



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction

Greetings Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Community of Practice Members,

Have you heard the recent news from the Office of Educational Technology and the Office of Special Education Programs? The information was released on January 22, 2024 with more celebrations and announcements to follow, including a presentation at ATIA (Assistive Technology Industry Association). In the ATIA presentation Glenna Wright- Gallo encouraged educators to look for Assistive technology supports that assist students in being “successful instead of reducing expectations for students.” She continued by stating “we need to raise the expectations for all people with disabilities.” Glenna Wright- Gallo’s speech is both inspirational and informative. Click on the [Link to ATPAP-63: Assistive Technology and IDEA: New Resources for Schools, Practitioners and Parents Video](#).

Click on the link to a guide for educators in the form of a [Dear Colleague Letter](#). One more supporting document is in the form of dispelling [Myths and Facts Surrounding AT](#).

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Upcoming Assistive Technology Professional Learning Events

Assistive Technology Community of Practice (CoP) Meetings

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming AT Forward CoP meetings:

Thursday, April 11, 2024 (4:00pm-5:00pm)

Selecting Apps for Safety, Functionality, and Fit presented by Mike Sindahl and DJ Scullin. Description: In 2009 Apple coined the phrase, "There's an app for that". Fast forward to the present and there are quite literally tens if not hundreds of "apps for that" so how do you select the best apps for your district? This presentation will walk you through one district's process for app approval, which includes evaluating digital tools for student safety, functionality with existing technology and systems, and fit with the district's curriculum and instruction. Please [register](#) in advance for this Zoom meeting.

Thursday, May 9, 2024 (4:00pm-5:00pm)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it affects us and our students presented by Frank Devereaux and other CESA 2 staff. More information to come soon. Please [register](#) in advance for this Zoom meeting.

Wisconsin Center for Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI) Update

Two Game-Changing Projects from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH)

APH has been working on two game-changing projects that, together, will alter the way we access braille and tactile graphics. The [Monarch](#), a multiline device that can display both braille and tactile graphics, and a new dynamic file type called [eBraille or eBRF](#).

The Monarch is a multipurpose device which can receive digital textbooks from APH and other providers, significantly reducing the time to fingertips for students across the nation who are blind and visually impaired. To keep up with everything Monarch, [join the community mailing list](#) to receive the latest updates about the Monarch.

The eBRF is a new file type that will add new features to digital braille so that it is reflowable, easier to navigate, and includes digital tactile graphics integrated with text, for display on multiline refreshable braille devices. Interested in following the eBRF project? [Sign up to receive updates](#) by inputting your email address, making sure "Subscribe" is selected in the dropdown menu, and then selecting "Next."

Training for Monarch has begun across the nation. Check out [these articles to learn more about the Monarch and the eBRF file format](#).

Wisconsin Aging and Disability and Independent Living Network Conference and WisTech AT Expo

Join leaders from the Wisconsin Aging, Disability, and Independent Living Network April 23–25, 2024, in La Crosse, WI. This Conference is focused on improving the lives of older people and adults with disabilities. Attendees will enjoy two full days of learning (half day pre-conference intensive followed by a day and a half of workshops)

along the beautiful Mississippi River. Attendees will also have numerous opportunities to learn, network, and collaborate with each other. WisTech will be hosting an AT Expo as part of this with hands-on access to AT along with mini-sessions.

Registration Information

[Register for the conference here.](#)

Early Bird: \$275 until February 23rd

Includes access to half-day pre-conference sessions.

Regular: \$300 beginning February 24th

Includes access to half-day pre-conference sessions

The full conference schedule will be released soon, but we can share these exciting updates:

Assistive Technology Resource Suggestions

Teaching parents about AAC can be a daunting task. Parents have so much to do and learning an AAC device can appear as a daunting task. Recently the Angleman's Syndrome Project launched a new site designed to assist parents with learning how to help their child communicate. They called it [Stepping into AAC](#).

"Stepping Into AAC is a program to support your individual's communication journey." The program is divided into 20 learning modules that support the parent with videos, easy to understand language and step by step guides on teaching language use and supporting language development. The program is intended to support the parent with short weekly lessons. They also offer resources to engage school teams and other caregivers. Stepping into AAC engages learners with videos, resources, and so much more.

Sometimes All We Need To Do Is Start A Conversation....

The month of March has us engaging in a variety of areas. Please take a moment to look at the Awareness areas for the month of March.

[National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month](#)

[National Developmental Disabilities Month](#)

[National Brain Injury Awareness Month](#)

[International Wheelchair Day](#)

[Trisomy Awareness Month](#)

[World Down Syndrome Day](#)

[Purple Day for Epilepsy](#)

[World BiPolar Day](#)

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Corner

AAC and motor planning

[The AAC Community](#) defines motor planning as “ the process of repeating an action so often that it becomes natural.” Motor planning is often overlooked when looking at an AAC device. Well meaning practitioners often “move” an icon” to assess if the student really knows the meaning of a specific word. These strategies can be very detrimental to a student. Think of it this way, how would you like it if someone rearranged your QWERTY keyboard into an alphabetical layout to see if you really knew the letters! There is evidence that AAC users use locations over icons to stay specific words or phrases. When doing an AAC assessment it is essential that this process include multiple team members including but not limited to an occupational therapist. They can assist with assessing the students motor planning abilities. For more information on motor planning check out these videos:

[Motor Planning and AAC](#)

[Motor Planning & AAC: Why to Never Move Buttons on a Device](#)

[Motor Planning AAC Morphology with LAMP Words for Life](#)

The [LAMP system by PRC \(Language Acquisition through Motor Planning\)](#) is a “therapeutic approach based on neurological and motor learning principles. “ To explore LAMP you can check out a device from the [AT4ALL](#) library.

From the desk of Mike Hipple, an adult who uses AAC

Awww high school was the best time. Going to the games, being in clubs, dating, chatting with friends everyday, and of course homecoming weeks. I wrote blogs about my high school years. You can find them at the end, but I thought that it would be interesting if we talk about teaching students what they are using for assistive technology. This is important, because when they are done with the school system they will need to find a way to get the tools that they are and have been using for years. A famous AAC study done by Dr. Light says that all AAC Communicators need to know the following: how to turn on their device, how to use the volume, and how to check the battery life. I love this study, because she said all, not some or most but all. I believe it can be true for all of the assistive technology tools like hearing aids, power chairs, scooters, and reading programs. Students who use assistive technology tools, they need to know how to use them, how to direct people who are working for them with such things as are my assistive technology tools charging, and how do I ask for help with my assistive technology tools. I went to a camp run by a man who uses a communication device. He was huge on teaching us about these things, because he knew that it was important for us to know how to ask someone to charge the device and power chair. Thanks to him my friends and I learned those important life skills, thank you Jon.

The position of a person’s body and devices is often just as important as the device itself. It is important for students who are in a power chair to get out of it everyday. It might be for just five minutes, that is still good, because they are out of their power chair, wheelchair, or scooter. The goal is to get their body relaxing and off of their

bottom. I had a mat in the bathroom that I used. A funny story about that. My aide and physical therapist visited the school a couple of times to see how they were doing with a list of the things that needed to be adjusted for me. One visit my aide or my physical therapist saw that they put the mat outside of the bathroom. They found someone who is a janitor and said what were you thinking about it, the mat should be in the bathroom not here. So, if you are going to be changing or adjusting anything please write down good and clear directions for someone.

The last topic that I want to write about is high school should be a fun and memorable time in everybody's life. The use of assistive technology can support that for the students. Maybe a student uses a walker and they need to take a walk everyday, ask one of their friends to do it with them. Maybe a student just got a communication device [I am hoping that no one is waiting to get a device until high school in Wisconsin] a fun way to start is to tell a joke on the morning announcements. Plus that would be an excellent opportunity for awareness. Anytime you can make using their device fun and enjoyable please do it. That shows AAC communicators and their families that using their device is fun and meaningful. I found these things by using assistive technology in high school. And March is cerebral palsy awareness month, I found these things to help you to celebrate it. [Cerebral Palsy Awareness Resource Pack](#)

Next month we will discuss community outing and ACC. To get a jump start on this topic I have provided you with an article to read. The author has a lot of information out there about AAC and high school :). [AAC in Secondary School: Social Media Homecoming Week & AAC - USSAAC Membership - USSAAC](#)

QIAT Community, Help Me Out!

QIAT is a nationwide grass roots organization that supports the identification, dissemination, and implementation of the Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology services in school settings. Posting a question is free. Often the people who are answering the questions are users of AT themselves and or family members. Consider [joining QIAT](#) to assist you and your team in learning, and connecting with others who are willing to share and coach others.

Question:. "Hello QIAT team!

I have had a wonderful question posed to me by a colleague inquiring about having an iPad shut down or turn off in the middle of a student using it.

She is working with a student who is struggling to transition away from the iPad when a timer goes off (signifying that it is time to move to a different activity). Is there a way to upload an app or turn on some kind of settings in which a timer can be set. When the

timer goes off on the device, the device will automatically shut down or turn off so the student can no longer use it.

They are hoping that if the device turns off and is no longer an option for use, it can support the transition away from the device into the next activity.

QIAT community, help me out!

Answers from the group:

Guided Access would be exactly what you're looking for. It is built into the accessibility of the iPad and allows you to lock a student into an application and set timers. At the end of the time, the iPad locks.

The other option if you didn't want the student to be locked into one application is to have the teacher set up Apple Classroom where the teacher can see the student's screen and lock it when needed. I have many teachers using this to manage the iPads in the classroom and it is seamless in its integration.

This is the "self advocator" in me, but why are you taking their iPad away? If they are playing games on it and it isn't for communicating, please teach them that it is time to do some work and knowledge that you know that they don't like to do work, but we all don't like to do work sometime {I find that students like it if we name something that we don't like to do ourselves}.

Feature Match: Transition

Feature matching occurs when you look systematically at what a student needs and the features of various programs. Below is an example of feature matching as it relates to students who are 14 years old or older in the area Transition.

When conducting an IEP and having the conversation about “whether the student needs assistive technology services or devices, “ consider the following questions.

When conducting an IEP and having the conversation about transition and assistive technology, consider the following questions:

✓	Area of Student Concern-Transition	Potential Solution Feature Match
	Are there resources in place to provide support to individuals with disabilities after high school?	Consider contacting agencies and supports: : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Aging Disability Resource Center (ADRC) for long-term supports• The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) for support around employment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Living Centers (ILCs) • Wisconsin's Assistive Technology Program (WisTech) • If the student will be attending postsecondary education and wants to disclose their disability, consider having the student contact the disability coordinator's office to learn more about the disclosure process and how to apply for accommodations. . <p>Consider networking and connecting with family supports and resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Voices of Wisconsin • Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities • Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative <p>Consider consulting the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Resource Map.</p>
	<p>Are there accessible supports in place to assist with independence in community mobility?</p>	<p>Consider orientation and mobility services.</p> <p>Consider city bus training.</p> <p>Consider getting an accessible version of the driver license test book.</p> <p>Consider connecting with the ADRC.</p>
	<p>Are there accessible supports in place to assist with a student learning to take responsibility for their Assistive Technology?</p>	<p>Consider a checklist for your student with items such as remembering to charge their device and using the case/care when transporting their device.</p>
	<p>Are there accessible supports in place to assist with managing time or time related concepts?</p>	<p>Consider the use of a Visual Timer.</p> <p>Consider the use native phone accessibility features and apps.</p> <p>Consider the use of a smart watch or wrist watch.</p>

	<p>Consider the use of low tech reminders, like adding sticky notes with picture supports, visual schedule, velcro prompts for change in schedules First then App, GoALLY, or Visual Daily Schedule.</p>
<p>Are there accessible supports in place to assist with independence in using technology ?</p>	<p>Consider resources for the student/parent on where to get help with AT or where to get AT repaired.</p> <p>Consider contacting Independent Living Centers (ILCs) and Wisconsin's Assistive Technology Program (WisTech).</p>
<p>Are there accessible supports in place to help the student follow a schedule?</p>	<p>Consider the use of a check-In/check-out system.</p> <p>Consider visual or picture schedule First Then App or board.</p> <p>Consider the use of alarms on phone, watch, iPad, etc.</p> <p>Consider ChoiceWorks app for video models (program uses real photos, videos and line drawings).</p>
<p>Are there accessible supports in place to assist with acquiring equipment that belongs to the student?</p>	<p>Consider a letter stating all of the equipment the student has used during their school career.</p> <p>Consider contacting the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), if the need is around their employment goal.</p> <p>Consider assisting the family with alternative funding sources, such as TEPP Program or local not-for-profits.</p>
<p>Are there accessible supports in place to assist with explaining the needs of an individual's disability?</p>	<p>Consider having a disability disclosure conversation with the student, including their rights under ADA and documenting necessary supports (i.e. accommodations, AT).</p>

	Consider having the student explore the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) to gain insight into workplace accommodations that may be available to them.
Are there accessible supports in place to assist with reading textbooks, novels or everyday items like medication bottles or bus schedules ?	<p>If the student qualifies for Accessible Educational Materials (AEM), consider having the student create an individual/personal account to Bookshare or Learning Ally.</p> <p>Consider using native phone accessibility features and/or apps.</p> <p>Consider technology, such as C-Pens & OCR</p>
Are there accessible supports in place to assist with note taking?	Consider devices or apps such as recording pens, LiveScribe , or Glean or Otter AI
Are there accessible supports in place to assist with self-regulation and/or emotional health?	<p>Consider a self-checklist or program such as How Does Your Engine Run</p> <p>Consider the use of social stories</p> <p>Consider the use of video modeling.</p> <p>Consider apps, like Calm or Go a Noodle</p> <p>Consider services in the community, like health services or campus services</p>

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Please note: Any listed app/website should be vetted prior to student use to ensure compliance with the district's technology policy.

Thank you to Stacy Duffy (stacy.duffy@CESA2.org) for her assistance and additions to this Feature Match.

Micro-Credentials Update

Congratulations to the following people who have earned badge(s) over the summer. We have now awarded 339 badges! We are empowering learners and raising the awareness of Assistive Technology!

- Mike Hipple WI AAC 8 badges!!! He earned a Macro Badge! Way to GO Mike
- Nancy Vandervort 1 badge
- Jessie Koehler 2 badges Madison Metro
- Jeffery Ziel 2 badges La Crosse

What is AT Forward?

The Assistive Technology (AT) Forward Project works with self-advocates, educators, practitioners, caregivers, and families to increase student autonomy in utilizing Assistive Technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning. The AT Forward Project provides a variety of free resources and learning opportunities, including [Community of Practice \(CoP\) meetings](#), [micro-credentialing](#), and [monthly email updates](#). See all past recorded CoP meetings on the [AT Forward CoP Video Resource Library](#). Please help us grow our AT community in Wisconsin and refer others to the [AT Forward CoP](#), by visiting the [AT Forward Registration page](#). From AT beginner to expert, the AT Forward CoP welcomes all knowledge level backgrounds!

Together we can and are moving AT Forward!!

If you have any questions or comments about the AT Forward Project, please contact Kathy White at Kathy.White@CESA2.org or Stacy Duffy at stacy.duffy@cesa2.org.