WE DID IT!

On October 15, 2019, the California Legislature announced the signing of AB-947, “Expanded core curriculum: visually impaired pupils”, (California Education Code, Chapter 778, Sections 56353 and 56354.) The new law, which takes effect January 1, 2020, literally changes the landscape for O&M services provided by California’s school system. (read more on pg. 2)

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All Photos by Atom Biggs
What’s so special about October 15, 2019? Only that it was California’s best White Cane Day California in decades! On this landmark day, the California Legislature announced the signing of AB-947, “Expanded core curriculum: visually impaired pupils”. (California Education Code, Chapter 778, Sections 56353 and 56354.) The new law, which takes effect January 1, 2020, literally changes the landscape for O&M services provided by California’s school system. California O&Ms and TVIs working in the school system will be starting 2020 off right, because:

School districts, county offices of education, and charter schools will be “authorized” to “consider elements of the Expanded Core Curriculum” when developing IEPs for students with visual impairment. [Section 56353 (a)]

O&M and TVI evaluations must be conducted by
- “appropriately certified specialists”. [56354 (a) (1)]
- [56354 (a) (1)]

O&M evaluations must occur in
- “familiar and unfamiliar environments”,
- “varying lighting conditions”, and
- “home, school, and community”. [56354 (2)]
- [56354 (2)]

O&M and TVI services are permitted “before or after school hours”. [56353 (c)]

The education agency must provide effective transportation to instructional settings. [56354 (c) (2)], AND
- “Except as specified in subdivision (c), a local educational agency shall not impose any limitations that result in the preclusion or the limitation of the ability of a pupil to receive instruction in orientation and mobility services in the home, school, or community setting and in varying lighting conditions, as designated in the pupil’s individualized education program and provided for pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.).“ [56354 (b)]
- [56354 (b)]
Our journey began on January 23, 2015, when Brenda Naimy of Cal State/LA submitted a “Uniform Complaint” on behalf of LACOE’s O&M Specialists against the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). The LACOE administration was not been its O&Ms to drive students into the community for O&M lessons, nor were they providing alternative means of transportation for O&M lessons. Two years later, on January 28, 2017, NCAOMS established the FAPE Committee. Thus was born the statewide, grassroots movement to codify the right of our children to community-based O&M instruction.

What should you do now?

- Show the law to your program administrator.
- For info and advocacy, direct your students and their parents to:
  - California Association of Blind Students (CABS)
  - California Council of the Blind (CCB)
  - California Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (CAPVI):
    capvinews@gmail.com
  - Disability Rights California
  - National Federation of the Blind (NFB-California Chapters)
- If you have any concerns that you would like to discuss confidentially, contact caomsfape@gmail.com.

Huge thanks to Assembly Member Sharon Quirk-Silva, for authoring the bill and for ushering it through the legislature. Thanks to our leaders: Brenda Naimy, for starting the process, and for many hours filled with brilliant ideas and fancy footwork; and Jeff Thom, of CCB, for drafting the bill, for securing an author, and for countless hours of unmatched and impeccable guidance along the way. Thanks to our Media Team: Dr. Sonja Biggs, Dr. Nick Casias, Lorena Cipri, Lindsay Hass, and Nancy Mitchner.

And thanks to the rest of the FAPE Committee members: Bryan Bashin, Maya Delgado-Greenberg, Richard Rueda, Sandy Staples, Rob Schuleenberg, Eric Sticken. Thanks to Robyn Casillas and her SoCal Legislative Team: Louis Lemonnier, Marion Dawirs, Dr. Nicholas Casias, Katelynn Guerrero, Kelly Grove, Cecelia Vera, Evan Guerrero, Evelyn Maldonado, and Cynthia Lopez. Thanks to Debra Christenson and her NorCal Legislative Outreach Team: Shalee McClendon-Stent, Shianna McClendon, Sarah Souza, William Souza, Brian Dahle, Mason Haase, and Debra Morris. Thanks to our legal experts: Christian Knox of Ruderman-Knox, LLP and Taymour Ravandi of Disability Rights of California (DRC). Thanks to our legislative consultants: Jane Vogel, Dr. Jan Jones-Wadsworth and Dr. Rona Pogrund. Thanks to our coalition agencies: CA-AER (Scott Kies and Geoff Perel); CAPVI (Judith Lesner and Ann Ward); CFILC (California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, Jacob Lesner-Buxton and Roger Acuna); CTEBVI (Maureen Reardon, Jonn Paris-Salb; and Grant Horrocks); and NFB (Shannon Dillon and Tim Elder). Thanks to the other agencies that supported our bill: East Bay Innovations, California Teacher’s Association, and Disability Rights of California.
(AB 947 cont.)
Thanks to ALL of you who helped revise the bill, voiced support at the Assembly Education Committee hearing, wrote a support letter at any point in the process, got someone else to write a support letter, contributed ideas, informed others, provided moral support, or did anything else to support this legislation. Special thanks for all you do in your own way and every day for your students!

HAPPY WHITE CANE DAY! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

(For more info, check out Jaye and Sylvia’s CAOMS Conference presentation)

Above and Beyond the Schools: New Legislation and Legislative Advocacy for O&M Services and Expanded Core Curriculum (EEC) Instruction in California Schools
Jaye Shupin and Sylvia Reese
Click here for the Presentation materials

Photo of Jaye Shupin and Sylvia Reese standing together during their presentation.
This year’s CAOMS Conference theme was “O and M Above and Beyond: Special Considerations for O and M.” Presentations focused on different types of technology, such as indoor navigation and TMAPP, as well as how to include Augmentative Adaptive Communication Devices into an O and M lesson. One presentation that made a strong impact was about ableism. Jessica Lehman, Lee Straub and Laura Miller talked about the ways our students encounter disability based oppression and how we teachers can address this. Another fascinating presentation was from Justine DiNapoli of Guiding Eyes for the Blind. She showed how guide dogs can support students with vision loss who also have other types of disabilities.

The conference began with the announcement that AB 947 had been approved, which made all attendees cheer. At the end of opening day, President-Elect Jaye Shupin led a discussion about the future of CAOMS. Should Northern and Southern CAOMS unite into one organization? How much advocacy should CAOMS be involved in, and what types? What role should the State Board play? See the minutes on page for more details.

To see more images and highlights from the conference, go to the CAOMS website:

http://caoms.org/Archives_2019.htm

A big thank-you to Atom Biggs for the great photos!!!
Image of conference volunteers at registration desk, waving.

Image of three attendees smiling and talking

Image of two attendees smiling at camera

Image of two men on multimedia team with their equipment.
This year, another luminary of the Orientation and Mobility Field was added to the Pete Wurzburger award. The name Dr. Sandra Rosen, director of the Orientation and Mobility Department at San Francisco State, was added to the award. This award honors those who go above and beyond to advance the field of O and M. If Pete Wurzburger is the “father” of O and M, then Sandy Rosen is the “godmother.” Thanks to her efforts, the O and M department at SFSU continues to thrive. Congratulations Dr. Rosen.

To learn more about Dr. Rosen, follow this link:
https://news.sfsu.edu/experts/sandra-rosen

Formal, close up picture of Dr. Sandra Rosen
This Year’s Award Winners!

The Pete Wurzburger/Sandra Rosen Award

Jeffrey Thom, for his incredible work that helped AB 947 pass. Sylvia Reese accepted the award on his behalf.

Meritorious Service Award

Lindsay Hass and Jason Dugan, because without them, the Northern CAOMS conference would have never been as awesome all these years!
CAOMS: Your Needs, Your Ideas

Open Forum/Round-table Discussion

NCAOMS Conference, Monterey Tides Hotel

November 2, 2019, 5:00-6:30pm

Facilitator: Jaye Shupin, NCAOMS President-Elect

Secretary: Gary Ginzler

Guest Presenter: Nick Casias

Over 40 attended in person, Zoom was available. CEU credit was approved for the meeting. Refreshments were provided by CAOMS.

Your Needs:
What do CAOMS members and the broader community of O&Ms want from CAOMS?
- Historically, members want CEUs and professional development
- Zoom For Meetings. What is Zoom?
  - Free web-based virtual meeting platform.
  - Allows us to attend meetings via internet or phone.
  - “Enterprise video conferencing with real-time messaging and content sharing”.
- CEU virtual presentations --- organizational virtual webinar series.
- Survey membership, what do members need and want from CAOM. Concerns:
  - Our email surveys get few responses to our email surveys. Ideas:
    - Text blast to phone numbers
    - Respondents automatically entered into a raffle to win a prize

Organizational Challenges:
Declining membership, both NCAOMS and SCAOMS.
- Many people pay for membership only during conference years in their geographical area.
- Do O&Ms know about CAOMS? Ideas:
  - NCAOMS offers free membership to students in the advanced O&M methods class
  - NCAOMS fall meeting is held every September at SFSU, the O&M students come to meet us and ask questions
- People are busy with their lives
- Ideas for encouraging people to join CAOMS and to maintain membership:
  - Discount for five year membership, $140?
  - Reduce membership cost
    - Cost of dues is already low: $30 for full membership, $15 for associates & students
    - AER is more expensive: $175, student $98, division $10 for up to 3 divisions
  - Minimum 2-year membership (so members can’t drop membership between regional conference years).
  - Easy payment through the website
    - Venmo and Zelle are handy – but we did not want service fees
  - Statewide membership (instead of 2 separate chapters)
    - Chapters might prefer greater autonomy and local control
  - Regional/multiple state caoms? Entire west coast, Northwest, Nevada people?
    - Can CAOMS really represent all of California?
- Personnel shortage – we have vacant leadership and committee positions
  - NCAOMS needs
    - Chair of Membership Committee as of January 1 (Lindsay has resigned), involves 30 to 60 minutes per week (average), more during conference time
    - Treasurer
    - Ways & Means Committee Chair, raise funds by selling merchandise
      - Proposal: NCAOMS and SCAOMS combine and collaborate (in an unspecified manner) on merchandise
      - Edgar Vargas volunteered to work on Merchandise with Nicole (last name omitted)
    - Conference Chair, monthly meetings in conference year, paperwork, and more intensive prep close to conference time
  - State Board needs
    - President – position has been vacant for years! Ideas:
      - North and south presidents could co-lead state board
    - Webmaster
      - Joe Buffamonte wants to retire as webmaster after many years of service
      - THANK YOU, JOE BUFFAMONTE, WEBMASTER EXTROiDINAIRE!
      - Job takes less than an hour a week
      - Nick Casias and Lalo Quezada (both of SCAOMS) volunteered to share duties, will coordinate with Joe Buffamonte (SCAOMS, current Webmaster)
  - Nick and Lalo proposed to explore updating our website
• Nick, Lalo and Gary will work together to get a proposal
• To be paid with Statewide funds
• Vince Fazzi, Treasurer of Statewide Board (since 1995) we have $9912, it can be used for joint issues
• Anyone have family members with expertise in web design who can give us a discount on a web makeover?

- Conferences are labor-intensive, especially with limited leadership. Ideas:
  - One joint conference mid-way between north and south every 2 or 3 years, allows sharing of resources. Concerns:
    - SCAOMS has commitments for the conference in 2020
    - NCAOMS has a deposit on the conference site for 2021
    - Many members depend on conference CEUs to renew certification

**Important to You:**
- Strategies for delivering services
- Skill development
- Specific topics of interest
  - Eco-location
- How do we get people to share knowledge and strategies?
  - Listserv

**Jaye’s Goals, as President:**
- Increase membership
- Pursue advocacy & legislation
  - FAPE
    - Not just for O&Ms serving children: visually impaired children who graduate from schools unprepared in O&M and the ECC become students in adult services, so it affects all of us
      - Transition topics-- all of our children become adult consumers Adult services need to do outreach to children
      - Providers of school-based services need to do outreach to adult services
  - ECC legislation – need TVIs to help lead the push to codify the ECC
  - Strengthen working partnerships with vision-related agencies and organizations
    - Establish partnerships for reciprocal meetings
    - Attend conferences of other vision-related organizations
    - Attend conferences of other disability-related organizations
    - Invite other types of service providers to our conferences
    - Chapter president not doing the conference that year may handle outreach to other organizations
  - Legislation – bring back JAC (Joint Action Committee, a coalition pushing for legislation to benefit the VI community)

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SCAOMS Service Project

Presented by Nick Cassias, SCAOMS President
- 2020 SCAOMS Conference will be a cruise to Mexico with an embedded service project
- Includes typical conference offerings with CEUs
- Docking in Ensenada, Mexico
- Nov 6 to Nov 9, 2020 (SCAOMS conference)
- Community service agreement with PRISMA (a service organization for blind/visually impaired)
- Seeking donations
  - Perkins braillers—trying to establish Perkins brailling recycling program
  - Braille paper
  - Canes and cane tips
  - Cash donations
    - The organization does not have a building
    - SCAOMS hopes to contribute towards helping the agency rent a facility for 12 months
- Want to provide Webinar-based instruction
- Need interpreters/translators bilingual in Spanish/English
- 3-phase program:
  - Phase 1: donate refurbished item
  - Phase 2: provide training
  - Phase 3: offer sponsorship
- Other:
  - Terena Scott needs articles for the Traveler
    - AB-947
    - SCAOMS Service Project
    - Submit articles before Thanksgiving, newsletter will be distributed in December

50/50 Raffle drawing:
- $289 total
  - Winner is Terena Scott, at $145
  - Other winner is the NCAOMS Scholarship fund, at $144

NEXT NCAOMS Meeting at CSB: Saturday, January 25th Shauna will follow up.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:25pm
SAVE THE DATE
CAOMS SERVICE PROJECT 2020

ENSENADA, MEXICO

Leaving Long Beach Harbor on Friday, November 6, 2020 and returning Monday, November 9, 2020.

A whole new concept for a Statewide CAOMS Conference with workshops, hands on experiences and a service project in Mexico.

An all-inclusive fare for food and lodgings and a reduced registration fee.

Contact Dr. Nicholas Casias, Conference Chair, if you would like more info. (Nicholas.Casias@gmail.com)
You need ACVREP credits.....and NCAOMS needs YOU!

*It's a match made in heaven!*

As a key member of the NCAOMS leadership team, you will

- Process NCAOMS member applications
- Maintain the NCAOMS database
- Send announcements out to our membership
- Help with the next conference (but not until 2021)

**Qualifications:**

- Membership in NCAOMS
- Willingness to learn the basics of our database management system

**EXTRAS:**

- *Training, guidance and support are available!*
- *Attendance at N-CAOMS meetings is preferred but not required!*

N-CAOMS is an entirely volunteer organization that provides the O&M community of Northern California with important local professional development and networking opportunities. We bring you:

- [www.caoms.org](http://www.caoms.org), the informational O&M website
- Biennial O&M conference on the beach in Monterey
- “The Traveler” newsletter
- Advocacy on issues important to O&Ms
- CEUs

*Help us support you!*

**Contact:**

Lindsay Hass: [ncaomsmembership@gmail.com](mailto:ncaomsmembership@gmail.com) AND

Jaye Shupin: [mobilityj@gmail.com](mailto:mobilityj@gmail.com) CAOMS Winter 2019 Newsletter.docx

(Big shout out to Lindsay for doing such an excellent job these past three years. Thank you!)
Happy New Year! Entering a new decade is exciting and the perfect time to look at our goals for “the 20’s”. CAOMS also needs to look to the future and consider how we want to proceed. But we need all of your input to know which direction we should go.

Many questions were raised during the general meeting at the CAOMS conference this year.

• Should Northern and Southern CAOMS merge into one organization?
• How can CAOMS collaborate with other professional organizations?
• Should CAOMS engage in more advocacy? If so, what kind?
• How can CAOMS be a greater support for families and consumers?
• What type of professional development opportunities do CAOMS members want in the future?
• How much money should CAOMS pay to revamp and manage the website?
• What is the purpose of the website?

These questions must be answered by all of us, not just your board. It’s time for us all to think about our organization and how we want it to grow. And we also need you to step up and give your time to CAOMS. There are several open seats on the N-CAOMS board, including Membership Chair (see prior page for info). The State Board needs a President. The website needs a new manager.

Now is the time to help The California Association of Orientation and Mobility thrive in this new decade. Look what we were able to do during the past decade! Just imagine how much more we can do when we stand together and support each other.

Thank you for all that you do for your students and your profession.

Happy Holidays to you all!!!

Terena Scott, Editor
Member, State Board of CAOMS