



**Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Office of Interim Superintendent Marv Lamer**

For Immediate Release

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**ASDB TO HOST BRAILLE INSTITUTE'S 2016 ARIZONA REGIONAL BRAILLE
CHALLENGE ON FEBRUARY 29, 2016**

Phoenix, AZ, February 23, 2016 – Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) Interim Superintendent Marv Lamer announced today that students from across the state who are blind and visually impaired will be participating in the [Braille Institute's](#) annual Arizona Regional Braille Challenge on ASDB's Tucson campus on Monday, February 29, 2016. Students in grades 1-12 will participate in a series of 5 skills contests demonstrating braille proficiency in reading and comprehension, speed and accuracy, proofreading, spelling, and reading tactile charts and graphs. The event will take place from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM throughout the ASDB Tucson campus.

“For the past five years, the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind has been honored to host this exciting competitive educational event for students from across the state,” said superintendent Lamer. “The Braille Challenge sheds light on the importance of how Braille literacy empowers students who are blind or visually impaired to successfully engage and thrive in the world around them.”

Exciting events such as an obstacle course, a Desert Sonoran Museum reptile show, a University of Arizona's Pep Band performance and many other fun-filled activities await the hundreds of students, families and volunteers expected to participate in this year's Braille Challenge. An art show entitled “More than Meets the Eye”—created specifically for students who read braille— will be on display in the ASDB Berger Performing Arts Center courtesy of the Needham Red Cross Club of Boston.

The Braille Challenge® is a national competitive event program of [Braille Institute](#). Braille Institute is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to eliminate barriers to a fulfilling life caused by blindness and severe sight loss. Each year, Braille Institute serves more than 75,000 people. Its rich history of empowering individuals who are blind or with significant vision loss dates back nearly a century.

The Arizona Regional Braille Challenge is one of 46 participating affiliates in the Braille Institute's North American Braille literacy program. The preliminary round of the Braille Challenge, hosted by each affiliate, is open to students of all skills levels, but the top-scoring 60 contestants in the United States and Canada will be invited to Los Angeles in June for the national championships.

In 2014, Arizona sent two students to nationals, and both came home with top awards. Ciara Peterson (8-years-old at the time) of Tucson, a recipient of services from ASDB's Southeast Regional Cooperative, took first place in the Apprentice Category, and Joey Parra (10-years-old at the time), both a Tucson resident and ASDB Tucson Campus student, took second place in the nation in the Freshman Category.

In 2015, Ciara and Joey continued to successfully represent Arizona on the national level, both earning recognition as Braille Challenge national finalists. In addition to her Braille Challenge accomplishments, Ciara Peterson has won 3 gold and 1 bronze medal at the Blind Olympics.

Advances in technology have not replaced the need for blind individuals to learn to read braille, a code created by Louis Braille in 1824. Numerous studies in the field of visual impairment show a strong correlation between braille literacy and successful employment for adults who are blind.

The Arizona Regional Braille Challenge Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives from ASDB, the University of Arizona, Tucson Unified School District and Marana Unified School District, has organized this year's Arizona Regional Braille Challenge with the generous support of the following local, state and national sponsors:

64 Ounce Games
Abilities Optimist Club
American Legion
Cocio-Estrada Post 59
Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum
Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
Braille Institute
Davis-Monthan Air Force Base
Delta Gamma Sorority
Desert Low Vision
Mike Sturgis of Tierra Antigua Realty

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National Braille Press
Needham Red Cross Club of Boston
Queen Donuts
Seedlings Books for Children
Tania's "33"
University of Arizona Pep Band
University of Arizona – Specialization
in Visual Impairment, College of Education
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The [Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind \(ASDB\)](#) was founded in 1912 – the year of Arizona's statehood. ASDB serves over 2,200 children who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard-of-hearing, multiply sensory disabled and deaf-blind from birth to age 22. ASDB operates two schools for the deaf, one school for the blind, a birth to age 3 Early Childhood and Family Education Program and five regional cooperatives. ASDB is dedicated to empowering students with the educational opportunities necessary to succeed in college, career and life.

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