For Further Clarification: Vision Impairment

- On the eye report if exact measures could be not be obtained, an eye specialist must so state and give best estimates.

- On the eye report “Prognosis when possible” refers to the doctor’s ability to determine a prognosis. If the doctor is unable to report a prognosis, then that inability should be noted. No information about the prognosis constitutes a discrepancy.

- Documentation should ensure that the functional vision evaluation reflects visual functioning in the environments in which the student functions. These may include, but not be limited to, the classroom, cafeteria, gym, hallway, school grounds, job site, and home. Although the FVE should include data from the medical reports, that information alone is not sufficient. The FVE should include information which can be used as the basis for educational decisions.

There should be a variety of recommendations including modifications to the environment, supplemental aids and equipment, adaptive technology, teaching strategies, physical education, vision related services, assessment strategies, testing strategies, and areas of needed instruction in compensatory skills areas. (These recommendations can be combined with those from the Learning Media Assessment.)

An FVE which (a) does not clearly indicate the student’s visual functioning in a variety of environments, or (b) is a restatement of the medical information, or (c) otherwise does not include information designed to assist in education decisions is out of compliance.

If a clinical low vision evaluation and/or an orientation and mobility (O&M) evaluation was recommended, there should be documentation that the evaluation occurred within a reasonable time frame. Reports should be included in the student’s eligibility folder.

- In the LMA, a statement of need for ongoing assessment to determine appropriate learning media is necessary in this report only if the evaluator is unable to determine a learning media. Typically this occurs when evaluating a very young child, a child with severe and profound disabilities, or when there is a borderline vision determination.

- A learning media assessment evaluates:
  - the efficiency with which the student gathers information through the use of vision, touch, and hearing.
  - the appropriate learning media and the variety of methods and materials the student uses to accomplish learning tasks.
  - the primary literacy medium the students will use for reading and writing (such as print, large print, Braille, and/or auditory tapes.)
There should be a variety of recommendations including what the learning media should be, modification to the environment, supplemental aids and equipment, adaptive technology, teaching strategies, physical education, vision related services, assessment strategies, testing strategies, and areas of needed instruction in compensatory skills areas.

The LMA may be combined with the functional vision evaluation. However, the LMA should be labeled as such. Only a teacher holding a valid certificate to teach students with visual impairment is qualified to perform a learning assessment.

- For Functionally Blind, “Braille skills” include pre-Braille and/or Braille readiness activities which develop the skills for Braille reading and writing. These skills may include tactual exploration and discrimination, fine motor coordination, and hand strength. Pre-Braille and/or Braille readiness activities may be appropriate for:
  - infants and preschoolers
  - students with multiple disabilities
  - students who are blind and in the primary grades
  - older students how are learning Braille due to trauma, deteriorating vision, and/or severely limited visual efficiency.