

ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

Subject of Policy ARDB Braille
Proficiency Requirements

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards for Braille proficiency for staff at the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind (ARDB). This ensures that Blind and visually impaired students have consistent access to communication in their most successful literacy medium, supporting academic, social, and vocational development. This also allows for stronger interdepartmental collaboration and connection.

II. COMMUNICATION PHILOSOPHY & JUSTIFICATION

ARDB is committed to maintaining a barrier-free communication environment for all students and staff who are Blind or visually impaired. Blind children require consistent access to proficient literacy models in Braille to acquire age-appropriate literacy skills, develop cognitive and social competencies, and fully participate in their education.

To assess proficiency, ARDB requires that all staff obtain a certificate of completion in Braille Basics from an approved curriculum as determined by the Superintendent and the Principal of the Blind Department. This ensures reliable, valid measurement of functional Braille literacy skills, which is essential for effective instruction and interaction with students.

III. REQUIREMENTS & TIMELINES

Teaching staff and direct service providers (e.g., teachers, counselors, SLPs, PTs, OTs) who work primarily with BVI students must achieve:

- Certificate of Completion in Braille Basics within 12 months of employment
- Intermediate Braille proficiency within 24 months of employment
- Advanced Braille proficiency within 36 months of employment

All other staff must achieve:

- Certificate of Completion in Braille Basics within 12 months of employment

In the event a staff member's role, title, or expectations should change, they will be

afforded the same grace as a newly hired employee to attain the required level for their new position.

The superintendent may at any time require a higher level of competency and fluency for a position if two members of administration propose it and she approves.

Braille training opportunities will be provided on campus or through approved providers as frequently as needed, but no fewer than six (6) opportunities annually.

Extensions for attaining fluency requirement past termination/transfer deadlines may only be approved upon recommendation from immediate supervisor and approval of the superintendent.

IV. PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

1. Initial Assessment – Conducted within first 60 days of employment (or upon policy adoption for existing staff).

2. Failure to Meet Standard – If a staff member does not meet the required level:

- A projected termination/transfer to lower expected level position date will be set immediately in accordance with their proficiency requirement timelines.

- Staff must submit proof of completion or assessment results to the campus Braille committee who will provide a targeted improvement plan.

- Retest eligibility: 6-month waiting period.

3. Second Failure – If the second retest does not meet the standard, the employee will be terminated/transferred to a less student-facing position effective the previously established date.

V. COMPENSATION INCENTIVES

Braille Proficiency Level	Compensation
Completion of National Certification in Braille (Level 4)	10% increase to base salary
Passing the Assessment Provided by ARDB (Level 3)	8% increase to base salary
Completion of Hadley Coursework (Level 2)	6% increase to base salary
Braille Basics (UEB) (Level 1)	2% increase to base salary

To qualify for compensation or bonus:

- Staff must have completed at least one year of employment,

- Received a “Meets Expectations” or better on their performance evaluation,
- And shown satisfactory performance of written English communication skills

VI. STAFF POSITION REQUIREMENTS CHART	
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Position Category	Required Braille Proficiency
Superintendent	Level 2
Executive Assistant to Superintendent	Level 1
Principal/Vice Principal (Blind Dept.)	Level 3
Teacher Supervisor (Blind Dept.)	Level 3
Teachers of Blind students	Level 3
Paraprofessionals for Blind students	Level 3
Education Specialists for Blind students	Level 3
Counselors (all types) working with Blind students	Level 2
Orientation & Mobility Specialist	Level 3
Speech Pathologist working with Blind students	Level 3
Special Education Coordinator	Level 2
Librarian/Library Assistant	Level 3
Administrative Specialists	Level 2
Nursing Staff (all positions)	Level 2
Dorm Staff working with Blind students	Level 2
Business/Finance Personnel	Level 1

