

Assistive Technology Needs in Special Education

SD Dept. of Education, Office of Special Education Program

Beth Schiltz, DOE Accommodations Program Specialist

Stacy Holzbauer, DOE Alternate Assessment Program Specialist

Federal Guidance

The United States Department of Education created the below guidance in support of children with disabilities who need AT devices and services for meaningful access and engagement in education. The guidance is found at the link <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/at-guidance/>

- Dear Colleague Letter: Assistive Technology (January 2024)
 - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/dcl-assistive-technology-jan-22-2024/>
- Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services
 - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/DCL-on-Myths-and-Facts-Surrounding-Assistive-TechnologyDevices-01-22-2024.pdf>
- Office of Educational Technology – National Technology Plan
 - <https://tech.ed.gov/netp/>

Resources

- Further resources may be found at the below links: CAST Professional Publishing
 - <https://www.castpublishing.org/>
- Assistive Technology and Employment Toolkit - AT3 center – Disability Employment TA Center
 - <https://at3center.net/wp-content/uploads/publications/at3-toolkit-final-accessible.pdf>
- NEW RESOURCE: EdTech Directory (released in the June OSEP Newsletter)
 - <https://ncademi.org/provide/directory/>

DOE Assistive Technology TA Guide

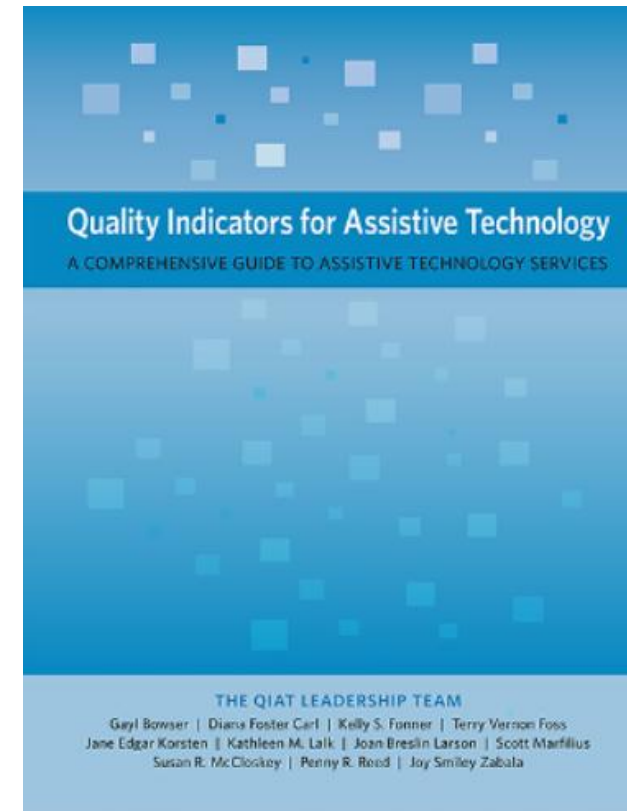
- DOE Assistive Technology Technical Assistance Guide:
 - <https://doe.sd.gov/sped/documents/AT-TA-Guide-24.pdf>
 - Provides Quality Indicators and Questions to Consider for a variety of Assistive Technology district considerations!

DOE Assistive Technology TA Guide

- DOE Assistive Technology Technical Assistance Guide:

- <https://doe.sd.gov/sped/documents/AT-TA-Guide-24.pdf>

- Pages 15 & 16 address Assistive Technology in **Transition**



6 Quality Indicators for Assistive Tech in Transition

Page 15

1. Transition plans address AT needs of the student, including roles and training needs of team members, subsequent steps in AT use, and follow-up after transition takes place.

- The comprehensive transition plan required by IDEA assists the receiving agency/team to successfully provide needed supports for the AT user. This involves assigning responsibilities and establishing accountability.

2. Transition planning empowers the student using AT to participate in the transition planning at a level appropriate to age and ability.

- Specific self-determination skills are taught that enable the student to gradually assume responsibility for participation and leadership in AT transition planning as capacity develops. AT tools are provided, as needed, to support the student's participation.

6 Quality Indicators for Assistive Tech in Transition

3. **Advocacy related to AT use is recognized as critical** and planned for by the teams involved in transition.
 - Everyone involved in transition advocates for the student's progress, including the student's use of AT. Specific advocacy tasks related to AT use are addressed and may be carried out by the student, the family, staff members, or a representative.
4. **AT requirements in the receiving environment** are identified during the transition planning process.
 - Environmental requirements, skill demands, and needed AT support are determined in order to plan appropriately. This determination is made collaboratively and with active participation by representatives from sending and receiving environments.

6 Quality Indicators for Assistive Tech in Transition

5. Transition planning for students using AT proceeds according to an **individualized timeline**.

- Transition planning timelines are adjusted based on specific needs of the student and differences in environments. Timelines address well-mapped action steps with specific target dates and ongoing opportunities for reassessment.

6. Transition plans address specific **equipment, training, and funding issues** such as transfer or acquisitions of AT, manuals, and support documents.

- A plan is developed to ensure AT equipment, hardware, and software arrives in working condition accompanied by any needed manual. Provisions for ongoing maintenance and technical support are included in the plan.

Questions for Districts to Consider

Page 16

1. How are students taught self-determination, self-awareness, and self-advocacy when they need AT devices?
2. How is long-range planning developed with sending and receiving agencies (timelines)?
3. How is the district ensuring adequate communication and coordination?
4. What is the district's policy and/or procedures for addressing funding issues?
5. How is the district ensuring adequate evaluation processes (e.g., clear documentation, sufficient data, effective communication)?
6. What does communication between sending and receiving agencies look like? How are philosophical differences communicated and worked out?
7. How are staff made aware of the laws regarding AT? Do they know what their responsibility is to follow the laws?

Including Assistive Technology in the IEP

Page 9

1. The education agency has guidelines for documenting AT needs in the IEP and required their consistent application.
2. All services that the IEP team determines are needed to support the selection, acquisition, and use of AT devices are designated in the IEP.
3. The IEP illustrates that AT is a tool to support achievement of goals and progress in the general curriculum by establishing a clear relationship between student need, AT devices and services, and the student's goals and objectives.
4. IEP content regarding AT use is written in language that describes how AT contributes to achievement of measurable and observable outcomes.
5. AT is included in the IEP in a manner that provides a clear and complete description of the devices and services to be provided and is used to address student needs and achieve expected results.

Questions for Districts to Consider

Page 10

1. What training or support is provided to assist IEP teams with including AT in IEPs?
2. How will the IEP team address the unique needs of each student with regards to AT?
3. Where on the IEP will AT be addressed, and how will AT be linked to goals and objectives?
4. When support and professional development for use of an AT device is needed, how is that support identified or requested?
5. How will data be collected on usage of AT devices?

Thank you!

Questions?

- Talk with District SPED Director and Administration to develop policies around Assistive Technology!
- Questions for DOE?
 - Beth.Schiltz@state.sd.us – Accommodations Program Specialist
 - Stacy.Holzbauer@state.sd.us – Alternate Assessment Program Specialist
 - Lori.Kwasniewski@state.sd.us – Transition Program Specialist