Nemeth.
- Each state is deciding it's own plan for math.
- BANA does provide guidelines for moving between literary UEB and Nemeth.

# Testing??

- 2016 - The braille version of PARCC will be in EBAE.
- Math will continue to be in Nemeth code.
- 2017 – not decided yet. Possibly younger grades in UEB and older grades in EBAE?? Will be revisited later.
- Some kids are already learning UEB. It is recommended to let braille users have the “read aloud” accommodation throughout this transition. This is available for all portions of the test, including reading.

# What do districts need to do?

- Make sure TVI's are learning UEB through one of the available courses.
- Find out your TVI's plan for introducing and teaching UEB to braille students.
- Encourage and allow TVI's, EA's, transcribers to participate in available trainings. (There will be trainings available in the state later this school year)

# Trainings/Resources

- Hadley School for the Blind: Transition to UEB Course. Hard copy version for braille readers, online for sighted learners. <http://www.hadley.edu/> \*\*Free\*\*
- Australian Course: Online course. <http://uebonline.org/login/> \*\*Free\*\*
- Transcriber's Course: <https://nfb.org/braille-transcribing> They currently have 18 lessons available. \*\*Free\*\*
- Resources available:
  - BANA <http://www.brailleauthority.org/index.html>