



## **Assistive Technology (AT) Forward September Update**

Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members and welcome to the first AT Forward Update for the 2021-22 school year! The AT Forward Update is a monthly publication, which provides information about the AT Forward Project, highlights the upcoming AT Forward Community of Practice (CoP) meetings, and includes additional Assistive Technology resources and tips.

### **What is the AT Forward Project?**

The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project is designed to support educators, practitioners, caregivers, and families to increase student autonomy in utilizing Assistive Technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning. Assistive Technology Forward provides a statewide, virtual Community of Practice (CoP) to support AT in virtual and distance learning. The AT Forward team utilizes the [WATI](#) (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative) and [QIAT](#) (Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology) formats.

### **Why should I read the AT Forward Update?**

The goal is to move assistive technology forward in the state of Wisconsin, so please encourage all teachers, administrators, IEP teams, and families of students with IEPs to read this monthly update.

### **What is the AT Forward Community of Practice (CoP)?**

The AT Forward Community of Practice provides members with the opportunity to learn from experts in the field of AT and network with colleagues and families statewide.

### **When is the first AT Forward CoP meeting?**

The first AT Forward CoP meeting, An ***Introduction to the AT Forward Project: What's Been Done and Where Are We Going***, is scheduled for **Monday, September 20, 2021 from 4:00pm-5:00pm**. This hour-long, virtual meeting will provide attendees with an overview of the project, updates from last year's AT Forward work, and a preview of the upcoming CoP sessions. Please utilize this link for [registration](#).

## **Where can I find additional information about upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings?**

For additional AT CoP meeting registration information, links to last year's AT Forward CoP presentations, and for a preview of the 2021-22 meetings, please visit our [AT Forward website](#). All AT Forward meetings will be held in a virtual format and will run from 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m. on their respective dates. In addition, all of the meetings will be recorded and published on the [AT Forward website](#).

## **Upcoming AT Forward CoP Meetings:**

**October 5, 2021:** Who Makes Up the AT Team? Identification of Team Roles to Support Student Needs

**October 20, 2021:** Building a Coaching Model for AAC Support

**November 8, 2021:** An Introduction to Assistive Technology for Students and Families

**November 16, 2021:** Sensory Supports To Assist Students with Learning through Technology

**December 1, 2021:** Behavior as Communication

**December 16, 2021:** Universal Design for Learning: Using Technology that Promotes Student Engagement for All

**January 10, 2022:** AT in the IEP: Using Data to Document Assistive Technology

**January 18, 2022:** How to Determine the Need for Technology Versus the Benefit

**February 2, 2022:** Accessing Grade Level Content

**February 17, 2022:** Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Resources: Accessible Electronic Texts for Students with Visual Impairments or Print Disabilities

**March 7, 2022:** Low and No Cost Resources to Support Assistive Technology

**April 26, 2022:** Finding Tools to Fit the Needs of Today's Students

**May 11, 2022:** Non-Academic Activities: Engaging Students in Social and Leisure Activities

**May 19, 2022:** Supporting Students with Medical Complexities

## **Do I need to be a CoP member to attend the meetings?**

While we encourage you to [join the AT Forward CoP](#), you do not have to be a member to attend the CoP meetings, so please forward this registration link to anyone who may be interested in attending, including: students, families, caretakers, general and special education staff, pupil and related services staff, school librarians, and school administrators.

## **What is the Quality Indicator Spotlight for September?**

Each month will highlight a Quality Indicator for Assistive Technology, which can easily be utilized to provide training for district staff. For September, the spotlight is [Indicator 8: AT Professional Development and Training](#).

### **What is the Assessing Student's Needs for Assistive Technology (ASNAT)?**

ASNAT is the acronym for the manual and process of assessment in the area of Assistive Technology. If your school district would benefit from a step-by-step AT assessment guide, this is the manual for you. This [link](#) will take you to the entire manual, but we suggest that you break it down into manageable sections. This month's focus will be on [Chapter 1](#), which provides an overview of assessment, consideration, and the laws that support assistive technology.

### **What is the Assistive Technology Lending Center (ATLC)?**

The [Assistive Technology Lending Center \(ATLC\)](#) is a lending library of high-end Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) equipment for trial purposes. The ATLC provides high-end AAC devices costing \$4000.00 or more for loan to Wisconsin LEA public school licensed professional educators for trial with children ages 3 to 18, who have IEPs and are enrolled in public schools, or students age 19-21, who are enrolled in a Wisconsin LEA school program and have an IEP. [Please follow this link for more information](#) and registration. Each month the AT Forward Update will feature a spotlight device of the month from the ATLC.

### **Where can I turn if I have an Assistive Technology question?**

The [QIAT Community](#) is a free AT resource, which includes a searchable question and answer support tool. If you are interested in learning about support, you can subscribe [here](#).

### **Where can I find additional Assistive Technology resources?**

Looking for general Assistive Technology information. Please refer to the resources found on the [DPI Website](#).

### **Book Study Suggestions:**

Are you looking for a fun way to build knowledge and empathy around Assistive Technology? Why not start a book study? September's book of the month is entitled, [Ghost Boy](#), by Martin Pistorius and includes the following excerpt:

“In January 1988, aged twelve, Martin Pistorius fell inexplicably sick. First he lost his voice and stopped eating; then he slept constantly and shunned human contact. Doctors were mystified. “

This page-turning book emphasizes the need to never give up on a child and the understanding that learning to communicate with a device takes time and the need for community. As a society, we must protect and take care of those who need us the most.

### **Resource of the Week:**

The resource of the week comes from Paula Wasler, who has over twenty years' experience in the field of Assistive Technology. She developed this resource to assist teams with following along in the ASNAT manual and the recommendation is to begin with [Assistive Technology 101](#).

### **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Virtual Conference: October 7-8, 2021**

The UDL Forward! project's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual UDL Virtual Conference centers the theme of UDL as a "principled approach to educational justice" with guest keynoters Mirko Chardin (Novak Consulting) and David Rose, co-founder of UDL. Mirko is co-author of *Equity by Design: Delivering on the Power and Promise of UDL*. David Rose will give his first talk on the neuroscience of bias for Wisconsin (coming out of retirement!), from recent research, and explain how UDL can help us recognize and dismantle the barriers we may be creating subconsciously. Registration is open, and all are invited to engage in UDL presentations from CAST and from Wisconsin educators October 7-8! [Register for the UDL Virtual Conference today!](#)

### **Where can I learn more about the AT Forward Project?**

Additional information can be found on the [Assistive Technology Forward](#) website, including the [Assistive Technology \(AT\) Forward Registration Form](#). If you know of an individual or a group, who would be interested in joining the AT Forward CoP, please encourage them to visit the AT Forward website.

Let's move AT Forward together this year!

If you have any questions or comments about the AT Forward Project, please contact Kathy White at [Kathy.White@CESA2.org](mailto:Kathy.White@CESA2.org) or Stacy Duffy at [stacy.duffy@cesa2.org](mailto:stacy.duffy@cesa2.org).