



Georgia Instructional Materials Center  
Division for Special Education Services and Supports  
1870 Twin Towers East  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
Phone: 404-463-4462 FAX: 678-717-0748  
Website: [www.gimc.org](http://www.gimc.org)



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## Unified English Braille (UEB) Implementation Plan

### Historical Perspective

On November 2, 2012, the Braille Authority of North America voted to adopt the Unified English Braille (UEB) as the official Braille Code for North America. The formal motion is as follows, *“the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) adopts the Unified English Braille to replace the current English Braille American Edition in the United States while maintaining the Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science Notation, 1972 Revision; the Music Braille Code, 1997; and the IPA Braille Code, 2008. The official braille codes for the United States will be Unified English Braille, Nemeth Code for Mathematics and Science Notation, 1972 Revision and published updates”* (Braille Authority of North America, November 1-3, 2012, *Fall Meeting 2012*, [Meeting Minutes], retrieved from <http://www.brailleauthority.org/minutes/minutes-2012-11.pdf>).

The mission of the Braille Authority of North America is to assure literacy for tactile readers through the standardization of braille and/or tactile graphics.

The purpose of BANA is to promote and to facilitate the uses, teaching, and production of braille. Pursuant to this purpose, BANA will promulgate rules, make interpretations, and render opinions pertaining to braille codes and guidelines for the provisions of literary and technical materials and related forms and formats of embossed materials now in existence or to be developed in the future for the use of blind persons in North America. When appropriate, BANA shall accomplish these activities in international collaboration with countries using English braille. In exercising its function and authority, BANA shall consider the effects of its decisions on other existing braille codes and guidelines, forms and formats; ease of production by various

methods; and acceptability to readers. (Braille Authority of North America (2014). ABOUT (BANA) MISSION AND PURPOSE. Retrieved from <http://www.brailleauthority.org/about-bana.html>).

### **Georgia's Implementation Plan**

In response to the Braille Authority of North America's (BANA's) adoption of the Unified English Braille Code (UEB), the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), the Department of Special Education Services & Supports (DSESS) and with input from stakeholders statewide, will proceed as follows:

#### *JUNE 2014*

- Full-day training on UEB highlighting the differences between UEB and English Braille American Edition (EBAE) at the Institute Designed for Educating All Students (IDEAS) Conference. Instruction included lecture and hands-on work by participants.

#### *JULY 2014*

- A Georgia Instructional Materials Center (GIMC) Program Specialist attended a full-day train the trainer short course on UEB at the International AER Conference.

#### *SEPTEMBER 2014*

- A GIMC Program Specialist met with the Atlanta Braille Volunteers and Georgia Braille Transcribers to present brief overview of UEB and attendant changes. Stakeholder information was collected at these meetings to include in the implementation plan.

#### *OCTOBER 2014*

- Chairperson of BANA presented overview of UEB to the Georgia Braille Transcribers.
- The Georgia Vision Educators' Statewide Training (GVEST) for teachers of students with visual impairment (TVIs) had a two-day in-depth workshop combining lecture and hands-on

experience. In addition, a separate stakeholder's meeting was conducted with TVIs and other professionals working with students who have visual impairments.

- A GIMC Program Specialist attended a UEB task force meeting at the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) Annual Meeting.

#### *NOVEMBER 2014*

- The GIMC Program Director and Program Specialist presented an overview of UEB to Georgia Statewide Coalition for the Blind and conducted a stakeholders' meeting with adult braille users.
- The Georgia Braille Transcribers began the Canadian National Institute for the Blind UEB training course for transcribers (CNIB Transcribers' UEB Course).

#### *DECEMBER 2014*

- An online statewide survey was conducted with TVIs regarding student and teacher usages and their individual training needs related to UEB.

#### *JANUARY 2015*

- GA DOE conducted statewide training on UEB during the statewide vision consortia meeting.
- The Georgia Braille Transcribers began their first book in UEB transcription.

#### *SCHOOL YEAR 2014-15*

- GaDOE offered professional learning credit to TVIs for completing the UEB Online Course offered by *Royal Institute for Deaf & Blind Children Renwick Centre*.
- All textbook orders placed with the GIMC that require new transcription will be transcribed using UEB whenever possible to obtain from braille producers. Following BANA's guidance, Nemeth code is the default code for math for the school year 2015-16. Any previously

transcribed text books in EBAE will not be re-transcribed, but will be used for their normal life of use.

#### *FEBRUARY 2015*

- The Braille Services Department of APH will present a one-day training for TVIs at the Georgia Academy for the Blind and a two-day training for the Georgia Braille Transcribers on using Duxbury for UEB transcription.

### **Next Steps**

#### *JANUARY 2015*

- Current K-12 braille readers and new braille readers begin instruction in UEB.

#### *MAY 2015*

- GaDOE will include a page on the GIMC website to provide a means to update stakeholders on the continued implementation of UEB in the state.

#### *SCHOOL YEAR 2015-16:*

- Continue state-wide and regional trainings to be offered in the UEB through GVEST, VI Statewide Consortia, IDEAS, and the Smokey Powell Assistive Technology Center. Based upon the many stakeholder meetings and the statewide teachers' survey conducted with TVIs by the GaDOE, the apparent needs for training in priority order are listed below. A follow-up survey is planned asking for perceived continued training needs and progress in student training on UEB.
  1. UEB in general
  2. Producing UEB through braille translation programs
  3. Back translation from braille to print
  4. UEB Technical Code for math

- Two UEB braille teacher preparation courses are being offered in the TVI Endorsement Program through Middle Georgia RESA. These courses provide the knowledge that a beginning teacher will need to teach braille in UEB format.
- All students who read braille will be expected to learn to access UEB materials as all new materials provided by the Georgia Instructional Materials Center will be produced in UEB. This means that teachers will begin or continue student instruction in the UEB code.
- The GaDOE will explore the needs regarding UEB Technical Code math instruction and production.
- The GaDOE DSESS will collaborate with the GaDOE Assessment Division to review state tests produced in braille. School year 2014-15 will be the final year for the use of English Braille American Edition in state evaluations. School year 2015-16 will be the first year in which all state required assessments will be produced in UEB.
- GADOE will update its web page dedicated to Vision Impairment. It will include information on continued professional learning opportunities in UEB and provide links to the UEB Online courses offered in Australia and Canada, as well as a link to the Hadley School training courses. GADOE will also produce a UEB training module in the form of a webinar that will be available from the web page.
- The GADOE Special Education Director's weekly EBlast will continue to raise awareness on issues around UEB implementation including training for teachers and annual assessment.
- GADOE will engage additional stakeholders around opportunities to increase awareness of this transition from EABE to UEB with the retention of the Nemeth Code for math. Stakeholder meetings will include updates concerning the Georgia math standards.