One of the legal requirements of the FVA is that it address whether or not a low vision eval is needed. Sometimes, the call can be a difficult one to make. This article gives you (or parents or professionals that you plan to share it with) a basic overview of the clinical low vision process.

YOU MAY PRINT ONE COPY OF THIS ARTICLE. FOR OTHER COPIES OR INFORMATION, VISIT:

http://www.iowa-braille.k12.ia.us/ProgServ/LowVision/lvcdoc.html

IOWA BRAILLE SCHOOL:

LOW VISION CLINIC. . . WHAT IS IT? WHO NEEDS IT?

Persons who have a reduced visual acuity that interferes with educational and day-to-day activities are sometimes referred to as having low vision. As many as 90 percent of the youth in Iowa who have been identified as having a visual impairment have some degree of useable vision. Many types of low vision devices and aids are available, as well as programming information, that may assist these students in overcoming some of their visual difficulties.

**Low Vision Clinic** offers a special examination to determine if a student’s visual abilities can be improved. A large part of the examination is conducted by a doctor of optometry who has received specialized training in working with children with visual impairments. The doctor will measure how well a student sees things that are close and things that are distant, and will determine whether any low vision devices will help the student. One type of low vision device is a spectacle magnifier that can help with reading and other near tasks. A monocular telescope is another low vision device that may enable a student to see distance objects, such as street signs, more clearly.

If a near low vision device is recommended, a low vision specialist from the clinic team will show the student how to use the device and will supervise a practice session. Most students who are prescribed a low vision device for distance enhancement will receive a practice session indoors and outdoors. The Orientation and Mobility Specialist who will conduct this practice session may also provide students with a functional vision evaluation to determine how well the student uses their vision for travel tasks, such as crossing streets and locating stairs and curbs. Low vision devices are available for a trial loan period from the Iowa Braille School Outreach Services Department.

**Low Vision Clinic** examinations take from one-half to two hours, depending on the needs of the student. The examination is free of cost to parents and school districts. The clinic is funded through a grant from the Iowa Department of Education and the Lions Clubs of Iowa.

The results of the **Low Vision Clinic** serve as a part of the process involved in identifying the needs of students who are visually impaired. Parents and the student's
teacher are encouraged to accompany the student so that they can have their questions answered and also be able to share their concerns and knowledge about the students. A copy of the report of findings will be sent to the student's parents and the AEA office about three weeks after the examination.

Low Vision Clinics are held in the fall and spring of the school year in various locations in Iowa. For information regarding the date and location of the next Low Vision Clinic contact the local AEA, or Outreach Department, Iowa Braille School, (319) 472-5221, or 1-800-645-4579, ext. 1202 or 1203.