The New Academy Charter School

Assistive Technology Policy

As defined in federal and state law, 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 children with disabilities,

Assistive technology devices and/or services may be essential factors in meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities. Both federal and state special education laws explicitly include assistive technology devices and/or services among those services which local school districts must provide for a child with a disability, at no cost to parents/guardians, if determine by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to be necessary for the student to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Such services may be required as part of special education, related services, or supplementary aids and services required enabling a child to be educated in the least restrictive environment.

The IEP team is responsible for determining if an assistive technology device and/or services are necessary for a child with a disability to receive FAPE. It is important to remember that assistive technology devices and/or services are not ends in themselves. The IEP team should focus on whether or not assistive technology devices and/or services are necessary for the eligible child to meet educational demands and therefore receive FAPE."

To the extent that assistive technology devices and/or services may be required as part of special education, related services, or supplementary aids or services, a child's IEP must include a statement describing the full extent of devices and service(s) as well as the amount of such service(s).

Academy Charter School's responsibility to provide assistive technology devices and services when included as part of a student's IEP with support from IU3. The Academy Charter School is responsible for the maintenance and repair of assistive technology devices used to implement a child's IEP. The Academy Charter School will have trainings for all staff to ensure that the assistive technology device is being maintained and repaired properly.

Definition/Description of Assistive Technology

Assistive technology device includes devices, hardware, and software that are required by a student with a disability. Assistive technology devices can be purchased from a local store or a vendor that specializes in the production and sale of Assistive technology devices. Assistive technology devices

often need to be modified or customized to meet the individual needs of a student with disability. When determining Assistive technology needs, IEP teams should consider commercially available solutions that may be used "as is" or that can be modified to meet the student's needs. However, in some situations it may be necessary to construct a device to meet the student's unique needs.

A range of Assistive technology devices are available. Some are relatively "low technology and inexpensive. For example, a pencil grip is an Assistive technology device that may be used by a student with a physical disability to improve handwritten communication through increasing their grasp of and control over their pencil. A student who has difficulty holding a standard cup may use an adapted cup with enlarged handles. Other devices are more " high technology" tools and are often more expensive. An example of a "high technology" tool is an augmentative communication device in which students type in messages on a communication display and they are spoken aloud.

Assistive technology devices are available in a variety of categories to address functional capabilities of students with disabilities. These categories include but are not limited to:

Academic and Learning Aids: Electronic and non-electronic aids such as calculators, spell checkers, portable word processors, and computer-based software solutions that are used by a student who has difficulty achieving in his or her educational curriculum.

Aids for Daily Living: Self-help aids for use in activities such as eating, bathing, cooking, dressing, toileting, and home maintenance.

Assistive Listening Devices and Environmental Aids: Electronic and non-electronic aids such as amplification devices, closed captioning systems, and environmental alert systems that assist a student who is hard of hearing or deaf with assessing information that is typically presented through and auditory modality.

Augmentative Communication: Electronic and non-electronic devices and software solutions that provide a means for expressive and receptive communication for students with limited speech.

Computer Access and Instruction: Input and output devices, alternative access aids, modified or alternative keyboards, switches, special software, and other devices and software solutions that enable a student with a disability to use the classroom computer.

Environmental control: Electronic and non-electronic aids such as switches, environmental control units, and adapted appliances that are used by a student with a physical disability to increase his or her independence across all areas of the curriculum.
Mobility A**ids**: Electronic and non-electronic aids such as wheelchairs (manual and electronic), walkers, scooters that are used to increase personal mobility.

Pre-vocational and Vocational Aids: Electronic and non-electronic aids such as picture based task analysis sheet, adapted knobs, and adapted timers and watches that are used to assist a student in completing pre-vocation and vocational tasks.

Recreation and Leisure Aids: Electronic and non-electronic aids such as adapted books, switch adapted toys, and leisure computer-based software applications that are used by a student

with a disability to increase his participation and independence in recreation and leisure activities.

Seating and Positioning: Adaptive seating systems and positioning devices that provide students with optimal positions to enhance participation and access to the curriculum.

Visual Aids: Electronic and non-electronic aids such as magnifiers, talking calculators, Braille writers, adapted tape players, screen reading software applications for the computer, and Braille note-taking devices that assist a student with a visual impairment or blindness to access and produce information that it typically presents in a visual (print) modality.

A particular student with a disability may require Assistive technology solutions from one or more of the above categories. For example, a student with a severe intellectual disability may use an augmentative communication device to supplement his or her communication skills, adaptive switch toy to participate in leisure activities, and an adapted keyboard for accessing the software applications on the classroom computer.

The above listed categories of Assistive technology devices are not disability specific. For example, a student with a learning disability who has difficulty focusing on the teacher's lecture in class due to processing difficulties may require an assistive listening device to amplify the teacher's voice in a classroom. Students with various types of disabilities use adapted recorders originally developed for visually impaired and blind children to access audio-reading materials.

The student's IEP committee determines the need for Assistive technology devices. Typically, Assistive technology solutions are identified through consideration of Assistive technology or through an Assistive technology assessment. Once an Assistive technology device has been determined educationally necessary, the student's IEP team should **describe the required device(s) in the IEP without naming a specific brand name**. Information on considering and assessing the need for Assistive technology devices and documenting Assistive technology devices is included in the subsequent sections of this manual.

Assistive Technology Service:
As defined in IDEIA, an Assistive technology service is

Any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, and 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, retaining, repairing, or replacing Assistive technology devices.

(d) Coordinating and use of 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 caregivers.

(f) Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of children with disabilities. (Section 300.6)

As stated in the IDEIA, assistive technology services are provided to assist in the selection, acquisition, and use of an assistive technology device. Often IEP teams focus their energies on the device itself and forget that the assistive technology services, as described in this document, are critical to the student's use of the device. For some students, appropriate assistive technology devices are identified through an assessment that the IDEIA specifies should be conducted in the student's customary environment. After, a device has been selected to meet the student's needs, the next step or "service" is to actually provide the assistive technology device for the student's use. After the device has been obtained, and if appropriate, modified, all appropriate individuals should be trained in the use of the device and the device should be made available for the student's use across instructional settings as needed.

Policy/Procedures for Providing Assistive Technology

Each IEP team in the school system will consider Assistive technology as a part of the development, review, and revision of the students IEP. Consideration of eligibility must be given for every student with a disability who is eligible for an IEP.

Screening Procedures

It is the primary responsibility of the student's teacher along with the assistance of other service providers to utilize the Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist included in the pre-referral packet.

When completing the Assistive Technology Checklist, school personnel should:

1. Gather information related to the student, program, and environmental factors. Identify areas that are keeping the student from accessing the general curriculum,

2. Considering the area (s) identified in step one, determine whether or not the student can accomplish the required task with any special strategies, accommodations, or technology already in use within the classroom.

3. Based on the information from step one and step two, determine if the student requires Assistive technology to complete the task identified. (Refer to the checklist of possible AT resources for examples of possible technology solutions.)

The consideration process during screening may include an opportunity for the student to use Assistive technology on a trial basis in order to obtain information on the potential effectiveness of the Assistive Technology device. Assistive technology for trial use may be available within the classroom or school. Contact the Special Education Director for referral to the AIU Assistive Technology specialist Jeanie

Esch – 412-394-4630 – Jeanie.esch@aiu3.net and/or Jennifer Pirring – 412-394-4630 – Jennifer.pirring@aiu3.net

IEP Team's Consideration of Assistive Technology

The IEP team will complete the Assistive Technology Checklist and attach it to the student's IEP. Possible conclusions of the screening/consideration process include:

- The student independently accomplishes required tasks within the relevant instructional or access areas using standard classroom tools. **Assistive Technology is not required.**

- The student accomplishes the required tasks within the instructional or access areas using standard classroom modifications and accommodations that are currently in place. **Assistive Technology is not required.**

- The student accomplishes the required tasks within the relevant instructional or access areas with Assistive technology that is currently in place. **Assistive Technology is required.** (Document required AT devices and services in the IEP Monitor the use of AT and make changes as needed.)

- The student cannot accomplish the required tasks within the relevant instructional or access areas with modifications, accommodations, and/or Assistive Technology that are currently in place.
    - If the IEP Team knows potential Assistive Technology solutions, trial use of the identified Assistive technology solution may be documented in the IEP and implemented. Following the trial use period, the results of the trial with a description of the appropriate Assistive technology device should be documented in the student's IEP if the team determines that it is required.
    - If the IEP team does not know potential solutions, a referral should be made to the local AIU assistive technology representative for additional assistance.

The outcomes of the consideration process will be documented in the Consideration of Special Factors component of the IEP. Minimal compliance with effective consideration of Assistive technology will include this statement: ***The student does/does not require Assistive technology devices and services at this time.*** If the IEP team determines that the student does require Assistive technology devices and/or services, they will include a description of the required Assistive technology in this section as well.

Requesting Assistance

The IEP team will request assistance in completing the consideration process when they are unable to determine whether or not the student requires Assistive technology or when they are unable to identify Assistive technology solutions that would be appropriate to meet the student's needs. The following procedure will be used for requesting additional assistance:

- Refer the student for an assistive technology consultation to the local AIU using the attached referral form. Jeanie Esch – 412-394-4630 – Jeanie.esch@aiu3.net and/or Jennifer Pirring – 412-394-4630 – Jennifer.pirring@aiu3.net

- Submit a copy of the General Student information from the current IEP
- Submit a copy of the Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist with all possible sections completed.
- Send the completed referral packet to the IEP Caseload Manager.

If the IEP team, in consultation with the school system assistive technology specialist/assistive technology team cannot identify appropriate assistive technology solutions through assistive technology consideration, the student will be referred for an assistive technology evaluation by the local AIU.