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Adams Wells Special Services Cooperative

CONSIDERING AND DOCUMENTING THE NEED FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The Teacher of Record is responsible for ensuring proper consideration and documentation of Assistive Technology into the IEP. It is important to consider critical questions that address the definition and uses of assistive technology, as well as how to carefully consider it for every student.

IDEA defines assistive technology device as “any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to *increase, maintain or improve* functional capabilities of children with disabilities.”

Some examples of AT devices are:

- a) Pencil grips
- b) Picture schedule boards
- c) Switches
- d) Alternative keyboards
- e) Voice output devices
- f) Software that improves a student’s ability to learn
- g) OT/PT, OI, VI, and HI equipment

Considering AT in the IEP:

IDEA 2004 requires that every child must be “considered” for assistive technology.

- Is it useful for the student?
- Is it needed for the student to meet goals?
- What tasks are difficult or impossible in the educational setting that the use of AT might be an option?

Outcomes of consideration:

Outcome A - Student is fine, no AT needed

Outcome B - Student is using AT and is working

~ Document in IEP

~ Add AT to related services page 5 (zero minutes)

~ Add AT device:

- accommodations, supplemental aids and/or services
- if accommodation for state testing
- supports to personnel for implementing the IEP
- write goals for AT device (don’t use specific name brands)

Outcome C - not enough information to make a decision

- fill out AT referral and send to AWSSC

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ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEFINITIONS AND RESOURCES

Definitions:

Augmentative Communication System:

An augmentative communication system is any system that increases or improves communication of individuals with receptive or expressive communication impairments. The system can include speech, gestures, sign language, symbols, synthesized speech, dedicated communication devices, microcomputers, and other communication systems.

Assistive Technology Device:

An assistive technology (AT) device includes any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functioning of individuals with disabilities. It may be purchased commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such a device.

NIMAS

National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) refers to a collection of consistent and valid XML-based source files created by K-12 curriculum publishers. From these well structured source files, accessible, student-ready alternate-format versions of textbooks and core materials (e.g., Braille, e-text, Digital Talking Book, etc.) can subsequently be created and distributed to qualified students with disabilities. NIMAS files are not student ready versions. IDEA 2004, P.L. 108-446, establishes the NIMAS as a national standard and requires states and local districts to adopt the NIMAS for providing textbooks and instructional materials to students who are blind or print disabled.

Promoting Achievement through Technology and Instruction for all Students (PATINS) and the Indiana Educational Resource Center (IERC) under the direction of the Indiana Center for Exceptional Learners coordinate the Indiana Center for Accessible Materials (ICAM). Coordinating agencies are those state and local agencies that have chosen to coordinate with the NIMAC by directing publishers to provide NIMAS-conformant files to the NIMAC.

Persons with Print Disabilities

Article 7 defines a "student with a print disability" as students served under this article who may qualify to receive books and other publications produced in specialized formats in accordance with U.S.C. 135a. This includes students with visual, perceptual, or other physical limitations. Students who have a print disability may receive specialized formats via the Indiana Center for Accessible Materials (ICAM).

Resources:

PATINS (Promoting Achievement through Technology and Instruction for all Students)

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The PATINS Project is an Indiana Department of Education/Center for Exceptional Learners assistive technology systems change initiative. The project is designed to impact both the organizational capacities of local public schools and the professional capabilities of school staff in the delivery of assistive technology services and the implementation of Universal Design for Learning Principles.

PATINS has established lending libraries at each of our five operational sites. Equipment, software, videos, and print materials are available to public school staff for preview and evaluation purposes. In addition, PATINS offers workshops, both onsite and offsite, and offers technical assistance to local school personnel on specific devices.

PATINS also provides refurbished computer technology to qualifying public schools for use with disabled, disadvantaged, and/or at-risk students.

The Mission of PATINS is to provide access to technology tools and instruction on Universal Design for Learning, so every student can participate and progress within the general curriculum.

www.patinsproject.com

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INSTRUCTIONAL CURRICULA AND MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS WITH A PRINT DISABILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy:

Adams Wells Special Services Cooperative (AWSSC) is committed to supporting the participating school corporations in providing students with disabilities instructional materials and supplies comparable to those provided non-disabled students. This is done using the following process:

Procedures:

1. During each student's case conference, the case conference committee (CCC) must determine whether the student needs instructional materials, including print instructional materials in an accessible format in order to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
2. An "accessible format" means an alternate approach to presenting information to a student with a disability. Accessible formats may be purchased ready for use by students with disabilities, developed for use by students with disabilities, or modified from existing materials in accordance with federal and state copyright laws.
3. Accessible formats include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a) Braille.
 - b) Audio.
 - c) Digital text.
 - d) Large type.
 - e) Tactile graphics.
 - f) Video.
 - g) Captions.
 - h) Audio descriptions.
4. If a student's CCC determines that a student needs print instructional materials in an accessible format, the school corporation must provide the materials to the student in a timely manner. A "timely manner" means that the school corporation will take all reasonable steps to ensure that students who need print instructional materials in accessible formats are provided those materials at the same time as other students receive instructional materials. Reasonable steps include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a) Requiring publishers or other contractors to, at a minimum, provide the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) with electronic files containing the content of the print instructional materials using the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS).
 - b) Having a means of acquiring print instructional materials in accessible formats for all students, including those who may transfer into the public agency after the start of

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the school year.

- c) Reasonable steps do **not** include withholding print instructional materials from other students until print instructional materials in other formats are available.
- 5. When a student needs print instructional materials in an accessible format, the school district must determine whether the student is a student with a **print disability**. This term refers to students who are **Chaffee qualified**. This refers to the 1931 Act to Provide Books for the Adult Blind which was expanded in 1952 to include blind children, and again in 1966 to include persons with physical impairments that prevent the reading of standard print. The current eligibility criteria are:
 - A. Blind persons whose visual acuity, as determined by competent authority, is 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses, or whose widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.
 - B. Other physically handicapped persons are eligible as follows:
 - 1) Persons whose visual disability, with correction and regardless of optical measurement, is certified by competent authority as preventing the reading of standard printed material.
 - 2) Persons certified by competent authority as unable to read or unable to use standard printed material as a result of physical limitations.
 - 3) Persons certified by competent authority as having a reading disability resulting from organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity to prevent their reading printed material in a normal manner.

The TOR notifies the district DRM of the accessible materials request and assists in the collection of information needed for the ICAM registration. In completing these forms a written certification statement from a competent authority may be required. A **competent authority** is a recognized expert who attests to the physical basis of the visual, perceptual, or other physical disability that limits the student's use of standard print as follows:

- a) In cases of blindness, visual disability, or physical limitations "competent authority" is defined to include doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathy, ophthalmologists, optometrists, registered nurses, therapists, professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or welfare agencies (e.g., social workers, case workers, counselors, rehabilitation teachers, and superintendents).
- b) In the case of a reading disability from organic dysfunction, competent authority is defined as doctors of medicine who may consult with colleagues in associated disciplines.

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6. If the student has a print disability, these required forms are sent to the School District Digital Rights Manager (DRM) to submit requests to the ICAM and the Indiana Educational Resource Center (IERC). Once the DRM receives the digital NIMAS files, they are converted to a student ready format by the school district personnel.
7. Regardless of the outcomes, the school corporation must ensure that the following students, who need print instructional materials in accessible formats, receive those materials in a timely manner:
 - a) A student who is not a student with a print disability as defined in 511 IAC 7-32-93.
 - b) A student who needs print instructional materials that cannot be produced from NIMAS files.
8. Charges to the parent for textbook rental, incidental fees, or any other fees permitted by state statute or rule do not violate the no cost requirement, and students who need accessible formats will still be charged accordingly.