Why is Braille Challenge Finals taking place remotely?

The health and safety of our students and their families is our top priority; therefore, we are taking precautionary measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by shifting Braille Challenge Finals from a physical event to a remote one. We are proud to be able to host Braille Challenge Finals in its 20th year and excited the event will have many of the same features as it normally does, along with new aspects that are unique to this year’s format.

When are you planning to announce the 50 finalists?

Unfortunately, the “shelter in place” mandate issued for the state of California on March 20, 2020 has delayed our ability to process the regional tests and select the finalists. Although we have processed the majority of contests, to ensure the integrity of the Challenge we will be processing the remainder as soon as possible. Once this process is complete, we will announce the 50 finalists.

When finalists have been identified, we will provide an announcement date to our regional coordinators, on our website, and on our social media channels. We will be announcing the finalists live on our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/brailleinstituteyouth/) and then publish them on our website and in a press release sent to media.

All 50 Finalists, and their families, will also be personally contacted and notified by Braille Institute staff.

When will Braille Challenge Finals competitions take place?

The testing portion of Braille Challenge Finals will be held remotely at a testing location determined by each finalist’s family, their TVI and/or regional Braille Challenge coordinator(s). Braille Institute staff will coordinate a privately proctored test which will then be sent back to Braille Institute for scoring.

When will the Braille Challenge Finals Award Ceremony take place?

Winners of the Finals will be announced at a virtual Award Ceremony held at Braille Institute which will be live streamed on Braille Institute’s YouTube page.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCx0VNBI7opfNYuQxrOl4uA
The ceremony will also feature special guest speakers to announce winners. We have not determined the date of the Awards Ceremony but will let you know once it’s set.

**If I’m a finalist, what will Braille Challenge Finals be like this year?**

Some things about Braille Challenge Finals will be the same but some things will be different. The format of the testing will be the same although testing will not take place in Los Angeles. The test will still be a fast-paced and challenging competition that puts braille literacy skills to the test to determine who the best braille readers and writers are in the U.S. and Canada.

Finalists will also receive many of the same items awarded in previous years such as Braille Challenge finalist trophies, medals, a swag bag, tactile portrait, a braille yearbook highlighting each Finalist, cash and product prizes, gift certificates, official recognition from Braille Institute, and remote viewing of the closing ceremony.

**Will there be parent workshops?**

Yes, the workshops will be webinars. A full workshop description with dates and times will be published in June on our website and social media channels.

**Will I get to meet the other Braille Challenge finalists?**

Unfortunately, due to our precautionary measures to COVID-19, we will not be able to host a physical Braille Challenge Finalist event that will bring together the finalists, and their families in-person. However, we encourage finalists and their families to tune into our live stream events and interact with each other and will also share a contact list of finalists for those who are interested in connecting on their own.

We will also encourage Regional Coordinators for regions with multiple finalists or regions that are within driving distance to each other to possibly host award ceremony watch parties of the live stream, if they are interested, and if social distancing regulations allow at the time.

**Where do I go for more information or if I have questions?**

We will regularly post updates on the main Braille Challenge page of our website along with our Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/brailleinstituteyouth/](https://www.facebook.com/brailleinstituteyouth/). We will also send out direct communication whenever possible.

If you still have general questions, please contact Rachel Antoine at rantoine@brailleinstitute.org or (323) 906-3113, Matthew Beckwith - mjbeckwith@brailleinstitute.org or (323) 210-2593 or Sergio Oliva at soliva@brailleinstitute.org
KEEP CALM AND BRAILLE ON