



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
**Public Instruction**



Assistive Technology Forward

Welcome to November! As educators, we find ourselves deeply engaged in our responsibilities and require effective strategies to optimize our time. A new tool has been introduced to assist you in locating previously published resources from earlier newsletters, known as the [Updated Search List](#). While the monthly updates and valuable resources are well-received, it can be challenging to monitor all the excellent materials available. This resource is organized for easy searching by topic and date of publication.

## **Table of Contents**

[Upcoming Assistive Technology Professional Learning Events and Announcements](#)

[Wisconsin Center for Blind and Visually Impaired \( WCBVI\) Update](#)  
[Sometimes All We Need to Do is Start a Conversation](#)

[Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) Corner](#)

[QIAT Community and AT Forward Community, Help Me Out!](#)

[Feature Match: Math](#)

## **Upcoming Assistive Technology Professional Learning Events and Announcements**

### **AT Forward Community of Practice (CoP) Meetings**

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming AT Forward CoP meetings!

#### **Normalizing Accessibility**

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 (12:00pm-1:00pm)

Iris Jacobson and Rose Kilmurray will focus on normalizing accessibility for students. It will include a discussion on universal tools, accommodations, and assessment accessibility. Please [register](#) in advance for this meeting.

### **Assistive Technology Tipping Points**

Tuesday, December 17, 2024 (12:00pm-1:00pm)

Ruth Ziolkowski and Kathy White will discuss how little changes can make huge differences in attitudes, and outcomes. What will your school district's tipping point be?

[Please click on this link to register in advance for this meeting.](#)

### **AI Chatbot Tutors to Help Build Background Knowledge and Scaffold Learning**

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 (4:00pm-5:00pm)

Frank Devereaux will discuss content area chatbots designed to spark inquiry and answer unlimited student questions as well as how to create their own chatbot for specific student needs.

[Please click on this link to register in advance for this meeting.](#)

### **AAC Decision Tree: How to Do an AAC Assessment**

Tuesday, February 4, 2025 (12:00pm-1:00pm)

Dawn Merth-Johnson and Kathy White will discuss what is an AAC assessment, the introduction of the AAC Decision Tree (from assessment to implementation), as well as a conversation around funding and how to avoid roadblocks.

[Please click on this link to register in advance for this meeting.](#)

### **Assistive Technology Myths and Facts**

Thursday, March 13, 2025 (4:00pm-5:00pm)

Michelle Silverman and Kathy White will discuss tools and strategies to use feature matching to make suggestions for AT trials and implementation. Real life examples of feature matching will be shared as well as information on where to get equipment on loan (at no cost) for trial.

[Please click on this link to register in advance for this meeting.](#)

### **Adaptive Gaming, AT, and Recreation**

Thursday May 1, 2025 (12:00pm-1:00pm)

Erik Johnson will discuss adaptive gaming and the relation to assistive technology and recreation.

[Please click on this link to register in advance for this meeting.](#)

## Other Assistive Technology Professional Learning Events or Announcements

### Complete the Survey! We want to hear from you

- [CLICK HERE to complete the Beginning of the year Survey for Assistive Technology \(AT\) Forward 2024-25.](#)
- Let us know how you are using the resources and what your preferences are for AT Forward CoP times.

**The Waisman Center AAC Programs** has re-launched its AAC-Partnership Program! The Partnership Program remains committed to building AAC capacity for SLPs statewide and meeting the growing AAC needs in Wisconsin. SLPs looking for additional support in expanding access to AAC for individuals on their caseload should place a referral to the AAC Partnership Program. The clinical team at the Waisman Center will triage each referral to determine if that team's immediate needs will be best met through in-person services at the Waisman Center or virtual consultative services. [To learn more about the AAC-Partnership Program, contact the team, or place a referral, please visit our website \(<https://ucedd.waisman.wisc.edu/aac-partnership-program/>\).](#)

**WisTech, Wisconsin's Assistive Technology Act Program**, is starting to plan for our 2025 Assistive Technology Trainings and we would like your input on the topics you are most interested in. These trainings are intended to provide high-quality content that supports and develops the skills of AT professionals and other service providers. Please [click here to complete the WisTech 2025 Training Survey](#) by 5 p.m., Wednesday, November 20, 2024. If you have any questions, need this information in an accessible format, or need assistance completing this survey, please contact [Laura Plummer](#) by email or phone at 608-514-2513. All trainings provide participants with Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor credits (CRCs) at no cost.

## Wisconsin Center for Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI) Update

WebAIM is Celebrating 25 Years!

WebAIM (Web Accessibility In Mind) is turning 25 this year. It's possible you don't know exactly what WebAIM is, but it is very likely you've used some of their resources, or if you haven't, you've been missing out on some amazing content! For those unfamiliar with WebAIM, [check out this article with various resources on the history of WebAIM](#).

Things you may not know about WebAIM:

- It is funded by the Department of Education and was founded due to a concern that the inaccessible web content would cause significant barriers to individuals with disabilities.
- Offers onsite and virtual training on a variety of topics, including but not limited to [Accessible Technology Procurement](#)
- Makes available an [Online Document Accessible Document Training Course](#) that starts a new session the first Monday of each month
- Hosts an [online article repository](#) on a variety of topics from building accessible websites and documents to tools and strategies for evaluating accessibility.
- Creates and manages resources such as the [Online Color Contrast Checker](#) to ensure document or website text meets WCAG color contrast guidelines, a [Web Accessibility Email Forum](#), and a [Word and PowerPoint Evaluation Guide](#)
- Recently launched [The National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction or NCADEMI](#) (pronounced "n-cademy."). Funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education, they are a new technical assistance center whose goal is to help schools and families improve the accessibility of digital educational materials and instruction from preschool through high school graduation.

Sound like a resource worth exploring? [Visit the WebAIM website](#) and have a look around!

## **Assistive Technology Resource Suggestions**

Wisconsin's own Cassie Frost was featured in October / November Closing the GAP Newsletter. CASSIE FROST, iM.S.Ed, ATP has been in the special education field for eighteen years as a special education teacher, Assistive Technology Professional, and consultant. Her area of expertise is with students who have emotional and behavioral

disabilities. The [article](#) outlines various AT Tools for emotional regulation.

## Sometimes All We Need to Do is Start a Conversation

November is [Epilepsy Awareness Month](#).

Various assistive technology tools are accessible to assist students with epilepsy, including adjustable screen settings, text-to-speech and speech-to-text - capabilities, seizure alert systems, digital note-taking applications, and other resources aimed at enhancing memory while alleviating stress and fatigue. Additionally, cognitive support software can provide valuable assistance in memory, organization, and attention for students dealing with cognitive impairments following a seizure.

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Corner

Conducting an augmentative communication assessment can be a daunting task.

It requires a deep understanding of the individual's communication needs, cognitive abilities, and physical limitations. Factors like the individual's age, cultural background, and communication environment can also influence the assessment process. However, by following a structured approach and utilizing appropriate assessment tools, healthcare professionals can effectively identify the most suitable communication strategies and technologies for individuals with complex communication needs. Here at AT Forward Project we would like to assist you with this process. We have compiled a list of questions that can help guide you to the information and strategies you might need.

- Question: **Do you or members of your team understand Feature Matching?**

*Yes/No -AT Forward has developed an [AAC Feature Match](#) that can assist you and your team to make the right choice in AAC development. Another tool that works well for complex learners is the [Communication Matrix](#).*

- Question: **Do you or members of your team understand the AAC assessment process?**

Yes/ No : Time is always a factor in anything we do as professionals. We have developed a way for you to learn more about AAC and AT. AT Forward has created a series of Micro Credentials. A Micro-credential is a safe paced, free of charge learning opportunity that offers information on how to conduct an assessment . The [AAC Micro Credential](#) will give you information based on the WATI Assessment Process. Participants will gather information on how to support learners with developmental disabilities in obtaining communication and literacy-based skills.

## QIAT Community and AT Forward Community, Help Me Out!

- QIAT is a nationwide grass roots organization that supports the identification, dissemination, and implementation of the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology services in school settings. Posting a question is free. Often the people who are answering the questions are users of AT themselves and or family members.
- **To become a Member of QIAT** you can do this by sending a “subscribe” message to [QIAT-ATAP@simplelists.com](mailto:QIAT-ATAP@simplelists.com) .You can address any questions to the QIAT Leadership Team at: [QIATleadership@gmail.com](mailto:QIATleadership@gmail.com)
- **QIAT community, help me out!**  
Question: “I was wondering if anyone has used an AI captioning service that they like in a high school environment and how the price compares to having captions done by a person (remotely via video conferencing).”

Answers from the group: “[Streamer](#)™ fully complies with student privacy laws (many captioning systems do not, such as ones from Ava, Otter, Google, Apple and Microsoft), and yes, it works with in-person or remote situations. Cost for the student is about \$9 per month for unlimited captioning and note-taking services.”  
“Ava is now compliant with student privacy laws.”

## Feature Match: Math

When conducting an IEP and having the conversation about “whether the student needs assistive technology services or devices,” consider the following questions. This is not a finite list. This is intended as a starting point for teams.

✓	Area of Student Concern- Math	Potential Solution Feature Match
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with difficulties in reading math problems?	<p>Consider programs that read quotations out loud to the student such as Snap&amp;Read Consider a talking calculator</p> <p>Other considerations are: text to speech, electronic math worksheets, change font/size, increase spacing, use of visuals or pictures symbols</p>
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with understanding the language or literacy of math?	Consider programs that simplify the text or read the text out loud, translation programs or the addition of picture symbols
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with the visual alignment of math programs?	Consider graph paper or turn regular lined paper in a column format
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with difficulties with multiple step directions or processes in a math program?	Consider task analysis of the skills and list out the skills needed

✓	Area of Student Concern- Math	Potential Solution Feature Match
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with physical challenges with writing math problems?	Consider drag and drop programs such as those listed <a href="http://Dyscalculia.org">Dyscalculia.org</a> or Washington
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with physical or sensory impairment that makes holding or using a ruler difficult?	Consider using a larger print, high contrast tactile symbols and or a talking ruler or tape measure, digital ruler, <a href="#">Rollova</a> Consider low tech options such as number stamps, magnetic numbers, stencils, or tactile numbers
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with difficulties with the computation part of math?	Consider a calculator or even a calculator that talks or has colored function keys <a href="#">Talking calculator app</a> <a href="#">Jumbo Talking Calculator in English</a> <a href="#">Talking calculators</a>
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with difficulties with identification of coins or bills?	Consider apps that use artificial intelligence to identify the coin and values such as <a href="#">Coinoscope: visual coin search</a> or other Artificial Intelligence programs
	Are there accessible supports in place to assist with difficulties using a calculator due to the size of the buttons or other access methods?	Consider a large button calculator, or an on-screen calculator



Please note: Any listed app/website should be vetted prior to student use to ensure compliance with the district's technology policy.

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## What is AT Forward?

The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project works with self-advocates, educators, practitioners, caregivers, and families to increase student autonomy in utilizing Assistive Technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning. The AT Forward Project provides a variety of free resources and learning opportunities, including [Community of Practice \(CoP\) meetings](#), [micro-credentialing](#), and [monthly email updates](#). See all past recorded CoP meetings on the [AT Forward CoP Video Resource Library](#). Please help us grow our AT community in Wisconsin and refer others to the [AT Forward CoP](#), by visiting the [AT Forward Registration page](#). From AT beginner to expert, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge level backgrounds!

Together we can and are moving AT Forward!!

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).