



Bulletin 22.02

SPECIAL EDUCATION INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

August 2022

TO: District Administrators, CESA Administrators, CCDEB Administrators,
Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services, and Other Interested Parties

FROM: Paul Manriquez, Assistant State Superintendent 
Division for Learning Support

SUBJECT: Assistive Technology

Introduction

Assistive technology can be a powerful tool for transforming learning. It can help affirm and advance relationships between educators and students, reinvent approaches to learning and collaboration, shrink equity and accessibility gaps, and adapt learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners. [U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology](#) (January 2017). Assistive technology can help students be more self-sufficient at home and in school, communicate with friends and family, function more independently in the community, and access higher education and employment as they grow older. Data indicates a gap between achievement scores of students with disabilities and age- or grade-level standards and expectations. In Wisconsin, fewer than 15% of students with disabilities demonstrate English Language Arts proficiency in statewide assessments, suggesting that the vast majority of these students have trouble accessing age- or grade-level curricula. One of the purposes of assistive technology in the classroom is to ensure students with disabilities have timely access to age- or grade-level curricula.

This bulletin provides technical assistance on state and federal requirements related to identifying and addressing the need for assistive technology as part of a special education evaluation and Individualized Education Program (IEP) development. Assistive technologies include both devices and services designed to address specific barriers that students with disabilities may face when they interact with their environment or materials, barriers that result in inequitable learning opportunities and outcomes. The use of assistive technologies capitalizes on student strengths to ensure every learner can access, engage, and make progress in challenging learning opportunities appropriate to their age or grade level.

A student's IEP must describe the assistive technology devices and services to be provided when the student's IEP team determines they are required to address the student's disability-related

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needs. Whenever a student's IEP is developed or reviewed and revised, the student's IEP team must consider as a special factor whether the student requires assistive technology to ensure the student's access, engagement, and progress in age- or grade-level curriculum, instruction, environments, or other school-related activities. IEP team considerations about the need for assistive technology devices or services are based on an analysis of the effects of the student's disability and the student's unique strengths and needs. Whether an assistive technology assessment is required as part of a comprehensive special education evaluation or reevaluation depends on identified concerns and how much is already known about a student's strengths and disability-related needs.

Assistive technology is often identified in an IEP as a related service to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education (34 CFR § 300.34) or as a supplementary aid and service to enable a student with a disability to be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate in light of the student's circumstances (34 CFR § 300.42). Assistive technology can address a wide range of academic and functional skills, including academics (e.g., reading, writing, mathematics), cognitive learning, communication, independence and self-determination, physical and health, and social and emotional learning. Assistive technology ranges from "high technology (tech)" devices such as text-to-speech or word prediction software and applications (apps) to "mid-tech" devices such as screen magnifiers or adaptive switches and "low-tech" devices such as pencil grips, graphic organizers, and highlighters. Assistive technology may be a type of *accessible education material* (AEM) that allows a student to access printed text, or it may be a type of *augmentative and alternative communication* (AAC) that provides a student with voice or communication options. When documenting assistive technology as a related service or a supplementary aid and service in a student's IEP, a service description along with the service's frequency, amount, location, and duration must be included in the IEP program summary.

Most people use assistive technology in their daily lives in various ways (e.g., computer applications or organizers). Some school districts develop systems for incorporating assistive technology to remove barriers to learning for all students as part of their implementation of universal design for learning (UDL). This document is specifically focused on assistive technology used to address the disability related-needs of students receiving special education services through an IEP, although assistive technology may also be provided through a 504 plan. The remainder of this document addresses frequently asked questions to clarify and provide additional guidance on state and federal special education requirements for assessing, determining, and providing assistive technology to such students.

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General Assistive Technology Questions

1. What are the general requirements for assistive technology?

In developing each student's IEP, the IEP team must consider whether a student needs assistive technology devices and services. 34 CFR § 300.324(a)(2)(v). Districts must ensure assistive technology devices or services, or both, are provided to a student with a disability if the IEP team determines they are required in order for the student to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. Assistive technology is documented as specially designed instruction, supplementary aids and services, or related services in the student's IEP. Assistive technology must be provided at no cost to the parents of a student with a disability who requires such devices or services. On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a student's home or other settings is required if the IEP team determines the student needs those devices to receive FAPE. 34 CFR § 300.105.

2. What is an assistive technology device?

An 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 the functional capabilities of a student with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of such a device. 34 CFR § 300.5. An internet-based instructional program is not a device and does not meet the definition of an assistive technology device. 34 CFR § 300 & 301 Analysis of Comments and Changes, 2006, p. 46547. As noted in the [Analysis of Comments and Changes](#), "The definition of assistive technology device does not list specific devices, nor would it be practical or possible to include an exhaustive list of assistive technology devices. Whether an augmentative communication device, playback devices, or other devices could be considered an assistive technology device for a student depends on whether the device is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability and whether the student's IEP team determines that the student needs the device in order to receive a FAPE.

3. What is an assistive technology service?

An assistive technology service means any service that directly assists a student with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. This includes:

- The evaluation of the needs of a student with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the student in the child's customary environment.
- Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by students with disabilities.
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices.
- Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.

- Training or technical assistance for a student with a disability or, if appropriate, that student's family.
- Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of that student. 34 CFR § 300.6

4. Which students are eligible to receive assistive technology?

Any student ages 3 through 21 is eligible to receive assistive technology as part of their IEP if the IEP team determines the student needs assistive technology to receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment. Assistive technology must be provided at no cost to the parents of a student with a disability. Assistive technology is a special factor that must be considered when developing each student's IEP. 34 CFR § 300.324 (a)(2). Any student who requires assistive technology to address a disability-related need must be provided such services, irrespective of the disability category in which the student has been classified. An assistive technology assessment may be needed as part of a student's special education evaluation or reevaluation to determine if a student needs assistive technology devices or services.

5. What types of disability-related needs can assistive technology address?

Assistive technology devices and services can address many types of academic and functional disability-related needs, including needs related to academics (e.g., reading, writing, mathematics), cognitive learning, communication, independence and self-determination, physical and health needs, and social and emotional learning. An assistive technology device or service is not limited to a certain disability category but rather must be matched to each student's unique disability-related need(s).

6. Can the use of assistive technology be considered an "accommodation"?

Yes. Assistive technology is sometimes referred to as an accommodation, especially when associated with district-wide or statewide assessments as indicated in a student's IEP (see questions 7 & 20). Supplementary aids and services in a student's IEP are also sometimes commonly referred to as accommodations provided in regular education, other educational settings, and in extracurricular and non-academic settings to enable a student with a disability to be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Needed accommodations are determined by the IEP team and documented in the student's IEP program summary, including the frequency, amount, location, and duration of the accommodation.

Accommodations allow a student with a disability to meet the same high academic and functional expectations as students without a disability, but with differences in "how" the student demonstrates the expectation. Thus, a student provided with an accommodation may meet the same standard or expectation utilizing a different format, modality, or environment compared to other students.

7. Can assistive technology be used as an accommodation on district-wide or statewide assessments?

Yes. Testing accommodations are changes to the format of a test (e.g., providing a test in large print) or its administration procedures (e.g., permitting extended time to complete the test, using text-to-speech or a human reader to access content and questions on a test). Testing accommodations change how students are tested but do not change what a test measures or the knowledge students are expected to demonstrate. Students receiving special education services who receive testing accommodations are required to take the same assessment and reach the same level of proficiency as students who do not use testing accommodations. IEP teams must consider as a special factor whether a student needs assistive technology when developing or reviewing a student's IEP. 34 CFR § 300.324 (a)(2). A student's IEP must include a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the student's academic achievement and functional performance on state and district-wide assessments. 34 CFR § 300.320(a)(6)(i). When a student requires assistive technology as a testing accommodation, the student's IEP team must document the need for such technology on the proper I-7 IEP form and include a statement in the IEP program summary of the frequency, amount, location, and duration of assistive technology(ies) to be provided.

8. Are accessible educational materials (AEM) a type of assistive technology device?

According to the [National Center of AEM](#), "Accessible educational materials (AEM) are 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 (e.g., print, digital, graphic, audio, video)." AEM is a type of assistive technology device if the IEP team determines the device is needed for the student to receive FAPE and to be able to access, engage, and make progress in age and grade-level curriculum, instruction, environments, and activities. Districts must take all reasonable steps to ensure that students with IEPs who require instructional materials in accessible formats in order to receive FAPE are provided with AEM, irrespective of the disability category in which they have been identified. AEM must be provided to students with disabilities in a timely manner, meaning at the same time as other students receive instructional materials. 34 CFR § 300.172. Educational materials and technologies are "accessible" to students with disabilities if they are able to "acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services" as students who do not have disabilities "in an equally integrated and equally effective manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use." Joint Letter US Department of Justice and US Department of Education, June 29, 2010.

9. Is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) a type of assistive technology device?

AAC is a set of tools that allows a student to communicate using an alternate format of communication so that the student can access, engage, and make progress in age and grade-level curriculum, instruction, environments, and activities. As noted in the [Analysis of Comments and](#)

Changes 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301 (2006, p. 46547), "The definition of assistive technology device does not list specific devices, nor would it be practical or possible to include an exhaustive list of assistive technology devices. Whether an augmentative communication device, playback devices, or other devices could be considered an assistive technology device for a student depends on whether the device is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability and whether the student's individualized education program (IEP) team determines that the student needs the device in order to receive FAPE." If the IEP team determines the student needs an AAC device to receive FAPE, then assistive technology must be documented in the student's IEP program summary and provided as specified.

10. Does assistive technology need to be made available at home or outside of school?

On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a student's home or other settings is required if the student's IEP team determines that the student needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE. 34 CFR 300.105(b). The district is responsible for the provision of the assistive technology device as part of FAPE only if the device is required as part of the student's specially designed instruction, related services, or supplementary aids and services. 34 CFR § 300 & 301 Analysis of Comments and Changes, 2006, p. 46581.

An IEP must include the frequency, amount, location, and duration for each special education service. IEPs must be implemented as written. If the IEP team determines the student requires assistive technology in the student's home or another location outside of school in order for the student to receive FAPE, then the IEP program summary must include documentation of the home or location outside of school, and the district must ensure the assistive technology is provided as written in the location(s) specified in the student's IEP.

11. Does assistive technology need to be made available to students during extracurricular activities?

Yes. IEP teams must ensure students with disabilities have the services they need to access and engage in non-academic and extracurricular activities available to all students. LEAs must ensure that each student with a disability participates with nondisabled students in extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate. The LEA must ensure that each student with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the student's IEP team to be appropriate and necessary for the student to participate in non-academic settings. 34 CFR § 300.117. Assistive technology as a supplementary aid and service is provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and non-academic settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate. 34 CFR § 300.42. The IEP team should clearly document in the IEP program summary a description of the device or service, the frequency, amount, location, and duration of the assistive technology to ensure availability during extracurricular activities when needed. The IEP must include information about the amount of services that will be provided to the student so that the level of the agency's commitment of resources will be clear to parents and other IEP team members and the IEP can be implemented as written.

Assistive Technology Assessments

12. What is an assistive technology assessment?

An assistive technology assessment identifies if a student requires an assistive technology device or service in order to receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment and how assistive technology may help meet the student's unique disability-related need(s). The assessment may identify new or different effects of a student's disability on their access, engagement, or progress in age or grade level general education instruction, curriculum, environments, or activities, as well as identify new or different disability-related needs. An assistive technology assessment should provide sufficient information to permit the IEP team to determine whether a student requires assistive technology devices or services in order to receive FAPE. Letter to Fisher, 23 IDELR 565 (OSEP 1995). An assistive technology assessment may include a wide variety of formal and informal tools that can be used to gather information about how assistive technology may address an individual student's academic or functional educational needs. An assistive technology assessment is part of a special education initial evaluation or reevaluation and must be completed within 60 days of receiving parental consent to conduct additional assessments.

The assessment may include a wide variety of formal and informal measures, such as:

- Observations of the student
- Reinforcement inventories
- Assistive technology trials
- Student, parent, caregiver, teacher interviews or surveys
- Checklists from assistive technology manufacturers or other assistive technology checklists

13. What is the role of an assistive technology assessment within a special education evaluation?

An assistive technology assessment is part of a comprehensive special education evaluation when the IEP team determines an assessment of a student's needs related to the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device is warranted. An assistive technology assessment may be needed as part of a special education evaluation or reevaluation to identify how assistive technology can support an individual student's educational needs. The failure to assess a student's need for assistive technology devices or services can amount to a denial of FAPE. North Hills Sch. Dist. v. M.B., 65 IDELR 150. However, an assistive technology assessment may not be necessary if the district can assess all the student's identified and suspected areas of need through other types of assessments (e.g., occupational therapy). District of Columbia Pub. Schs., 67 IDELR 134 (SEA DC 2015). More information about special education evaluations can be found in [Wisconsin DPI Bulletin 20.01: Special Education Evaluation](#).

14. Is an assistive technology assessment required to add assistive technology to a student's IEP?

No. If the district has sufficient information about the student's disability-related needs and how assistive technology can address those needs, one would not be required before including assistive technology devices or services in the student's IEP. The IEP team must consider whether the

student needs assistive technology devices and services as part of the IEP development process. 34 CFR 300.324 (a)(2)(v). An assistive technology assessment is part of a comprehensive special education evaluation when the IEP team determines an assessment of a student's needs related to the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device that is warranted because they have insufficient information. This depends in part on the IEP team's knowledge of the student's disability-related needs and knowledge of how assistive technology devices and services can be matched to support those needs.

15. Does conducting an assistive technology assessment for a student already receiving special education services through an IEP require initiating a special education reevaluation?

Yes. An assistive technology assessment is part of a comprehensive special education reevaluation when the LEA determines a reevaluation of a student's needs related to the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device is warranted; or if the student's parent or teacher requests a reevaluation to address a student's need for assistive technology and there is not sufficient existing information with which to review and revise (as appropriate) the student's IEP to address such needs.

When additional information from an assistive technology assessment is needed, the IEP team must initiate a reevaluation. The reevaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the IEP team to make decisions about the student's continuing eligibility for special education and the educational needs of the student. The IEP team must complete a thorough review of existing data and request consent for completing any new assessment. It is possible that only information from the assistive technology assessment may be required to complete the reevaluation. Parental consent must be sought before conducting additional testing during the reevaluation, including the assistive technology assessment. 34 CFR § 300.300(c)(1).

16. What are assistive technology trials?

Assistive technology trials are a means of identifying assistive technology devices and services that best meet the individual academic or functional educational needs of a student by trying a device or service for a short period of time and monitoring the impact. Assistive technology trials may also identify a student's response to assistive technology across environments, educational tasks, and learning objectives. It is permissible for a student to try different assistive technology devices and services on a trial basis in order to identify the most appropriate device to meet the student's needs. Through trial runs, it may be determined that the student does not indicate any need for assistive technology. The use of assistive technology trial runs must be documented in the student's IEP program summary and include frequency, amount, location, and duration.

17. When are assistive technology trials part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation?

Assistive technology trials may be part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation when the IEP team determines they will assist the IEP team with collecting information needed to determine special education eligibility and IEP development. Assistive technology trials can be one of the data

collection components of an assistive technology assessment, similar to other assessment components such as observations, interviews, or checklists.

Assistive technology trials are **not** part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation when:

- A trial period is used to determine if a particular device would be effective in meeting a student's disability-related need (see the previous question).
- The IEP clearly identifies that assistive technology trials will be used as part of ongoing monitoring of a student's progress on IEP goals.
- Outlined in the IEP program summary or other areas of a student's IEP such as program modifications and support for school staff, IEP goals, related services, or supplementary aids and services.
- If they are being conducted for all students within the general education program, such as through a universal classroom, school-wide, or district-wide screening. 34 CFR § 300.300(d)(1)(ii).

18. Who is able to conduct assistive technology assessments?

Assistive technology assessments must be administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel. 34 CFR § 300.304.

Although Wisconsin has an [Assistive Technology \(858\) Licensure Programs Supplemental Teaching Category](#), there is no state or federal certification requirement, license, or specific role or job title required to identify a staff person as trained and knowledgeable to conduct an assistive technology assessment. Many preparation programs for special education teachers and related service providers include training about specific types of assistive technology services and devices. School staff may also receive training and knowledge from professional learning opportunities, including completion of school, district, regional, or statewide training, completion of coursework at an institution of higher education, online training, training or coaching received from other school staff, or portfolio documentation of self-taught assistive technology training.

19. Do students with complex communication needs need to be assessed to determine if an *augmentative alternative communication (AAC)* device is needed?

Yes, if the IEP team does not have enough information to identify how to address a student's complex communication needs, then an assistive technology assessment is needed to determine if an AAC device is required. AAC devices can range from low-tech communication boards to complex high-tech electronic devices. Complex communication needs may be evidenced by students who do not use verbal communication, use limited verbal communication, or who otherwise have significant difficulty interacting and communicating with others. For students with complex communication needs, the IEP team must ensure someone knowledgeable about augmentative alternative communication is part of the IEP team to assist in determining the student's communication

disability-related needs and how best to address those needs through IEP services. The IEP team must also ensure the person conducting an assistive technology assessment is trained and knowledgeable to identify how AAC may support an individual student's complex communication needs.

Assistive Technology in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

20. Where is assistive technology documented in the IEP?

The IEP team must determine if a student needs assistive technology services or devices as part of the special factors consideration on the IEP: Linking Present Levels, Needs, Goals, and Services Form (I-4) and describe the student's assistive technology needs. The IEP team must then document any necessary services or devices in the IEP program summary, including a description of the service or device, frequency, amount, location, and duration, and what goals or needs are addressed. In addition to other needs that may require assistive technology, the IEP team must determine if the student is able to access, use and derive meaning from age- or grade-level standard printed text. If the student is not able to do so, the necessary accessible education materials (AEM) services or devices must be documented in the Program Summary of the student's IEP. A prompt is included under special factors on the I-4 form to document when a student requires AEM services or devices.

State and federal laws require that state assessments must allow for the inclusion of all students, including students with disabilities. Accommodations and supports are practices and procedures that provide equitable access to grade-level content. They are intended to reduce or eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. The accommodations or supports provided to a student must be consistent for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district and state assessments. It is important to note that some instructional accommodations may alter what a test is designed to measure. When a student has needs that require them to use an accommodation that is not on a state's accommodation policy list for a particular assessment or portion of an assessment, procedures for [requesting accommodations](#) are available.

The use of assistive technology during testing is documented on the appropriate [I-7 form](#) for the purpose of utilizing designated supports or accommodations on district-wide and statewide assessments. For instance, the Forward Exam has specific policies and guidance regarding the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations permitted on the assessments in each content area. (See the [Accessibility Guide](#) for more information.) Universal tools are available to all students; however, if a student with a disability requires a universal tool, it should be documented in the student's IEP. Designated supports and accommodations are also available for any student for whom the need has been documented as part of their classroom instruction. The needed designated supports and accommodations are documented by the IEP team on the I-7 Forward form.

Assistive technology should also be considered for transition-aged students (ages 14-21) within the student's post-secondary transition plan (PTP). The PTP is part of a student's IEP and outlines the services and supports needed for the student to successfully transition to post-secondary environments. IEP teams should also consider which outside agencies, such as the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) or a local independent living center (IDC), could support a student's assistive technology needs as they prepare for leaving high school. If an outside agency is likely to pay for a transition service, the school district is responsible for inviting that agency to the IEP meeting, with consent from the parent.

21. Can revisions to assistive technology in a student's IEP be made based on information from monitoring the progress of IEP goals or other information collected through the student's general education and special education services?

Yes. Information from monitoring the progress of IEP goals and information collected through the student's general education and special education services should be discussed during the review and revision of each student's IEP to determine if revisions to the student's assistive technology services are needed. This information should be used to determine if there are any changes to a student's disability-related needs, IEP goals, or special education services. It is not necessary to conduct a reevaluation to revise special education services in the IEP to meet a student's disability-related needs. With the agreement of the parent, revisions may be made outside of an IEP team meeting when there is no change in placement. When this occurs, the revision is documented in the IEP program summary and on the [Notice of Changes to IEP Without an IEP Team Meeting \(I-10 form\)](#).

22. Can revisions related to assistive technology be made in the student's IEP based on information from the parent or student?

Yes. Parents and students are important IEP team members. Information from the parent and, when appropriate, the student must be considered during an IEP team meeting to review and revise the student's IEP. Information provided by the parent and student should be used to determine if there are any changes to a student's disability-related needs, IEP goals, or special education services. Revisions may be made outside of an IEP team meeting, as well, with the agreement of the parent. When this occurs, the revision is documented in the IEP program summary and on the [Notice of Changes to IEP Without an IEP Team Meeting \(I-10 form\)](#).

23. Can a type of assistive technology be provided to the student if it has not been trialed?

Yes. The IEP team may be able to identify a type of assistive technology to address a student's disability-related needs without conducting an assistive technology trial.

24. Can assistive technology be provided to a student if not documented in the IEP?

Yes, there are circumstances when assistive technology may be provided to a student with a disability as part of their general education program. There are a variety of assistive technologies that may be available to all students through the course of general education curriculum, instruction, or activities. Assistive technology available to all students must only be documented in

the student's IEP if the IEP team determines that assistive technology is required in order for the student to receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment. This ensures the assistive technology is not just available to all students but specifies the frequency, amount, location, and duration the assistive technology must be provided to the student. Documentation of services that a student needs to access, engage, and make progress in age or grade level general education is required under IDEA to ensure students have access to needed services regardless of changing schools or districts.

25. Does progress on the use of assistive technology have to be monitored and reported to parents?

Yes, if the student's knowledge and ability to use an assistive technology device is an IEP goal, then progress on the IEP goal must be monitored and reported to parents. In addition, schools and IEP teams have data and information collected through both general and special education services that provide information on the student's age or grade level and present levels of academic and functional performance that can be used to identify if assistive technology is supporting the student to access, engage, and make progress in the student's age or grade level general education program.

26. Must the IEP specify the type of assistive technology device or service?

Yes. The type of assistive technology device(s) and service(s) must be documented in the student's IEP, so it is clear to IEP team members and all who are responsible for implementing the IEP. The description should include the type of device or service, the frequency, amount, location, and duration of its use, and the student's unique disability-related need(s) or IEP goal(s) that are addressed by the assistive technology.

27. Must the brand name, if known, of the assistive technology device be documented in the IEP?

No. The IEP team is not required to document a specific brand name or vendor for an assistive technology device. It is not necessary to name a brand or vendor when the device, service, or format of assistive technology is clearly described in the IEP, along with the frequency, amount, location, and duration of its use. This allows the student to use different devices and services that best meet the student's needs. However, if the brand name of an assistive technology device is named in the IEP, then the district must ensure that the specific brand is provided to the student.

28. Does the IEP need to be revised if a type of assistive technology is no longer available, no longer needed, or is broken?

The student's IEP must be implemented as written. If the student's IEP team or school staff feel that a type of assistive technology documented in the IEP is no longer needed, then the IEP should meet to revise the IEP, or with parent agreement, revise the IEP without a meeting. If a device is no longer available or is broken, then the IEP team should meet to determine how the student's disability-related needs will be addressed.

In IDEA complaint [#18-050](#), DPI concluded that the district failed to implement the student's IEP when it did not provide the assistive technology specified in a student's IEP because it was broken.

The fact that a student with a disability had access to other visual aids while the district attempted to fix and then replace a tablet with a cracked screen did not excuse the district's delay in providing a replacement device when the student went without a tablet for sixteen weeks.

Assistive Technology Responsibilities

29. What is the LEA's responsibility for providing assistive technology to students receiving special education services?

LEAs are responsible for providing FAPE, which may include providing students with assistive technology based on a student's unique disability-related needs. On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a student's home or in other settings is required if the student's IEP team determines the student needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE. 34 CFR § 300.105.

Additional LEA responsibilities related to assistive technology include (34 CFR § 300.6):

- Assessing the assistive technology needs of a student with a disability, including completing a functional assessment in the student's customary environment.
- Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by students with disabilities.
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices.
- Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.
- Providing training or technical assistance for a student with a disability or, if appropriate, that student's family.
- Training for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the student's major life functions.

Educators working with the student may require training to know how to use an assistive technology device, provide a service, or utilize materials in accessible formats. Training may include but is not limited to knowing how an assistive technology device works, programming and setting up a device, utilizing the device across academic and non-academic activities throughout the school day, supporting the student and families' use of assistive technology at home and in the community, integrating assistive technology within curriculum and instruction, and ensuring maintenance, security, and confidentiality of assistive technology. This training can be documented in the IEP program summary under program modifications and supports for school staff.

- **Ensuring general education curriculum and instructional materials are accessible:** LEAs must take all reasonable steps to provide instructional materials in accessible formats to students with disabilities who need those instructional materials at the same time as other students receive instructional materials. 34 CFR § 300.172. LEAs have the responsibility to ensure that curriculum and instruction provided to all students are accessible to students with disabilities. LEAs should develop policies and procedures to ensure curriculum and instruction are accessible, and general and special education staff and library media and information technology specialists work collaboratively to ensure the purchase and distribution of accessible educational materials in a timely manner.
- **Ensuring assistive technology is secure and confidential:** School districts are required to have policies and procedures in place to ensure privacy and security protections are in place for students using assistive technology devices or tools. LEAs must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at the collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. 300.623(a)
- **Purchase and maintenance of assistive technology:** The LEA must acquire and maintain assistive technology outlined in the student's IEP at no cost to the parents. LEAs must ensure students receive the assistive technology required to access curriculum and instruction within the same timeline as all students receive curriculum and instructional materials. 34 CFR § 300.172. Schools may also braid funding to support assistive technology needs of transition-aged and early learning students (see Question #32). Under certain conditions, an LEA may use the Medicaid or other public benefits or insurance programs in which a child participates to provide or pay for assistive technology devices or services specified in a student's IEP, as permitted under the public benefits or insurance program. 34 CFR § 300.154.

30. Who is responsible for providing assistive technology outlined in a student's IEP?

Although Wisconsin has an Assistive Technology (858) Licensure Programs Supplemental Teaching Category, there is no state or federal certification requirement, license, or specific role or job title required to provide assistive technology outlined in a student's IEP. Specially designed instruction must be provided by appropriately licensed special education teachers (or licensed reading teachers, if providing specially designed reading instruction) and must be implemented as written in the IEP in relation to the frequency, amount, location, and duration of the service. Although only appropriately licensed teachers may provide specially designed instruction, other school staff may provide supplementary aids and services or related services in a student's IEP. The school may determine who has the knowledge and training to provide assistive technology documented in a student's IEP to meet the student's unique disability-related needs.

31. Who is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of using assistive technology?

The effectiveness of assistive technology is reflected in a student's progress in the general education curriculum and toward their IEP goals. Monitoring the progress of IEP goals is the

responsibility of appropriately licensed staff. A student's IEP must include how the student's progress toward meeting the annual IEP goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress will be provided. 34 CFR § 300.320(a)(2). The IEP team must review the student's IEP periodically and at least annually to determine whether the annual goals are being achieved. In conducting a review of the student's IEP, the IEP Team must consider the special factors in the student's IEP, including whether the student continues to need assistive technology devices and services. 34 CFR § 300.324.

32. Who is responsible for supporting the student's assistive technology needs through transition for students eligible for special education after the age of 18?

In Wisconsin, students may receive special education services through the age of 21. The IEP team is responsible for ensuring a student's assistive technology needs are met when the student is receiving services beyond the age of 18. IEP teams and outside agencies should consider what assistive technology needs the student may require after leaving high school. Students may need time, while still receiving special education services through the LEA, to become familiar with assistive technology they may rely on to meet post-secondary outcomes and goals. Outside agencies may support the cost of assistive technology for students transitioning from high school. IEPs can be written to include braided funding across state and county agencies to support the transition, including any assistive technology needs of the student.

33. What is the role of a paraprofessional or aide in supporting the use of assistive technology?

The term "aide" is defined in the rule as a school employee who works under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher in a district or school whose responsibilities include, but are not limited to, supporting the lesson plan of the licensed teacher, providing technical assistance to the teacher, helping with classroom control or management, and other duties as assigned. PI 34.01. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) uses the term "paraprofessional." Both teaching aides and paraprofessionals may provide the student with a supplementary aid and service outlined in the student's IEP, such as access to an assistive technology device. Only licensed teachers, not paraprofessionals or aides, can provide specially designed instruction, including specially designed instruction on how to use an assistive technology device or material in an accessible format. However, aides and paraprofessionals may assist the student with practicing a skill that has been taught by a licensed teacher when they are under the direct, regular, and continuing supervision of a supervising teacher.

34. Are families required to support and use the same assistive technology as the school team in order for it to be in the IEP?

No. Families are not responsible for providing FAPE; it is the LEA's responsibility to provide FAPE, including identifying and providing special education services related to assistive technology. LEAs must include parents in developing each student's IEP and, if appropriate, provide assistive technology training or technical assistance for a student's family. 34 CFR § 300.6(e).

Medicaid Billing

35. May Medicaid be billed for assistive technology use in schools?

Under certain conditions, an LEA may use the Medicaid or other public benefits or insurance programs in which a child participates to provide or pay for assistive technology devices or services specified in a student's IEP, as permitted under the public benefits or insurance program. 34 CFR § 300.154.

LEAs may submit claims to Wisconsin Medicaid for covered school-based services (SBS) provided to Medicaid-eligible students enrolled in special education programs. These services must be listed in a student's IEP. The Department of Health Services (DHS) coordinates the SBS benefit program. Additional information is available at [Information Update Bulletin 14.01](#) and DHS [ForwardHealth](#).

36. May the family use their insurance to pay for assistive technology?

Yes, families may use their insurance to pay for assistive technology used in schools, but this is not required and cannot be a determination of whether a student receives assistive technology to receive FAPE. If a student is Medicaid-eligible, and there is no cost to the family, or the student, in using the benefits of that program to support a service included in a student's individualized education program (IEP), then an LEA may use the public benefits or insurance to the extent possible. Additional information is available at [Information Update Bulletin 14.01](#) and DHS [ForwardHealth](#).

An LEA must obtain parental consent before the LEA accesses Wisconsin Medicaid for the first time. This is a one-time consent. The LEA is no longer required to obtain parental consent each time access to Wisconsin Medicaid is sought. Additionally, the current regulations require the LEA to provide written notification to the student's parents before parental consent is obtained and annually thereafter. 34 CFR § 300.154(d)(2)(iv)-(v).

Assistive Technology Resources

[Wisconsin DPI Assistive Technology](#): Links to state and federal laws, AT learning modules, and additional AT resources.

- [AT Learning Modules](#) on DPI Special Education Assistive Technology webpage
- [Assistive Technology 101 Webinars](#)
- [Augmentative Alternative Communication \(AAC\) Webinars](#)
- [Assistive Technology Forward Community of Practice](#)
- [Assistive Technology Forward Micro-Credentialing Project](#)
- [Assistive Technology Forward Community of Practice YouTube Playlist](#)

- [Assistive Technology Resource Statewide Map](#)

[Assistive Technology for All: Statewide AT lending center.](#)

[HEAR Wisconsin Assistive Technology Lending Center](#)

[Wisconsin DPI Bulletin 20-02: Accessible Educational Materials](#)

[Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative \(WATI\)](#)

[Wisconsin Assistive Technology Regional Network \(WATRN\)](#)

[Wisconsin Assistive Technology Program \(WisTech\)](#)

[Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired Assistive Technology and Accessibility Resources](#)

[Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired: Assistive Technology Loans](#)

[Wisconsin Accessible Education Materials Center](#)

[Wisconsin Department of Health Services \(DHS\) ForwardHealth Medicaid Billing Resources](#)

[WCASS Guide for IEP teams: Supporting Students with Print Disability](#)

[IDEA \(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act\) and Research for Inclusive Settings \(IRIS\) Center](#)

[National Center on Accessible Educational Materials: CAST](#)

[International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication: What is AAC?](#)

[Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services \(QIAT\) Indicators](#)

For questions about this information, contact the DPI Special Education Team at (608) 266-1781.