



Role and Responsibilities of the LEA Related to Provision of Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) in a Timely Manner

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Role of the LEA

Federal legislation requires LEAs to ensure that all students with disabilities who require AIM must receive these in a timely manner.

- AIM refers to textbooks, core related instructional materials, and all other printed materials that students (K-12) would use in their classrooms.
- Timely manner is defined in the Iowa Rules of Special Education as “at the same time as non-disabled peers receive their textbooks and core related instructional materials.”
- AIM can be rendered in four specialized formats: Braille, large print, audio, and digital text.

IDEA also requires that LEAs who purchase textbooks and core related instructional materials after July 19, 2006 **must** require publishers/vendors in their purchasing agreements to send a National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) conformant fileset of the textbook (s) to the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). This requirement must be met whether or not there are currently students in the district identified as needing AIM. The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has taken the position that all textbooks and core related materials sold by K-12 publishers (i.e., works still “in print” as opposed to “out of print”) after July 19, 2006 are subject to a request for conversion to NIMAS filesets and subsequent submission to the NIMAC. Sample contract language is available at the Iowa Department of Education. In addition, the district should also:

- Maintain a textbook for each student.
- Ask the publishers if specialized formats are available for purchase, or negotiate with the publisher for permission to make specialized formats.
- Actively ensure that the mandates of IDEA, Section 504 and copyright laws are followed.

Responsibilities of the LEA

1. Guarantee that AIM are provided in a timely manner to qualified students as written in IEPs and Section 504 Plans.
2. Obtain textbooks and core related instructional materials in specialized formats for students who have print disabilities.
 - a. For students who are eligible under the Copyright Act as Amended (Chafee): obtain specialized formats through the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) or Bookshare.
 - To ensure availability of digital text in a timely manner. Bookshare recommends requesting NIMAC conversions a minimum of 4 weeks in advance. While conversion typically takes less than one week, a rush of requests arriving the week before school starts might add delays in the process. If the local district cannot find the textbook in Bookshare or the NIMAC and the district wants a DAISY or BRF file, the district is welcome to contact Bookshare at <http://bookshare.org/contactUs>. In addition, the district can send Bookshare a physical copy of the book(s) and it will be converted as quickly as possible. Turnaround time (at present) varies from 1-3 months depending on backlog and difficulty of book. Bookshare is working on capacity in order to reduce the turnaround time.
 - If a book is not available from Bookshare, it may be ordered from the Iowa Department for the Blind. The Instructional Materials Center (IMC) can obtain or initiate production of materials in Braille, large print, audio, or digital text. You can use the online order form for K-12 materials at www.IDBonline.org/library/.

Responsibilities of the LEA (continued)

- The turn-around time for materials requested from the IMC at the Iowa Department for the Blind can vary from a few days to more than six months. Numerous sources of specialized formats are searched in addition to the NIMAC. If the title is readily available from our library or another source in the desired format, it can be delivered immediately or held for shipment next school year. If the title is not available, the book will be produced in the desired format, which can be a time-consuming process. NIMAS filesets provide a good guide for transcription, but when compared to the print copy, are not always completely accurate. The Iowa Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is committed to providing instructional materials in specialized formats that are as close to identical to the print as possible. Orders for a student's textbooks and supplementary materials should be placed as early as possible to allow for production in Braille, audio, large print, or electronic text, as well as tactile graphics. Placing orders for next school year in January would not be too soon. Waiting to send orders till May or June may result in the materials not being ready by the first day of school. If books need to be produced, the print copies must also be submitted to the IMC as soon as possible.
 - Even if you are planning to order from Bookshare, you should search for your desired titles as early as possible. Ordering early from Bookshare avoids the potential of a backlog and ensures that you get the book in a timely manner. In the event certain books are not in the Bookshare collection, you will still have ample time to order from the IMC, *if you don't wait till the last day of school to do your search.*
- b. For students who are not eligible under the Copyright Act as Amended (Chafee) but require AIM: obtain specialized formats through publishers or Area Education Agencies. Contact Beth Hirst for more information.
3. Ensure that textbook adoption committees take into consideration all students, including those with disabilities and their needs for specialized formats of the textbooks by:
- Considering accessibility as a factor in their decision-making rubrics and consider preference to those publishers who offer accessible versions for sale
 - Including a broad range of educators on the committee, including special educators
 - Consulting Assistive Technology specialists in determining the level of accessibility and the appropriate supports as needed
 - Requesting sample materials prior to purchase to determine the degree of accessibility (not all digital materials are accessible)
 - Including language in purchasing agreements with publishers to ensure the required NIMAS file is shared with the NIMAC (required)
 - Including language in textbook purchasing agreements that promote alternate format accessible materials for use by any student regardless of eligibility
4. Ensure that the district business office inserts into the contract with publishers and vendors the required NIMAS language.

Documenting the Acquisition Process

The AIM Acquisition Summary is provided for LEAs to use in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities when providing AIM. This form is used to:

- Initiate and document the acquisition process of AIM based on IEP and Section 504 team recommendations.
- Provide parents a copy of what was discussed at the IEP or Section 504 meetings.

Resources

True AIM: <http://trueaim.iowa.gov>

Iowa Department for the Blind:

<http://www.IDBonline.org>

Bookshare: <http://www.bookshare.org>

For more information, contact

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