ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES

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Contact Information

Wayne Assistive Technology Team

WATT General Contact

- wattsupport@resa.net
- 734-334-1701

Laura Begley, SLP-CCC, AT Coordinator
Pamela Cunningham, AT Coordinator
Derrick Graves, AT Coordinator
Christine Skoglund, AT Coordinator
Wayne Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) services 33 school districts and 108 Public School Academies (PSAs) across Wayne County. Wayne RESA’s Special Education and Early Intervention Services (SEEIS) provides countywide support and technical assistance in the development, implementation, and evaluation of mandated special education programs and services. Special education refers to educational accommodations, modifications, and supports that ensure student access to a free appropriate public education.

Special education services are available to eligible students from birth through high school graduation or age 26, as appropriate. Each school district and public school academy provides special education programs and services to students with disabilities. Fourteen school districts provide centers of educational service for students requiring highly specialized approaches adapted to the severity of student need.

SEEIS provides guidance and support to parents, teachers, and administrators in meeting the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) laws. SEEIS’ guidelines and standardized forms are accessible on RESA’s website to help schools and parents in putting these legal requirements into educational practice. Wayne RESA Special Education Forms

The Wayne Assistive Technology Team (WATT) is a part of SEEIS that helps to meet the Assistive Technology (AT) needs across the county. This document has been developed by WATT as a tool to help parents, teachers and administrators determine the appropriateness of assistive technology for special education students.

Content and resources for this document were derived from the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) and the AT Handbook for Education Professionals, First Edition (May 2019).
Mission Statement

WATT strives to provide high quality assistive technology services through consultation, evaluation, training, resources and implementation support to students, teachers, and other support staff within Wayne County for students with moderate to severe disabilities based on needs identified through the IEP process.
What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology’s role is to provide access and increase opportunities for students to actively participate, engage, and learn within educational environments. Assistive Technology includes: products, services, equipment, and systems that enhance learning, functional skills, and daily living for students with disabilities.

Assistive Technology devices may range from simple supports such as pencil grips to dynamic communication devices that may be used with switches or eyegaze to access voice output. AT services may include training the student and staff to use voice to text recording, word prediction, etc., and support for students with complex communication needs for augmentative alternative communication.

Assistive Technology is an ongoing process that addresses concerns over time. It incorporates a team approach. AT efforts at all stages include collaborative work by IEP teams and include a shared vision and shared responsibility for assessment, planning, consideration, implementation and review. The ultimate goal of AT is to ensure students receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and use AT, as needed, to support IEP goals.
AT Legislation

Laws Affecting School District IEP Teams

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) (P.L. 105-107) requires that assistive technology be provided for all students with disabilities who require this support. The law specifies that:

**34 C.F.R. § 300.5 Assistive technology device**

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 child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(1))

IDEA also defines assistive technology services:

**34 C.F.R. § 300.6 Assistive technology service:**

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. The term includes—

a) The evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, 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 children with disabilities;

c) Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing 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 a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child’s family; and

f) 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 child. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(2))

34 C.F.R.§ 300.105 Assistive technology

a) Each public agency must ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, as those terms are defined in §§300.5 and 300.6, respectively, are made available to a child with a disability if required as a part of the child’s—
   1) Special education under § 300.36;
   2) Related services under § 300.34; or
   3) Supplementary aids and services under §§ 300.38 and 300.114(a)(2)(ii).

b) On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a child’s home or in other settings is required if the child’s IEP Team determines that the child needs access to those devices in order to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(2))
AT Consideration

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires consideration of assistive technology (AT) for students who receive special education services. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team considers a student’s AT needs during IEP development. AT devices and services that enable students to meet identified goals and objectives must be considered during the annual IEP meeting.

The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) Consortium has developed a list of indicators that define effective AT consideration. These indicators include:

- Assistive technology (AT) devices and services are considered for all students with disabilities regardless of type or severity
- During the development of the individualized educational program (IEP), the IEP team consistently uses a collaborative decision-making process that supports systematic consideration of each student’s possible need for AT devices and services
- IEP team members have the collective knowledge and skills needed to make informed AT decisions and seek assistance when needed
- Decisions regarding the need for AT devices and services are based on the student's IEP goals and objectives, access to curricular and extracurricular activities, and progress in the general education curriculum
- The IEP team gathers and analyzes data about the student, customary environments, educational goals, and tasks when considering a student's need for AT devices and services
- When AT is needed, the IEP team explores a range of AT devices, services, and other supports that address identified needs
• The AT consideration process and results are documented in the IEP and include a rationale for the decision and supporting evidence

The SETT Framework

WATT uses the SETT Framework as a guide for AT consideration. The SETT Framework was developed by Dr. Joy Zabala as an organizational tool to ensure that the IEP team focuses on the student and their actual needs. SETT aids in the decision-making through all phases of AT service and delivery, from consideration through implementation and evaluation of the AT’s effectiveness.

SETT, an acronym for Student, Environments, Tasks, and Tools is a tool that assists IEP teams in the AT consideration process. Using the SETT scaffold, teams follow a process that helps them identify appropriate supports for a student. ([www.joyzabala.com](http://www.joyzabala.com))

The process begins by providing information specifically related to the student.

• What is the functional area(s) of concern (What does the student need to be able to do that is difficult or impossible at this time?)

• What are the student’s special needs that contribute to these concerns?

• What are the student’s current abilities related to these concerns?

• What are the student’s interests?

The process continues by providing information about the environment(s) where the technology is to be used. The questions about environment should be as detailed as possible and may consider the following:

• What is the physical layout of the room?

• How much support does other staff provide?

• What supports and tools are presently available to staff?
• Are there physical access issues?

• What services are being provided?

• What are the other school environments in which the student may need access to the technology (cafeteria, gym, playground)?

• What other places in addition to school may the student need to use technology (home, community environments)?

The next step in the process is to identify the **tasks**. This includes what actually happens in the environments and describes what the student is expected to do.

Finally, consideration is given to what kinds of **tools** might be useful in helping the student achieve his or her IEP goals. All information gathered up until now is used by the team to make decisions about appropriate tools to put in place for trial.
AT Data Collection

Data collection plays a critical role in AT consideration, student evaluation (including a selection of assessment tools and strategies), implementation, and determination of the effectiveness of selected AT in meeting identified student needs. Without data, AT may be assigned inappropriately and ineffectively. Staff may need support in developing effective data collection systems that are both pragmatic and efficient.

Basics of AT Data Collection

How Do You Know It? How Can You Show It? (Reed, Bowser, & Korsten, 2002, 2004) provides a complete guide to AT and data collection. This resource offers a data collection guide that should be considered by all IEP teams during all phases of the AT process.

The AT data collection process includes six steps:

1. Identify difficulties and what may be causing difficulties
2. Gather baseline data.
3. Review problem and generate possible solutions.
4. Conduct functional tool trials and collect data
5. Decide on one or more AT devices
6. Write AT into the IEP.

There are a variety of wonderful free data collection tools available for your use on the WATI website and on Joy Zabala’s website. Other forms of data to consider include:

- IEP Goals and Objectives
- Progress Reports
- Grades
- Standardized Test Scores
- Medical History
- Attendance
AT in the IEP

The need for assistive technology may be indicated when a student is having difficulty achieving his or her IEP goals and objectives, struggling to participate in classroom activities, or not making progress in the general education curriculum. During an IEP meeting, the consideration of assistive technology should occur within the discussion about accommodations and supplementary aids and services, based on the student’s present level of academic performance.

A district representative knowledgeable about AT should be present at the IEP when AT decisions are being made. The IEP team should share and discuss information about the student’s present level of academic performance in relationship to the environment and tasks. This information helps determine if the student requires AT tools and/or services to participate actively, work on expected tasks, and make progress toward mastery of educational goals.

An effective consideration process is (gpat.org):

- Individualized
- Dynamic
- Ongoing
- Team driven
- Documented
- Bound to the expected tasks

The following list represents examples of what could be entered in various sections of the IEP to document the consideration of AT. Other information could be included in these areas, depending on the unique abilities and needs of the students.

- **Special Factors:** Consideration of AT is part of every IEP. By checking box, “the need for AT devices and services...” demonstrates consideration.

- **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance:** If a student needs AT to access the curriculum or to make progress toward their goals, this is the place to indicate
which educational area and how AT will help. This is also the place where IEP teams can document what current AT is used, (e.g., “When using text-to-speech software on a tablet or computer, James reads and comprehends at a 5.0-grade level.”)

- **Supplementary Aids and Services:** Modifications, Accommodations, Supports, AT consultation and assessment requests may be listed here. For example, if a student needs writing supports you could indicate that “adapted tools for writing (e.g., pencil grips, weighted pencil)” under Modification/Accommodation/Support. Then list the appropriate frequency and location.

- **Transition:** AT should be listed where it applies to the following Transition areas: Instruction, Related Services, Community Experiences, Development of Employment, Other Post-School Adult Living Objectives, and/or Acquisition of Daily Living Skills.

- **Assessment:** AT accommodations for State and district-wide assessments should be listed here (and should be parallel to what is recorded for classroom assessment in Supplementary Aids and Services).

- **Goals/Objectives:** AT may be required as a method to complete a curricular or IEP goal. This is also the place where a goal could be added to support the development of proficiency in the use of AT.

- **Notice For Provision of Programs and Services:** This notice is included with every IEP. If AT is considered but not needed, it may be documented on this notice as an Option Considered but Not Needed. This notice is generally appended to the IEP.
Roles and Responsibilities of WATT

Wayne Assistive Technology Team (WATT) provides consultative services to IEP teams and assists in developing and implementing AT supports for students with (moderate to severe) disabilities.

WATT offers:

- Assistive technology consultation and support along with consideration for district purchase of specialized equipment
- AT Evaluation for students with moderate to severe disabilities
- Lending library with devices, software, and reference materials for loan to schools for trial periods
- In-service training for educators, parents, and students
- Support in integrating assistive technology into the curriculum
- Information on the latest technology, software, and web resources along with technical assistance
- Adaptations including switches, environmental aids, and mounting systems for student use
- Information and assistance with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework

Consultation and Evaluation

Assistive Technology decision-making is an ongoing process to be carried out by school districts as part of the IEP Process. If an IEP team recognizes the need for more information before making assistive technology decisions, the team may request WATT support.

Requests for Services

Districts may request WATT services for consultations and/or evaluations for students with a moderate or severe disability. The
request may be initiated by contacting WATT via phone or email. WATT services are available to Wayne County school districts and public school academies. Note: Public School Academies must contact Wayne RESA for guidance prior to making a formal referral.

When to request an AT Consultation

- When the IEP team determines there are barriers to the student accessing the curriculum and known supports are not effective
- To implement trial of assistive technology devices or supports

When to request a formal AT Evaluation

Districts may request an AT Evaluation from WATT for students with a moderate to severe disability when the IEP Team recognizes the need to seek more information or support. Parent requests for an AT evaluation must go through the school district.

Formal AT Evaluation Requirements

- Student must have an IEP and be considered moderate to severely impaired
- Special Education Director or Designated Administrative Authorization
- Parental Consent
- 30 school days to conduct the evaluation and make a determination of a student’s need for AT
- Formal data collection

Building District Capacity

The integration of technology across the core curriculum provides opportunities for all students to experience greater levels of independence, access, and success. To this end, WATT can assist local school districts in their efforts to build staff capacity to implement a comprehensive assistive technology process at the district level. WATT services can provide staff training regarding the SETT framework for AT decision making, UDL (Universal Design for Learning), curriculum accommodations and modifications, AT and the IEP, and assistive technology tools to support communication, reading, written
expression, and mathematics.

**What supports are available to help districts in implementing AT?**

Effective assistive technology implementation requires collaboration, sound planning, systematic documentation, and up-to-date knowledge of AT tools/resources. Districts and schools are most productive in meeting these demands when teams and well-developed AT plans are in place.

WATT supports districts in building capacity by offering the following:

- Support the AT decision making as part of the IEP process
- Increase knowledge of assistive technology
- Conduct AT evaluations for students with a moderate to severe disability only
- Present professional development and training
- Impart information on the latest technology, software, web resources, and equipment/tools
- Maintain an AT lending library
- Lend reference and testing materials
- Provide lab for creating AT content
- Share AT conferences, workshops, and convention information
- Training and resources for Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

**WATT Lending Library**

The WATT lending library was established to provide short-term trial periods of assistive technology tools to students with disabilities before schools or parents invest time and money into a particular piece of technology. The best way to determine if a tool effectively supports a student’s access to the curriculum is to trial the technology in the educational setting.

WATT lending library loans items for 120 days and includes the following supports and materials:

- Adapted Toys
- Books and Reference Guides
● Communication Devices
● Learning Aids
● Software
● Tablets (e.g., iPad) and Computers

All tools and devices are considered the property of the WATT lending library. Tools/equipment are not to be transferred from one student to another. The person checking out the device is responsible for the return.

**Lending Library Terms of Agreement:**

1. To use the equipment to evaluate effectiveness of assistive technology.
2. The borrowed equipment will be used exclusively with students with an IEP.
3. To undertake the responsibility for the equipment’s care and use.
4. To accept responsibility for the general maintenance of the equipment.
5. No one will modify the equipment in any manner without the consent of a WATT library representative. This includes repair, updating, and or loading or deleting of software or modifying password.
6. To return the equipment in person to the WATT lending library no later than the end of the loan period.
7. To return equipment clean and in good repair, in the boxes in which it was loaned.
8. To report damaged equipment to the library at the time of return.
9. To accept responsibility for locating and returning any missing parts.
10. To familiarize self with the device’s operation and care prior to use.
11. To inform my local district’s assistive technology team, if any, of the request to borrow equipment prior to the loan in order to keep the local team informed and to ensure that requested AT lending library equipment is not already available locally.
12. Failure to return equipment may result in the denial of future
Professional Development

Districts/schools throughout Wayne County may request professional development from WATT to support their programs and services related to Assistive Technology.

Possible topics may include:

- Accessible Educational Materials/Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Communication (Augmentative and Alternative Communication - AAC)
- Executive functioning
- Math
- Motor skills
- Reading
- Social skills
- Training on AT devices and software
- Universal Design for Learning
- Low Vision
- Writing
- AT decision-making process
References

Alt+Shift is a collaborative & impact-focused organization advancing:. (2019). Retrieved April 12, 2019, from https://www.altshift.education


