# AT / FYI . . .

**MN Regions 5 & 7 Assistive Technology Community of Practice**  
*Volume 19, Issue 2*  
October 2016

## Region AT Representatives

*Sponsored by MN Regions 5 & 7*

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<td>Kelly Peterson</td>
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<td>Elk River</td>
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<td>Eric Weber/Bryan Winkels</td>
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<td>MAWSECO</td>
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<td>Paul Bunyan</td>
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<td>PDF</td>
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<td>SCRED</td>
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<td>Sherburne-Northern Wright</td>
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Calendar of Events

2016-2017 REGIONAL MEETINGS
Benton-Stearns Ed District Office, Sartell MN  9:00 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

September 21—Working with District AT Teams and Technology Committees
October 5—Information Dissemination Systems/Infinitec Update Meeting
November 2—Teaching Organizational Skills and Executive Function Module
December 8—MN Statewide Testing Accommodations
January 18—Google Tools
February—NO MEETING
March 15—All Day 9 am-3pm Listening Curriculum for Digital Materials/Bookshare
April 5—Chrome and Chromebooks
May 3—Classroom Management Systems, Electronic Curricula, and Flipped Classroom

34rd ANNUAL CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE
Minneapolis MN

Pre-Conference Sessions:  October 17 & 18, 2016

CHARTING THE CS CONFERENCE
Arrowwood, Alexandria, MN

Family Sessions:  April 22, 2017
Pre-Conference Sessions:  April 23, 2017
Conference Sessions:  April 24 & 25, 2017

AT Information:  Listservs

AT Listserv
The AT Listserv is a wonderful resource for educators who work with students who use technology for learning. Members ask questions, share information, and discuss topics that are relevant to our day-to-day work with students ages birth through 21.

How to Join:  To subscribe, visit or send a message with the word “subscribe” in it to the request address, mn.at@mailmanlists.us for further instructions.

To Post on the Listserv:  Send message to mn.at@mailmanlists.us. Complete the subject line identifying the topic of your post. Type your message and send it. Remember confidentiality when posting!

QIAT Listserv
The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT—pronounced quiet) listserv is a place to share resources, questions ideas, and problem-solving in an on-going email discussion (there are archives and a website of resources to assist you, too). To sign up, go to the following website http://qiat.org and follow the links to join the listserv.
Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)

Print Disabilities

More and more schools are moving toward online classroom resources. With digital curriculum comes the issue of accessibility for students with print disabilities. A great deal of history and thought has gone into defining a print disability:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and amendments (2008)
- Rehabilitation Act (1973) and amended (1999) as Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act
- Pratt-Smoot Act (1931) and amendment (1962)
- National Library of Congress Eligibility for Service of Individuals with Disabilities
- AIM (now AEM) Commission Working Definition of a Print Disability

**Source:** Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials

The Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) has developed a working definition of a print disability:

"A print disability means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits the individual in seeing or reading"

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) states that persons have a print disability and are eligible to access alternative format materials under the following conditions:

- "Bind persons whose visual acuity, as determined by competent authority, is 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses, or whose widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.

- "Other physically handicapped persons are eligible as follows:
  1. Persons whose visual disability, with correction and regardless of optical measurement, is certified by competent authority as preventing the reading of standard printed material.
  2. Persons certified by competent authority as unable to read or unable to use standard printed material as a result of physical limitations.
  3. Persons certified by competent authority as having a reading disability resulting from organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity to prevent their reading printed material in a normal manner.

- "Eligibility of Persons with Reading Disabilities
  o According to the federal regulations for PL 89-522, materials will be loaned to readers, "certified by competent authority as unable to read normal printed material as a result of physical limitations under the regulations prescribed by the Librarian of Congress for this service" (39 Federal Register 20203, June 7, 1974, as amended at 46 Federal Register 48661, Oct. 2, 1981)
  o To receive services for a reading disability based on a physical handicap, the following facts must be established:
    ▪ the reading disability must be of sufficient severity to prevent reading regular or standard printed material in a normal manner,
    ▪ the cause of the disability must be physically based, that is, it must be an organic dysfunction, and o the person certifying the application must be medically able to judge whether the disability has a physical or organic basis.
  o Groups of individuals are not automatically eligible: those who have learning disabilities, dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, chronic-fatigue syndrome, autism, functional illiteracy, or mental retardation, unless there is a specific accompanying visual or physical handicap.
  o Nonorganic factors must be ruled out and cannot be taken into consideration.
Accessible Educational Materials
The term Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) was recently changed to Accessible Educational Materials (AEM). Information available on the topic may be found under either term.

The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials has posted videos to help educational teams better understand what AEM means and includes. It well worth the time to view the following videos:

Simply Said: Understanding Accessible Instructional Materials
This fully-captioned video is designed to increase awareness of AIM/AEM. It contains the basic information and descriptions of which students need AEM and what formats they need (audio, braille, digital, and/or large print). 3 minutes and 42 seconds Simply Said: Understanding AIM

Simply Said: Understanding Accessibility in Digital Learning
“The National Center on Accessible Educational Materials and PACER Center have developed a brief video in easy-to-understand language that provides an overview of accessibility features to look for in digital learning materials. This open-captioned video is intended to increase awareness of: 1) features that can be designed into digital materials to increase broad usability and accessibility and, 2) the importance of considering accessibility features in the selection of digital educational materials.” 6 minutes and 42 seconds Simply Said: Understanding Accessibility in Digital Learning

AIM and the 21st Century Classroom
“Characteristics of 21st Century Classrooms include accessible technology and accessible instructional materials that transform learning for every student. In Fayette County Georgia the system incorporates various classroom technologies and an online interactive network that educators and students can access from a variety of technology devices to communities about lessons and resources.” 5 minutes and 53 seconds AIM and the 21st Century Classroom

The Importance of Making Instruction Accessible to All Students
Although this is an older video, this student-based video is an excellent discussion of the need for accessible materials.

“Every teacher impacts students, but are they able to effectively reach ALL their students? Any education professional who fails to provide accessible instruction and materials is inadvertently building barriers to learning. Make commitment to ensure you positively impact all of your students by signing the pledge today.” Amanda Peters, Great Lake ADA Center. 5 minutes 23 seconds Making Instruction Accessible for All
Used Assistive Technology Resources

DifferentNeedz
DifferentNeedz is a website offering “families a one-stop shop to buy and sell their gently used medical supplies, disability equipment, and adaptive toys.” Categories include: mobility; standing/sitting; physical therapy; adaptive toys and electronics; medical equipment; hygiene; apparel; and “everything else.” The materials and equipment on this website change regularly.

HERO
The Healthcare Equipment Recycling Organization (HERO) in the Fargo-Moorhead area collects and redistributes donated healthcare supplies to those in need. They have a retail store in Fargo ND and one in Moorhead MN. If a family is in need of specialized equipment, or needs to donate equipment no longer in use, HERO may be the place to go. Wheelchairs, walkers, motorized scooters, etc.

MN STAR Program
A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) has the mission “to help all Minnesotans with disabilities gain access and acquire assistive technology they need to live, learn, work and play. The Minnesota STAR Program is federally funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (P.L. 108-364).”

The STAR program allows for four different AT activities:

1. Device Demonstration—individuals of educational teams with an individual can “compare features and benefits of a particular device or category of devices.” It is a time to explore and try a device or devices and/or software and ask questions. Devices may then be borrowed for a short-term loan period.

2. Device Loan—Short-term loans of up to 30 days can be used to try devices or software before making the purchase. Sometimes a short-term loan is used when a device is awaiting repair or delivery. The AT available for loan to students in the educational setting include:
   - Alternative keyboards (e.g. ergonomic keyboard, one-handed keyboard)
   - Voice recognition software
   - Talking calculator
   - Height adjustable desk
   - Portable reader (converts text-to-speech)
   - Handheld video magnifier
   - Specialized educational materials including software to assist students with tasks such as reading, writing, and math”
   - Pencil grips
   - Handwriting guides
   - Communication devices

3. Device Exchange—“STAR maintains an online device exchange known as STAR Technology Exchange (STARTE). This free device exchange site allows Minnesotans and others to donate, sell, and buy previously owned but still usable assistive technology.

4. Reuse—Go to the STARTE site to find out more about buying, selling, or donating used AT.

TIKES
PACER has a project called TIKES (Technology to Improve Kids’ Educational Success) that “is a response to national and state studies which indicate that AT is greatly underutilized among children ages birth to 5.” It is a model demonstration project that is currently partnering with three school districts in Minnesota to assist parents and professionals to use AT with young children. The school districts are: Bloomington, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan, and Anoka-Hennepin.
TIKES has 5 goals:

- Hands-on training through the development of curricula for parents and professionals regarding AT.
- Child-centered AT Plans—Partners will develop a guiding document to support teams in considering and implementing AT as part of an IFSP/IEP.
- Coaching—Technical assistance and face to face opportunities for parents and professionals to develop their own knowledge and build capacity in the area of AT for young children.
- AT Lending Library—Assist partner school districts in setting up AT lending libraries for local access.
- AT Reuse—Assist partner school districts in “establishing an AT reuse program. An early childhood category has also been added to SUPER (Still Useful Product and Equipment Referral).”

The Spring 2016 edition of the PACER’s Early Childhood Connection newsletter features a description of the TIKES program and an insert box giving helpful tips:

- “Subscribe to TIKES’ Tiny Tech e-newsletter on early childhood and assistive technology: tinyurl.com/tinytech
- “Subscribe to TIKES’s text messages on early childhood and assistive technology (4 texts per month): tinyurl.com/tikestexts
- “TIKES Pinterest Board: pinterest.com/pacertikes
- “Center on Technology and Disability (CTD) which includes early childhood information: ctdinstitute.org.”

Source: PACER’s Early Childhood Connection Newsletter (Spring 2016)