



Assistive Technology Guide

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Contents

Purpose and GFPS District Goals	3
How to Use This Guide	3
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	4
The UDL Framework is Comprised of 3 Guidelines:.....	4
Assistive Technology	4
AT as a Device	4
AT as a Service.....	4
AT Evaluation.....	5
Option 1: Complete an AT Evaluation Through the Evaluation Plan.....	5
Option 2: Complete a Dynamic Assessment Through the IEP	6
Requesting a Device.....	6
For Trial:	6
For Purchase:	6
AT in the IEP.....	7
Consideration of Special Factors	7
Transition Services	7
PLAAFPs and Goals/Objectives.....	7
Supplementary Aids and Services	8
Prior Written Notice	8
Notes.....	8
AT Implementation	9
Maintenance/Repair/Replacement	9
Training.....	9
Data Collection	9
Coordinate with Clinical Therapists	10
The AT Team.....	11

Purpose and GFPS District Goals

Assistive Technology (AT) must be considered for all students with disabilities and is also considered yearly for students at the annual IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Individual IEP teams must consider if a student's functional capabilities could be increased, maintained, or improved by AT devices or services. The purpose of AT is to remove barriers, improve access to curriculum and educational materials, and assist students to reach their educational goals, which include access to general education curriculum, special instruction, vocational, and extracurricular activities.

GFPS is dedicated to supporting students with disabilities and has developed district-specific AT guidelines to support educational teams in considering, assessing, and implementing assistive technology at GFPS. These guidelines align with GFPS's [Information Technology's 3-Year Technology Plan](#) Objectives 1.5 and 5.3. This guide provides information and resources for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to enhance participation and learning for all students.

How to Use This Guide

Every student and situation is unique. This guide is meant to offer a general framework for consideration and guidance, while acknowledging that each student's need will be different and have individualized considerations. Use this as a resource while also utilizing district administration, the Assistive Technology team, and other knowledgeable colleagues to ensure adherence to legal statutes and best practices.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning is an educational framework that aims to create inclusive learning environments to address the diverse needs of all learners. UDL is not specifically geared to students with disabilities - **UDL is for all students**.

The UDL Framework is Comprised of 3 Guidelines:

- Provide Multiple Means of Engagement - Motivating students toward learning in the classroom
- Provide Multiple Means of Representation - Supporting a student's education needs based on factors such as disabilities, cultural or language backgrounds, and other needs
- Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression - Providing students with means to engage in class, based on their needs and strengths

See [UDL FAQs](#)

Assistive Technology

An AT device is 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. This does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted (e.g., cochlear implants, feeding tube), or the replacement of such device.

AT as a Device

- Communication boards, student-specific visual supports, calculator, slant board
- Computer, speech generating device
- Computer hardware: Eye gaze, switches, joystick, keyboards, and pointing devices.
- Computer software or extensions: Screen readers, text to speech, speech to text
- Communication apps
- Prosthetics, Orthotics
- Mounting systems, positioning devices.
- Wheelchair, walkers
- Mechanical lifts

The term AT service means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

AT as a Service

- Completing an evaluation or dynamic assessment of assistive technology
- Making purchasing recommendations
- Customizing a device to meet the student's specific needs

- Maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices
- Teaching the student how to use the device
- Coordinating with outpatient therapies, professionals, organizations, educational team
- Training

See [Fact Sheet for AT Examples](#) and [AT FAQs](#)

AT Evaluation

An AT evaluation should be conducted by an interdisciplinary team, with at least one person knowledgeable about assistive technology. Ideally, the team creates a plan for assessment, identifies the student’s strengths and needs, the environments where the AT will be used, and then selects AT options for trial.

Educational teams can complete an AT evaluation through a signed Evaluation Plan or a dynamic assessment process through the IEP.

An evaluation would likely not be needed for instances when the AT is clearly identified and readily available (e.g., calculator, pencil grip, etc.) or when the AT item has been provided for student use by sources outside of school (e.g., braces, selected mobility devices, etc.).

Option 1: Complete an AT Evaluation Through the Evaluation Plan

An evaluation can be conducted by embedding AT needs within all sections (i.e., within Communication, Sensory-Motor, CBA, etc.) or by including Assistive Technology/Services on the Eval Plan. Report results of AT evaluation and make recommendations, then conduct trials, and lastly, make final AT decisions with team.

EXAMPLES:

- The IEP team has determined that a re-evaluation is necessary. This student has disabilities, which impacts their access to school settings, participation and learning at school. The interdisciplinary team completes a comprehensive AT evaluation that guides the recommendations for the IEP team to consider.
- Student has been in RTI for a long time and team has determined need to special education evaluation. There are documented needs and struggles with written work production. An interdisciplinary team should complete an AT evaluation in an effort to identify AT devices to ease the writing process, increase efficiency and participation.
- Student has communication needs, is difficult to understand, has limited language, and is not responding well to traditional speech language therapy to increase intelligibility. Student is up for re-evaluation and AT should be evaluated for appropriate AT devices.

Option 2: Complete a Dynamic Assessment Through the IEP

AT evaluation can be conducted through ongoing assessment (data collection, review of data, trials, reporting of data, IEP team discussion, etc.)

EXAMPLES:

- Student has an IEP with a reading goal. Student struggles to accurately complete or engage in work across all subject areas due to reading barriers. Complete dynamic assessment to find AT supports for reading across subjects and environment.
- Student has been working on math goals supporting basic math facts and is unable to continue to move forward with more advanced math skills due to difficulty with the memorization of math facts. Complete dynamic assessment to determine if AT tools and services are required for continued progression in math.

See [Fact Sheet for AT Evaluation](#)

Requesting a Device

Utilization of specific AT devices or services is dependent on the results of the evaluative process.

For Trial:

- Determine specific area of need and purpose (e.g., work production, communication)
- Set goals for trial
- Set timeline
- Determine features needed via feature matching
- Request AT device(s) the interdisciplinary team determines appropriate for trial [e.g., Special Education Assistive Technology Team (SEAT), Montech, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB), vendor, etc.]
- Conduct trials of selected AT
- Collect data

See [Fact Sheet for Feature Matching](#)

For Purchase:

- After trial, summarize the data and create a report making a recommendation for a specific device/item/service. Then, submit an [AT Help Ticket](#) to the AT Team and upload your AT evaluation report.
- The AT Team will review the initial request and provide feedback to the requesting party. Feedback may include a request for additional information, consideration of alternative AT device(s), or *initial approval* of the requested AT device(s).

- If initially approved by the AT team, the AT team will send the request to the building's SPED Coordinator, principal, case manager, and any known service providers stating that the education team has adequate data, and the AT Team is in support of the purchase of the requested AT.
- If the building's SPED coordinator approves the request, they will send the request to Lance Boyd, Executive Director of Student Achievement for *final review*. If approved by Lance, the device will be acquired and/or purchased for the student.
- The IEP team is responsible for making recommendations to the IEP team. If the IEP team determines that the student needs AT listed on their IEP, the team will work with the AT team and administration for purchasing.

See [Fact Sheet for AT Evaluation](#)

AT in the IEP

AT is considered for all students, regardless of the student's disability or severity of their disability. If the student uses AT (high or low tech) in any capacity, for any portion of their school day, to support any area of social/academic need, it must be documented in the IEP.

Consideration of Special Factors

- Check **YES** to the question "Does the student require assistive technology devices or services?" under Consideration of Special Factors.

Transition Services

- Describe AT needs/services as applicable across transition areas

PLAAFPs and Goals/Objectives

Highly dependent upon individual needs of the student, the eventual outcome is that a student who uses AT in any capacity has it embedded into and throughout their IEP and school day. For AT to become a successful tool, all professionals need to support usage across environments.

- Writing an Assistive Technology PLAAFP and Goal/Objectives
 - It can be beneficial to have clearly established discussion about the student's current level of functioning as it pertains directly to the Assistive Technology program/app/etc., inclusive of direct instruction for chosen AT.
- AT is Woven Throughout Applicable IEP PLAAFPs and Goals/Objectives
 - AT services or devices are included within all applicable goal areas to ensure student is receiving benefit across environments.

Supplementary Aids and Services

- AT is described within each area of use (i.e., Personnel, Classroom Assessment, Instructional, Parent) and aligns with student goals, as well as state and district testing. Describe how and when it will be used. List the AT devices and services that the district provides. Do not name devices (i.e., wego 13A-D, Co: Writer, Dynavox Compass, etc.) application, brand, etc., but describe it and its functionality. Collaborative service providers enter their services here.
- Describe contingency plan (i.e., low tech options) to be put into place should the device be: awaiting purchase, in repair, being maintained, not at school, not charged, etc.
- Through discussion, outline when/how/if the device will go home. The device has potential to go home with the student for use for the duration of the written IEP, the calendar year (365 days/year, beyond school year and ESY).
- Considerations for discussion regarding use beyond the school setting:
 - Reason for AT use (e.g., reading, writing, communication, community, vocational)
 - How does the student use AT everyday activities?
 - Does the student currently use AT in the community?
 - Communication status: How does the student communicate without their device, is there a low-tech AT option to consider?
 - Is AT used to support homework and/or IEP goals in the home setting?

Prior Written Notice

- Enter changes related to assistive technology. Examples: An AT goal area was added with associated minutes, an AT device and/or service was added to supplementary aids, an AT device was discontinued, etc.
- Include team's recommendation for device use at home

Notes

- Name the AT device(s), including the names of the apps, device name, extensions, etc.
- List outside services and who provides and maintains the device
- List AT devices that are provided by family, community agencies, clinical services, etc.,
- Recapture recommendations for the device going home, and if the parents decline.

See [Fact Sheet for AT in the IEP](#) and [Fact Sheet for AT Training](#)

AT Implementation

It takes an interdisciplinary team to implement AT for student success. Implementation includes equipment maintenance/repair/replacement, training, data collection, and coordinating with clinical therapies when applicable.

Maintenance/Repair/Replacement

- Maintenance includes tasks such as ensuring the student's device is charged, updating equipment fit, updating applications, customizing applications
- If a student's device needs repair or replacement, document it in the following ways:
 - For students with an IEP, document in the AIM Contact Log.
 - For students with a 504, document in EdHub
 - If the equipment is a district provided Chromebook, laptop, or iPad, also submit an AT Help Ticket with the GFPS Help Desk.
 - Notify the IEP team members, family, and building coordinator.
- The case manager and service provider will request repair/replacement from building administration and the Executive Director for Student Achievement- Special Education and Central Area Schools.

See [Fact Sheet for AT Implementation](#)

Training

The school district is responsible for:

- Training the student.
- Offering training to the student's family. If the family agrees to training, the training and schedule will be documented in the Parent section of Supplementary Aids.
- Training professionals, employers, or other individuals who provide services to the student or are involved in the major life functions of the student.

See [Fact sheet for AT Training](#)

Data Collection

Data collection is required to meet the accountability requirement of IDEA 2004 (IDEA *Section 300.320*, 2017). Data is used to make educational decisions, measure progress, adjust instruction, and determine future goals. The type of data being collected should be clearly defined, collected on a scheduled basis, interpreted, and reported on through the IEP process. If data indicates a need for change in instruction or goals, make changes as appropriate.

Multiple sources of data collection are required to ensure that data is accurate and shows the whole picture of student progress. Data collectors may be identified in the goal and could include the special education teacher, speech and language pathologist, para educator, classroom teacher,

occupational therapist, and/or physical therapist. Those who will be responsible for collecting data may be identified in the goal. Data should be compared between collectors to ensure reliability, to identify problems, to note success, etc.

See [Fact Sheet for Data Collection](#)

Coordinate with Clinical Therapists

- Obtain release of information
- When appropriate, collaborate with outside providers

The AT Team

The Assistive Technology team at GFPS is a team of professionals who are dedicated to helping all students thrive by removing barriers, improving access to curriculum and educational materials, and assisting students in reaching their educational goals.

A student's educational team is responsible for completing the AT process. The AT team meets monthly to review and coach educational teams in navigating the AT process. If you have a student need or need to submit a request for AT device purchase/acquisition, submit an [AT Team Help Ticket](#).

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