ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY USE IN SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

8. Monitor AT consideration at IEP meetings to ensure that AT is considered for every student receiving special education. If identified in the IEP as needed, monitor the timely provision of assistive technology services and devices as delineated in the IEP.
9. Make a master list of assistive technology listed in every IEP, for ease of reference. This master list will identify which students should have technology available and operational in all classes.
10. Ensure timely technical support which will support continuous student achievement.

Adapted from QIAT Consortium

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Iowa's True AIM:
http://trueaimiowa.gov/

NIMAS Technical Assistance:
http://nimas.cast.org/

NIMAC:
http://nimac.us/

Iowa Department for the Blind:
http://www.IDBonline.org

Bookshare:
http://www.bookshare.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

Beth Hirst
515-281-1280
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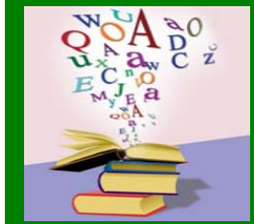
Iowa Department for the Blind
524 Fourth Street
Des Moines, IA 50309-2364



What You Need to Know About

Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) And Assistive Technology (AT)

WHAT SHOULD THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT) AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY (IT) BE?

AT AND IT SYSTEMS EXIST IN MOST SCHOOLS

Most schools have systems in place for supporting technology. Assistive technology devices are managed by LEA teams (IFSP, IEP, or Section 504) working with students with disabilities. Instructional technology infrastructure is managed by network coordinators and technology specialists working with all students. These teams and specialists are challenged to work together within the larger context of a school district to meet all technology and assistive technology needs of all students. This includes the specific assistive technology and instructional technology needs of an individual student as identified in their IFSP, IEP, and Section 504 Plans. This brochure provides guidelines and information to assist integration of these interests.

WHAT DOES FEDERAL AND STATE LAW SAY ABOUT AT?

The amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the **Iowa Rules of Special Education** require that IEP teams consider whether every child with a disability requires assistive technology and services (federal citation at 20 U.S.C. Section 1401) to access their right to a "free, appropriate, public education" in the least restrictive environment. Assistive technology must be provided in a timely manner if it is needed for the student to gain access to the general education curriculum and to participate more fully in all aspects of school life.

WHAT ARE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES AND SERVICES?

1. Assistive Technology Device: The term "assistive technology device" means any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

WHAT IS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES? (CONTINUED)

2. Assistive Technology Service: The term "assistive technology service" means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such term includes:
   A. the evaluation of the needs of such child, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment;
   B. purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by such child;
   C. selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices;
   D. coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
   E. training or technical assistance for such child, or, when appropriate, the family of such child; and
   F. training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services) to, employ, or otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of such child.

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

1. **Assistive technology is driven by individual needs as determined by the IFSP, IEP, or Section 504 Plan.** The daily needs of the individual will determine what assistive technology devices and services are needed and outlined in the IFSP, IEP or Section 504 Plan. As an administrator, recognizing the individualized nature of assistive technology services, and supporting staff in their provision is necessary. The abilities of the student, the environments in which the student requires assistive technology and the tasks to be completed will determine the types of devices needed. To insure a collaborative effort between AT and IT staff, IT staff should be invited to the IEP meeting where assistive technology decisions will be made.
2. **Assistive Technology is a Tool.** Assistive technology is a tool used by students to access the general education curriculum. As an administrator, supporting the development of an IFSP, IEP or Section 504 Plan that reflects the use of assistive technology as a method to achieve more functional goals is essential.
3. **Administrative Support is Important.** The administrator is key to the successful assistive technology service delivery. Administrator's should support the team's collaborative efforts; support training needed, and acquire the identified technology as necessary.
4. **Assistive Technology Takes Staff Time.** Assistive technology service delivery requires staff time. Time is necessary for assessment, teaming, implementation, customization, maintenance, and training. As administrators, it is important to recognize the amount of staff (including the IT people, teachers, paraprofessionals,etc.) time required and help identify strategies to maximize time use.
5. **Local, State and National Resources are Available.** The responsibility of the administrator is to have information about local, state, and national support services concerning assistive technology.

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (CONTINUED)

6. **Assistive Technology is a Collaborative Effort.** Teams include students and families as equal members. Team membership varies as the individual situations and environments change and evolve. The selection process and the utilization of assistive technology is a team effort. Supporting regular communication and collaboration among team members especially the instructional technology personnel is the administrator's role, even if the administrator has to waive or eliminate instructional technology policies and procedures that interfere with a student's timely access to assistive technology and accessible instructional materials.
7. **Assistive Technology is an Ongoing Process.** Since changes often occur with a student's abilities, skills, environments, curriculum, and technology, assistive technology must be continually monitored to make sure it meets the student's changing needs. The administrator's commitment to assistive technology recognizes that staff energy and time will be required on an ongoing basis.
8. **Assistive Technology Involves Training and Application of Skills.** Various trainings can be provided either on-site, locally or regionally. Differing levels and types of trainings are necessary for team members as they update, expand and apply, new skills in the area of assistive technology. The administrator's role involves ensuring that team members have access to needed trainings.
9. **Assistive Technology Involves Preparation for Transitions.** Planning for changes in classrooms, grades, staff, schools, and exiting school will ensure smoother transitions for students using assistive technology. Transition planning meetings allow for the exchange of important information and facilitate assistive technology services when school transitions occur. Administrators play a key role in planning for transitions and should facilitate the coordination of information and equipment between teams.

ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY USE IN SCHOOLS

What a school leader can do to encourage appropriate and effective use of technology:

1. Involve staff in the creation of a school-wide technology plan that includes assistive technologies.
2. Lead staff in becoming familiar with the educational and assistive technology available at your school and in your district resources to support their use at school, district, and statewide levels.
3. Assess the technology training needs of staff at your school periodically.
4. Plan proactively professional development about technology for staff at your school.
5. Use universal design for learning strategies to support the needs of diverse learners.
   - Advocate for technology that supports accessibility for diverse learners.
   - Promote the use of technology-based learning activities in line with curriculum objectives.
6. Recognize effective technology use (e.g., highlight effective practices at staff meetings, bulletin board postings, peer sharing during training events, newsletter articles).
7. Create a database of all assistive and educational technology used in the building and district in order to:
   - obtain information about what the district has committed to provide to meet individual student needs
   - monitor building-wide usage
   - plan for future needs
   - provide documentation for compliance with IDEA