Wisconsin Accessible Educational Materials (AEM): Are you Ready?

State Superintendent's Special Education and Pupil Services Leadership Conference

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Presenters

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Learning Topics

1. Understand "who" must receive Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) as well as who else may benefit from accessible educational materials (aem).

2. Identify "what" are the types of AEM that can be matched to individual student needs.

3. Identify systems of support to ensure students are receiving what they need, when they need it, in the way they need it.

High Leverage Practices (HLPs) in Special Education

Today's presentation covers the following HLPs

1. Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.

2. Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families.

3. Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.

4. Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs.

5. Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs.

6. Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes.

7. Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment.

8. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behaviors

9. Teach social behaviors.

10. Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans.

19. Use assistive and instructional technologies.

22. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.

Educational Equity

Educational equity means that **every** student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.

https://dpi.wi.gov/rti/equity

Learning Objective #1

Understand "who" must receive Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) as well as who else may benefit from accessible educational materials (aem)
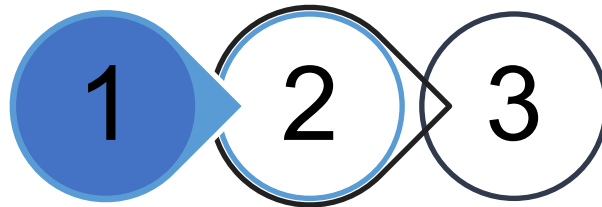
Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) and "aem"

AEM	aem
Must be a student with an IEP, who qualifies under law.	Any student, including students with IEPs - all the time.
All students get what they need!	

UDL
Wisconsin Universal Design for Learning

What is an Accessible Educational Material?

The National AEM Center defines Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) as:

"Print- and technology-based educational materials, including printed and electronic textbooks and related core materials that are **designed or enhanced in a way that makes them usable across the widest range of learner variability, regardless of format**."

Digital does Not Mean Accessible

- Text-based digital materials are not consistently designed for use with assistive technology (AT).

  - Some learners use AT to read and navigate text and images in digital materials.

  - Screen readers, text to speech, and switches are a few examples of AT devices and software.

Accessible Formats and Accessibility Features
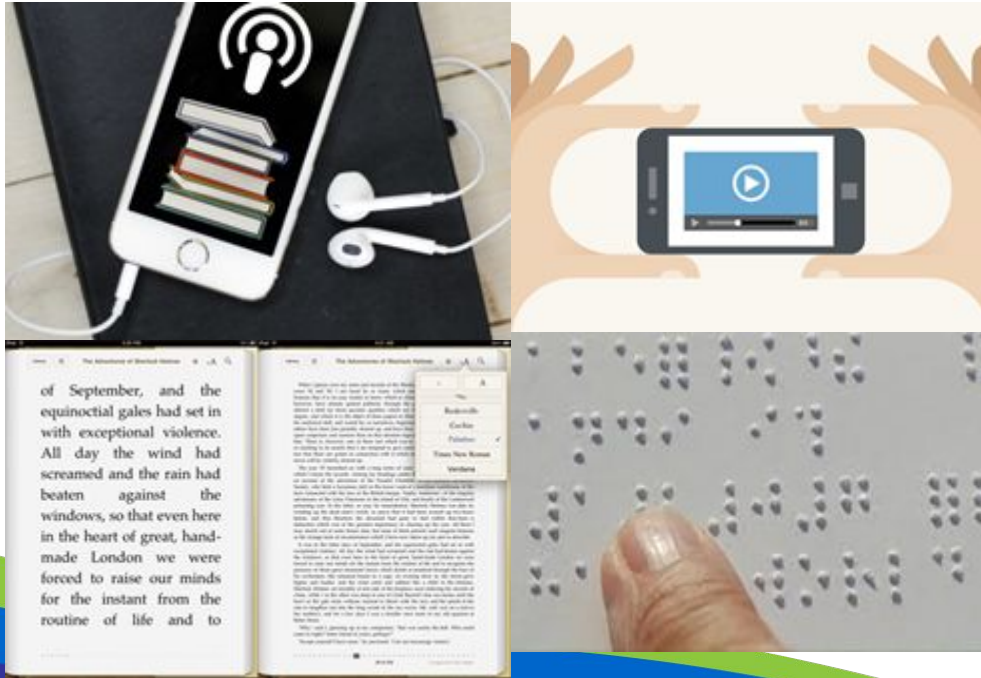
- ❏ Change speed
- ❏ Closed captioned
- ❏ Navigation features
- ❏ Choose background
- ❏ Choose font
- ❏ Enlarge or reduce
- ❏ Highlighting
- ❏ Volume adjust
- ❏ Embedded supports
  - ❏ Glossary
  - ❏ Coach
  - ❏ Notes
  - ❏ Video

Who Should Receive AEM?

5) Does the student need assistive technology services or devices?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Consider any item, piece of equipment, product system, or service to increase, maintain, or improve the student's functional capabilities. In addition to other needs that require assistive technology, discuss if the student accesses, uses, and derives meaning from age or grade level standard printed text when considering accessible education materials (AEM) and the need for assistive technology.

If yes, describe the student's assistive technology needs:

Document necessary services or devices in the Program Summary.

Who Should Receive AEM?

An individual who, regardless of any **other** disability—

A. is <mark>blind</mark>;
B. has a <mark>visual impairment</mark> or <mark>perceptual</mark> or <mark>reading disability</mark> that cannot be improved to give visual function substantially equivalent to that of a person, who has no such impairment or disability and so is unable to read printed works to substantially the same degree as a person without an impairment or disability; or
C. is otherwise unable, through <mark>physical disability</mark>, to hold or manipulate a book or to focus or move the eyes to the extent that would be normally acceptable for reading.

[DPI Update Bulletin 20.02](#)

Provision of AEM Required to Receive Federal Special Education Funding

- All Local Educational Agencies (LEA), e.g. school districts, must sign an assurance document to receive funding through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- This assurance states the LEA will provide instructional materials in a timely manner to students with disabilities as required in IDEA [34 CFR § 300.210].
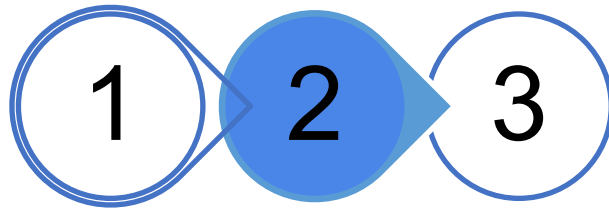
Who Should Receive AEM?

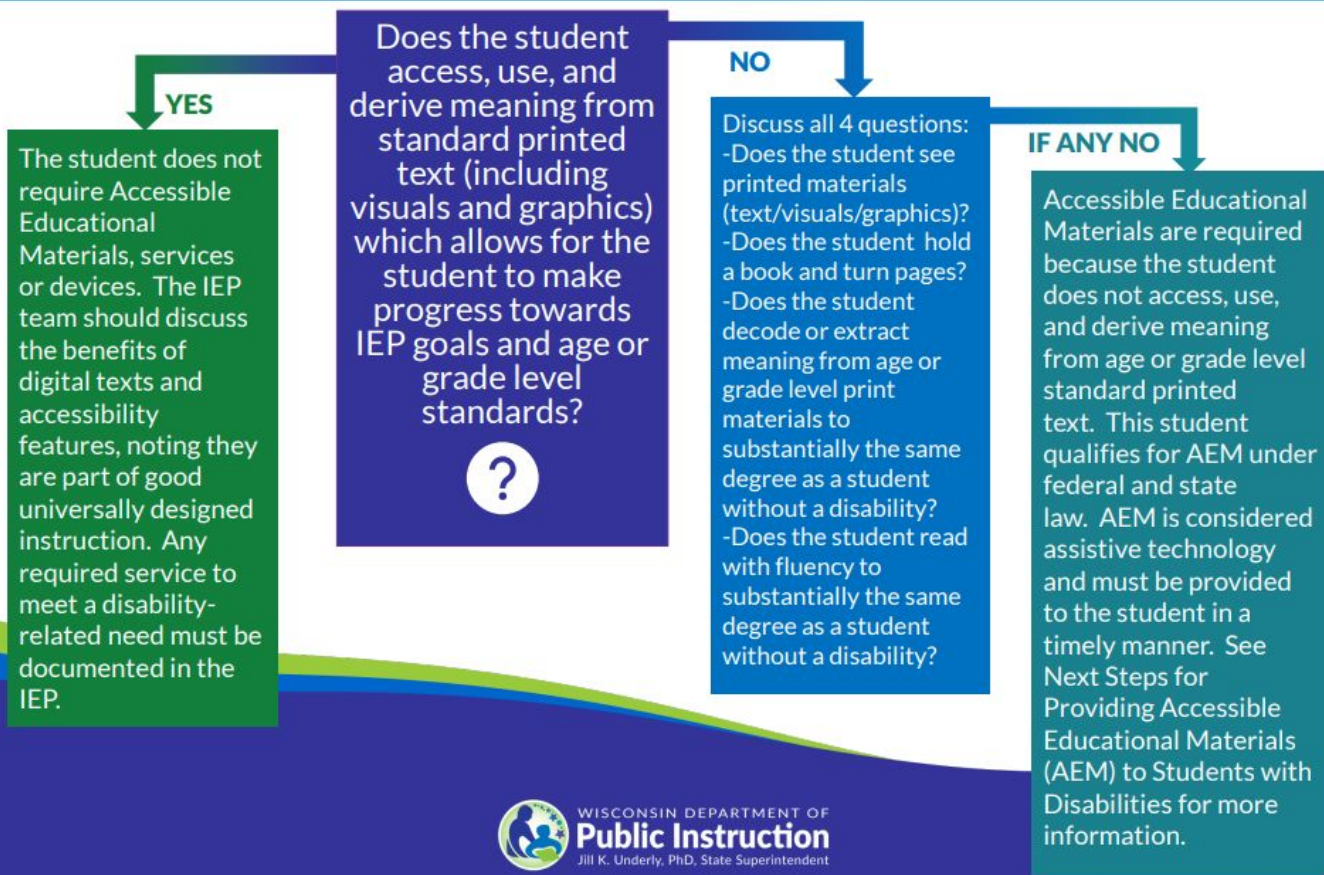To summarize, determining whether a student with an IEP should receive AEM should be based on:

- does the student access, use, or derive meaning from age or grade level standard printed text

- ensuring access to all instructional materials

- NOT based on disability categories or labels

Learning Objective #2

Identify "what" are the types of AEM that can be matched to individual student needs.

1 → 2 → 3

AEM Decision Tree

Does the student access, use, and derive meaning from standard printed text (including visuals and graphics) which allows for the student to make progress towards IEP goals and age or grade level standards? ?

YES

The student does not require Accessible Educational Materials, services or devices. The IEP team should discuss the benefits of digital texts and accessibility features, noting they are part of good universally designed instruction. Any required service to meet a disability-related need must be documented in the IEP.

NO

Discuss all 4 questions:
-Does the student see printed materials (text/visuals/graphics)?
-Does the student hold a book and turn pages?
-Does the student decode or extract meaning from age or grade level print materials to substantially the same degree as a student without a disability?
-Does the student read with fluency to substantially the same degree as a student without a disability?

IF ANY NO

Accessible Educational Materials are required because the student does not access, use, and derive meaning from age or grade level standard printed text. This student qualifies for AEM under federal and state law. AEM is considered assistive technology and must be provided to the student in a timely manner. See Next Steps for Providing Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) to Students with Disabilities for more information.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction
Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent

Questions for IEP Teams to Consider the Need for AEM

1) Does the student see printed materials (text/visuals/graphics)?

2) Does the student hold a book and turn pages?

3) Does the student decode or extract meaning from age or grade level print materials to substantially the same degree as a student without a disability?

4) Does the student read with fluency to substantially the same degree as a student without a disability?

Explore Feature Matching

Feature Matching assists the team in asking the right questions

1) Does the student see printed materials (text/visuals/graphics)?

[Vision Feature Match](#)

Explore Feature Matching

Feature Matching assists the team in asking the right questions

2) Does the student hold a book and turn pages?

[Physical Access](#)

Explore Feature Matching

Feature Matching assists the team in asking the right questions

3) Does the student decode or extract meaning from age or grade level print materials to substantially the same degree as a student without a disability?

Reading

Explore Feature Matching

Feature Matching assists the team in asking the right questions

4) Does the student read with fluency to substantially the same degree as a student without a disability?

Reading and AEM

What is required after a student qualifies for AEM?

When a student qualifies for AEM under federal law, LEAs must provide:

- AEM in a timely manner (at the same time as provided to peers)

- AEM in accessible and usable format(s)

- instruction for access and use by the learner

- training for staff and families

DPI Update Bulletin 20.02
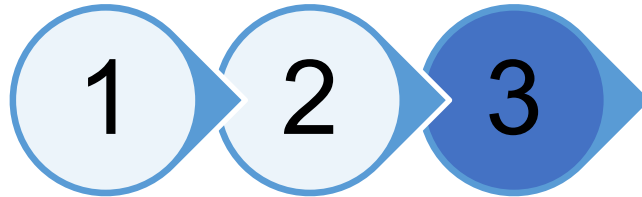
"The expert in anything was once a beginner."
—Anonymous

"The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you."
—B.B. King

Acquiring AEM

School districts can acquire AEM through:

1. Non-profit Accessible Media Producers that operate in the U.S. under a copyright exemption and are able to make books available to individuals with print disabilities.
2. Directly from publishers
3. Through the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC):
   a. Contact the Wisconsin AEM Center or WCBVI AEM Center for assistance

AEM Media Producers

Bookshare

A program supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), providing alternative AEM options for qualifying students with with dyslexia, learning disabilities, visual impairments, physical disabilities, and other reading barriers.

Join the Bookshare Community on Social Media Platforms

Learning Ally

A national nonprofit, requiring membership, providing AEM support for students and adults with an eligible print disability.

Join the Learning Ally Educator Community

Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library

WTBBL

As part of a national network cooperating with the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) provides audiobooks and Braille materials to Wisconsin residents who cannot read or use regular print materials as a result of temporary or permanent visual or physical limitations.

Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)

AEM Searchable Database

[APH Louis Database of Accessible Materials](#)

Louis is a database of accessible educational materials from agencies and organizations across the U.S. It is designed to help educators and parents quickly locate the accessible materials students need, while reducing duplication of effort by sharing information from over 75 organizations in one place. The Louis search also allows users to search the NIMAC, Bookshare, and Learning Ally databases.

Check out the Louis training video for helpful information on searching the new website.

Wisconsin AEM Support Centers

Wisconsin Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center

- A point-of-contact for educators to seek technical support in acquiring AEM for learner's who require access to age or grade level standard printed text in a format that is accessible to address their disability-related need(s).

Accessible Educational Materials Center – Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI)

- The Accessible Education Materials (AEM) Center is part of the WCBVI Outreach Program. AEM services are available to public, private, and home schools and agencies providing educational programs for prekindergarten through 12th grade children and students who are blind or visually impaired.

Wisconsin AEM Center

Services Provided:

- Qualified professionals can submit an AEM request through the WI AEM Center's website. There is a help video available to assist individuals with the process.
- Districts can receive phone and email support for questions around AEM.
- The website houses a list of developed resources around AEM, including the DPI AEM Bulletin, AEM Decision Tree for IEP Teams, Next Steps for Providing AEM to Students with Disabilities, the 2022-23 four-part AEM webinar series, and the AT Forward AEM Micro-Credentials. .

WCBVI AEM Center

Services Provided:

- Loaning assistive technology devices and capital equipment such as Light Touch Brailler, SMART Brailler, Electric Brailler, and Unimanual Brailler;
- Obtaining K-12 textbooks and educational materials for qualifying children and students through funds provided by the American Printing House (APH) Federal Quota Program;
- Textbook research and vendor referrals; and
- Central repository of braille and large print textbooks and specialized educational aids for loan.

Creating Accessible Educational Materials

- Creating PDFs, worksheets, and other materials accessible
  - Universal Tools: Kami, Snap&Read, SnapType (app), and other tools (see [Next Steps for Providing AEM Guidance Document](#))
  - [APH Hive](#) provides refresher courses on creating accessible documents.
- Born Accessible: Design materials that are accessible for all
  - [National Center on AEM](#)

AEM Resources

- [AEM Decision Tree for IEP Teams](#)
- [Next Steps for Providing AEM Guidance Document](#)
- [Assistive Technology (AT) Forward](#)
  - [AT Forward Micro-Credentials](#): AEM Micro-Credential
  - [AT Forward Video Resource Guide](#): Recordings of AEM Webinar Series
- [DPI Update Bulletin 20.02](#)
- [Wisconsin AEM Center](#)
- [WCBVI AEM Center](#)

Explore Resources

- Explore resources:
  - [Protocol Accommodations in Reading (PAR)](#) or uPAR
  - [Bookshare](#)
  - [Learning Ally](#)
  - [Read & Write](#)
  - [Announcify](#)
  - [SpeakIt!](#)
  - [Snap&Read](#)
  - Accessibility Options built-in [Apple](#) / [Chrome](#)