# Report of the Educational Services Advisory Committee

# to the Trustees of the

# American Printing House for the Blind

# Fiscal Year 2022

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Educational Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) is:

* To provide oversight and leadership in the planning, evaluation, and delivery of product-related services provided by the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind.
* To identify new services as needed.
* To assist in the promotion of APH products through services.
* To advise APH on general operations and communications as they relate to the accountability of services provided.
* To advise APH generally on topics relevant to the education and rehabilitation of persons who are blind or visually impaired.
* To advise APH in planning future federal initiatives based on innovative ideas and current trends by helping APH staff keep informed of trends and important discussions/debates occurring in the field.
* To advocate for and support the administration of the ACT by APH.
* To facilitate communications and partnerships between APH and appropriate entities.

## INTRODUCTION

In March of 2022 the ESAC met in Louisville, KY, at APH as a formal advisory committee to address the 2021 ESAC report and to develop commendations and recommendations for the current fiscal year. To assist with this endeavor, presentations were made by APH’s services administrative staff, including progress updates on the 2021 recommendations, operations, and information on new initiatives.

## COMMENDATIONS

The ESAC commends APH for the following:

1. The outreach team for their focus on expansion of regional support for services and products.
2. The creation of ABIDE program to support all APH from its employees to the people they serve by recognizing and fostering a culture of accessibility, belonging, inclusion, diversity and equity.
3. The improvement of the customer service system for EOTs, customers and partners, as evidenced by the national recruiting and employment of remote staff, creating clear key performance indicators, call back options and improved department collaboration.
4. The update of the Louis database platform allowing for better usability and integration with the APH shopping site.
5. The creativity to begin a partnership with OCALI with their program of “Unlock Reading for Students with VI”.
6. The thoughtfulness paid to the museum and its layout including the use of outside consultants to create a truly accessible environment for all.
7. The successful transition of SRS to an external provider to increase security.

**Consistent with the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind (1879), the Educational Services Advisory Committee (ESAC) recommends that APH:**

1. Recognize that the scoring rubric for the APH Scholars is a living document with an active review each year by ESAC. The drafted updates for 2022 are completed and shared with APH leadership:
	1. Consider the addition of a category for other professionals connected to the vision field but not necessarily teachers. (Technical Support, Braille Transcribers, Paraprofessionals and Ordering Specialists, etc.)
2. Develop the ability to provide support on the products from field reviewers who can answer technical questions on a platform similar to Apple Support Community and consider using a star rating scale open to all product users.
3. Create measurable and clear Outreach Regional Specialists goals that are shared with EOTs and in the yearly review account for EOT feedback.
	1. In the virtual EOT meetings allow for breakout sessions to provide a consistent meeting opportunity with EOTs and their regional specialists.
4. Examine the usability of the Louis Database and other website designs. (e.g. provide a larger reset button for the Louis database search function).
5. Work to improve the current CATT program including outreach and provide targeted trainings. Then scale this as a resource for all regions.
6. Develop a home page portal that allows for specific “I want to...” prompts to allow for clearer navigation to all APH’s programs. (i.e. preliminary chat bot function).

Respectfully Submitted,

Educational Services Advisory Committee 2022

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