

Montcalm Area ISD

AT Consideration Process

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 97) states it is the school district's responsibility to provide assistive technology if a student needs it for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). However, IDEA 97 does NOT, provide specific instruction to ways assistive technology decisions should be made or how the process the education facility should follow. Without specific instruction many Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams find themselves confused on how to proceed when considering the assistive technology needs of students with disabilities.

The Montcalm Area ISD Special Education Assistive Technology Team has adopted the following process which is to be used as a template to help the individual student teams that wish to start an effective AT process.

Step 1:

The At consideration, assessment and decision making takes place during the Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED) or during a student's Individualized Education Planning (IEP) meeting. The process is based on the SETT Framework designed by Joy Zabala. SETT stands for Student, Environment, Tasks, and Tools.

The first step of consideration is for the team to get to know the Student by looking into a few questions. See the "AT Assessment Form" Student Section for the questions on the student. The PDF can be downloaded from the MAISD website under Special Education, Assistive Technology, and Assistive Technology Forms. Or http://www.maisd.com/special_education/guidelines_manuals_and_forms

Step 2:

The second step of consideration is to look into the students Environment. See the "AT Assessment Form" Environment Section for the questions on the student s environment.

Step 3:

With the information collected from getting to know the Student and the Student's Environment the third step is for the team to consider AT starting from low tech to high tech if depending on if it is needed for the Tasks the student needs to perform. See the "AT Assessment Form" Tasks Section for the questions on the student tasks.

Step 4:

Now the team knows the Student, the student's Environment and how it influences the student's performance and what Tasks the student is having difficulties with. The fourth step for the team is to decide if assistive technology or Tools are needed. **The team should always** look towards the no tech or low tech tools first when considering AT then build up to high tech tools if needed. See the "AT Assessment Form" Tools Section for the consideration of Tools. For help in your consideration of AT go to the link "Assistive Technology Consideration Guide" on the AT Wiki. List the tools to which the team has decided on trying then contact Colleen Norton, Assistive

Technologist at the Seiter Education Center to check if the tool is in the AT Lending Library and available for lending.

Step 5:

The fifth step is for the provider trying the assistive technology tool to use the “Data Collection Tool Form” located on the MAISD website under Special Education, Assistive Technology, and Assistive Technology Forms. Or

http://www.maisd.com/special_education/guidelines_manuals_and_forms

It is recommended to try the AT for at least 6 weeks to gather data to show if it is working or not. If the data shows it is not working the provider needs to look at the Tools list for something else to try. If there are no other tools listed then the team needs to reconvene for other considerations.

Please remember, there is no perfect way to provide assistive technology services. The unique nature of each child’s needs requires flexibility from each team. At the same time there is a need for a process which ensures consistency and quality in the services provided to all MAISD students. The MAISD AT Team feels the SETT Framework provides the consistency and quality that is required.

Where is the assistive technology identified in the IEP? On Easy IEP in the IEP Process, Under Considerations: PLAAFP FAPE, In the “Address the student's anticipated needs or other matters” box, Assistive Technology Considerations and Assessments can be included. Teacher comments will appear on the IEP under Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) Factors.

Where is assistive technology identified in the IEP? The following statement is a **mandatory** component to be checked and addressed on the IEP. “ The need for assistive technology devices or services was considered”. At can be identified in the Present levels of performance, the Special education Programs/Ancillary and other related services, the Supplementary aids and services, the Program modifications or support for school personnel, the Modification to assessments and or the Transition services.

Step 6:

After the AT consideration evaluation and trial period, the device can be identified as one that **will assist** the student to make progress in the general education curriculum on the IEP. To add the device to an IEP, the teacher should describe the type of assistive technology with enough detail including features, and device category **without** specifying the brand name under supplemental aids and services. This allows flexibility to update equipment without reconvening the IEP.

When the IEP team determines through the **collection of data** that a device is educationally relevant and necessary for the student to achieve IEP goals and objectives, the school district must provide the recommended device. (The school district may request a copy of the data sheet showing that the requested device is worthy.) If a device is specified in the IEP it must be available and functioning properly. Assistive technology is specified in the IEP even if the device may be funded by another agency. When assistive technology is specified in the IEP a school cannot delay implementation of that part of the IEP while they wait for external funding. Short term device loaner or rental should be considered.

If the school purchases the device the school owns it. If the student moves out of the district, the device does not automatically follow the student unless the district makes an agreement to transfer it to another school district.