



# Iowa Department for the Blind

## **How much money is saved each year by students borrowing textbooks from the IMC collection rather than having them transcribed?**

We estimate that it would have cost approximately \$356,246 - \$439,467 if the 400+ books that were check out from our collection last year would have been purchased by individual districts.

## **How has the change in funding impacted accessible material requests?**

The number of student materials ordered through the Instructional Materials Center and sent first quarter of the 2022–23 school year increased by 9%. Following the change by Department of Education the number of school materials ordered through the Instructional Materials Center and sent for the second quarter of the 2022–23 school year decreased by 48%.

## **Why is braille so expensive?**

Producing braille and tactile graphics (such as charts, maps, and diagrams) that faithfully convey all the information in a print textbook requires training and time. While computer software can do a lot of the preliminary work, it still makes mistakes and there are still parts of transcription that require a human brain to resolve. A poorly transcribed textbook can leave a student confused and frustrated. This was illustrated very in the Documentary film “Do You Dream In Color?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhloN2rKKzs> which shows a student trying to study using textbooks that were not put together properly. This frustration perpetuates the myth that braille is slow and hard to use.

However, when students do receive high quality braille and training in how to read braille, they can compete academically with their fellow students who are not blind. Additional benefits of braille include:

- Improved spelling as audio does not give students exposure to how words are spelled.
- Ability to take and read back notes while listening to a lecture.
- Ability to label and identify materials and personal items to increase independence.
- Having a low-tech backup for when technology or power fails.
- The ability to search and skim quickly through a document.

## **How are blind and low vision youth currently performing?**

IDB has been asking the Iowa Department of Education to release data regarding student performance for more than 5 years and DE has refused. Here is what we know based on blind and low vision students participating in our programming:

- The library serves over 270 Iowa youth providing accessible materials (audio, braille and large print) and

programs.

- 69% of library's youth program participants are reading below grade level.

It is deeply disturbing to us that more than two-thirds of blind youth are not reading at grade level.