



Ensuring Qualified Instruction for Blind and Low Vision Students in Arizona

The Issue

Blind and low vision students require instruction in highly specialized subject areas that are not part of general teacher preparation programs. These areas include Braille literacy, orientation and mobility (safe travel skills), assistive technology, nonvisual independent living skills, and low vision instruction.

These skills directly impact student safety, literacy, access to education, independence, and long-term employment outcomes.

Arizona Has Already Established This Standard

Arizona law already recognizes that specialized instruction requires specialized qualifications. Current statute requires that teachers providing Braille instruction hold appropriate certification or meet equivalent university standards.

When instruction requires unique technical competencies, general licensure alone is not sufficient. Extending this standard to other blindness-specific instructional areas is a logical continuation of existing Arizona law.

Consistency with Other Arizona Teaching Requirements

Arizona already requires additional credentials for educators providing technical or safety-critical services, including special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, and career and technical education instructors.

Blindness-specific instruction is equally technical and high-impact. Orientation and mobility instruction, for example, directly affects student safety, while assistive technology instruction determines whether students can meaningfully access the curriculum.



Recognized National Certification Pathways

There are two nationally recognized certification systems that establish competency standards for blindness-specific instruction:

- National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB)
- Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP)

Both certification systems require demonstrated competency, ethical practice, and ongoing continuing education.

What We Are Requesting

The National Federation of the Blind of Arizona and supporting blindness community organizations respectfully request that Arizona law require teachers who provide blindness-specific instruction to hold:

- A relevant NBPCB or ACVREP certification, or
- Clearly defined equivalent university-based preparation standards

This approach maintains flexibility for school districts while ensuring instructional quality and student safety.

Why This Matters Now

Without clear qualification standards, blind and low vision students may receive instruction from individuals who lack the training necessary to teach these specialized skills safely and effectively. This creates inequitable educational outcomes and undermines Arizona's commitment to high standards in education.

Please contact our legislative director, Jordan Moon, at 951-316-5363 or by email at jmoon@saavi.us should you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

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