Guidelines for the Provision of Quality Assistive Technology Services:

A Plan for Michigan's Region IV

Jackson ISD
Lenawee ISD
Macomb ISD
Monroe ISD
Oakland Schools
St. Clair RESA
Washtenaw ISD
Wayne RESA

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Introduction

The ***Guidelines for the Provision of Quality Assistive Technology Services: A Plan for Region IV*** is based upon the ***Region IV Assistive Technology Plan*** created by the 1994 Academy on Assistive Technology (see appendix for list of participants). As a result of the 1994 Plan, the Michigan Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium was formed. The Michigan Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium is dedicated to building the capacity of its members to deliver quality assistive technology services. The consortium includes representatives from Jackson, Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair; Washtenaw, and Wayne counties and serves several purposes. This plan guides the work of the Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium. It also serves as a framework for districts, counties and schools to use as they develop and refine their Assistive Technology Services. The revised plan reflects a response to current legislation, including No Child Left Behind and IDEA 2004. In addition, it incorporates the principles of Universal Design for Learning and integrates Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology into the Assistive Technology process.

We thank the eight Intermediate School District Special Education Directors for their continued guidance and support.

It is our hope that these guidelines will ensure that all students have the opportunity to be successful in their educational experience.

Michigan Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium, 2006

Using This Guide

In this document we set forth the guidelines regarding assistive technology (AT) that have been agreed upon by the constituent districts of Region IV in Michigan.

Materials presented in the gray boxes are considered to be guidelines which will be used by Region IV for organizing, supporting and promoting the use of assistive technology for students with disabilities. Each guideline has a check box (❑) next to it so the reader can check off those guidelines which have been addressed by his or her district.

Material outside of the gray boxes constitutes comments, clarifications, additional suggestions, references, and ideas for local districts wanting to adapt this document to their own use.

Material presented in italics is reproduced directly from the rules, regulations or public laws.

Legislation on Which These Guidelines Are Based

❑	**Legislation**	Comments
	Definition of Assistive Technology Devices *"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 functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of such device.* (From the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 [IDEA], § 300.5.)	The definition of assistive technology is very broad in federal legislation. These aides can range from an adapted pencil to sophisticated augmentative communication devices.

Definition of Assistive Technology Services *The term "assistive technology service" means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such terms include –* *(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, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices; coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;* *(D) training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family; and* *(E) training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education 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.* (From the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 [IDEA] § 300.6.)	(A) Optional terms for evaluation include: AT consultation, AT decision making process or AT assessment. Best practice suggests that assistive technology consideration and decision making is an ongoing process rather than a single event, which the term 'evaluation' may imply.
Assistive Technology *Each public agency shall ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, as those terms are defined in 300.5-300.6, are made available to a child with a disability if required as part of the child's: (a) special education; (b) related services; or (c) supplementary aids and services. 300.308* Development of IEP 300.324 (v) At each and every IEP the team must consider whether the child needs assistive technology devices and services.	

Michigan Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium

❑ Guideline 1	Comments
Mission Statement We recognize that technology can eliminate barriers and enable individuals with disabilities to be participating and contributing members of society. We believe that all individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal access to the technology needed to ensure opportunities for learning. We accept the responsibility to provide assistive technology services, when appropriate, to directly assist a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. The mission of the Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium is to provide and facilitate the capacity to deliver quality assistive technology services through regional and interregional collaboration, building capacity and training.	Each district should have a mission statement which affirms the value and accessibility of assistive technology to individuals with disabilities. Mission statements should include at least the following three key components: 1. A statement regarding the value of assistive technology to society at large or to the community within the district. 2. A brief statement regarding student equity and access. 3. A commitment to providing assistive technology service and support.

❑ Guideline 2	Comments
Consortium Work The Region IV ISD Directors of Special Education will maintain the Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium. The purpose of the Consortium is to continue to build capacity to deliver quality assistive technology services and promote best practices, including the principles of Universal Design for Learning. This Consortium consists of representatives from each constituent ISD, and meets monthly.	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) "is an educational approach to teaching, learning, and assessment, drawing on new brain research and new media technologies to respond to individual learner differences." (Center for Applied Special Technology www.cast.org)

Consortium members: • Coordinate communication within and between all levels within the ISD, and disburse information about assistive technology. • Disseminate information on availability of service and equipment options. • Gather information to ensure that staff members are kept current about district plans and state objectives. • Communicate information about technology and support monies, and district, state and national public and private procedures for funding devices. • Maintain open lines of communication between state, county, district and building levels, serving as an assistive technology communication liaison. • Coordinate access to a resource library developed by the region or county. • Report the results of each meeting to the Region IV administrators of special education.	In support of UDL principles, the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) were developed. As referred to in IDEA 2004, NIMAS ensures students' access to written text by the production and electronic distribution of digital versions of textbooks and other instructional materials http://nimas.cast.org/ The Strategies and Tools to enhance Learning for All (STELA) project, developed by the Michigan Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium, demonstrates a method of meeting diverse needs within the general education classroom. The results of the STELA project continue to inform our current work in UDL. See STELA Project at http://www.resa.net/regioniv

❑ **Guideline 3**	Comments
Professional Collaboration The consortium is committed to working collaboratively with general educators so that all students may progress within the general education curriculum.	This reflects federal mandates IDEA 97, IDEA 04, NCLB. Major work of this committee is to help educators incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning in established general education initiatives.

❑ **Guideline 4**	Comments
Setting Goals The AT Consortium will annually develop goals and activities and review projects, based upon the identified needs throughout Region IV.	A yearly review is conducted. The results, along with the next year's goals, projects, activities, and budget are presented to the Region IV ISD Directors of Special Education for their review and approval.

❑ Guideline 5	Comments
Monitoring Needs The Assistive Technology Consortium should continuously monitor the needs of constituent districts to determine changing priorities and emerging needs.	This guidelines requires ongoing communication with the local education agency.

❑ Guideline 6	Comments
Acquisition of Products The Assistive Technology Consortium will collaborate with vendors and other agencies to enable our local districts to access information and AT materials (e.g., software, equipment and related training) in a cost effective manner.	Activities include facilitating special group purchase pricing, sharing funding sources and providing product information.

❑ Guideline 7	Comments
Collaborative Professional Development The Assistive Technology Consortium shares in-service activities, combines resources for mutual training needs, and facilitates the exchange of information about best practices in assistive technology and UDL.	Ways to enhance information exchange include sharing or providing AT/UDL: • Presentations by state and national speakers for local and regional staff. • Training materials. • Training in regional and local settings. • Processes and procedures. • Training opportunities such as vendor demonstrations and technology fairs.

❑ Guideline 8	Comments
Informational Resources The Assistive Technology Consortium maintains informational resources relating to Assistive Technology and Universal Design For Learning.	The Consortium maintains a Region IV Assistive Technology website (www.resa.net/regioniv) including: • Guidelines • Links to regional, state and national resources • Contacts • Consortium special projects The Consortium also maintains a brochure describing Region IV AT Consortium's purpose and the personnel involved.

❑ Guideline 9	Comments
Guidelines Review The Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium will review and evaluate these guidelines to ensure that they reflect current legislation and best practices	

❑ Guideline 10	Comments
Evaluation of District AT Plan Each district should establish an evaluation process to determine whether their assistive technology service plan has been implemented to determine whether modifications in the plan are needed.	A primary document for evaluating district Assistive Technology (AT) plans, as well as administrative and implementation guidelines for quality assistive technology services, is found at the following website: Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT) www.qiat.org.

Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services

The following guidelines have been selected by the Region IV Consortium from the document "Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology Services. The indicators are a "set of descriptors that could serve as over arching guidelines for quality AT services." (QIAT 2004).

Consideration of Assistive Technology Needs

❑ **Guideline 11**	Intent
Assistive technology devices and services are considered for all students with disabilities regardless of type or severity of disability.	Consideration of assistive technology need is required by IDEA unique educational needs of the student. Students are not excluded from any reason, e.g. type of disability, age, administrative concerns, etc.

❑ **Guideline 12**	Intent
During the development of the individualized educational program, the IEP team consistently uses a collaborative decision-making process that supports systematic consideration of each student's possible need for assistive technology devices and services.	A collaborative process that ensures that all IEP teams effectively consider the assistive technology of students is defined, communicated, and consistently used throughout the agency. Processes may vary from agency to agency to most effectively address student needs under local conditions.

❑ **Guideline 13**	Intent
IEP team members have the collective knowledge and skills needed to make informed assistive technology decisions and seek assistance when needed.	IEP team members combine their knowledge and skills to determine if assistive technology devices and services are needed to remove barriers to student performance. When the assistive technology needs are beyond the knowledge and scope of the IEP team, additional resources and support are sought.

❑ **Guideline 14**	Intent
Decisions regarding the need for assistive technology devices and services are based on the student's IEP goals and objectives, access to curricular and extracurricular activities, and progress in the general education curriculum.	As the IEP team determines the tasks the student needs to complete and develops the goals and objectives, the team considers whether assistive technology is required to accomplish those tasks.

❑ **Guideline 15**	Intent
The IEP team gathers and analyzes data about the student, customary environments, educational goals, and tasks when considering a student's need for assistive technology devices and services.	The IEP team shares and discusses information about the student's present levels of achievement in relationship to the environments, and tasks to determine if the student requires assistive technology devices and services to participate actively, work on expected tasks, and make progress toward mastery of educational goals.

❑ **Guideline 16**	Intent
When assistive technology is needed, the IEP team explores a range of assistive technology devices, services, and other supports that address identified needs.	The IEP team considers various supports and services that address the educational needs of the student and may include no tech, low tech, mid-tech and/or high tech solutions and devices. IEP team members do not limit their thinking to only those devices and services currently available within the district.

❑ **Guideline 17**	Intent
The assistive technology consideration process and results are documented in the IEP and include a rationale for the decision and supporting evidence.	Even though IEP documentation may include a checkbox verifying that assistive technology has been considered, the reasons for the decisions and recommendations should be clearly stated Supporting evidence may include the results of assistive technology assessments, data from device trials, differences in achievement with and without assistive technology, student preferences for competing devices, and teacher observations, among others.

Assessment of Assistive Technology Needs

❑ **Guideline 18**	Intent
Procedures for all aspects of assistive technology assessment are clearly defined and consistently applied.	Throughout the educational agency, personnel are well informed and trained about assessment procedures and how to initiate them. There is consistency throughout the agency in the conducting of assistive technology assessments. Procedures may include - but are not limited to -initiating an assessment, planning and conducting an assessment, conducting trials, reporting results, and resolving conflicts.

❑ **Guideline 19**	Intent
All assistive technology assessments include a functional assessment in the student's customary environments, such as the classroom, lunchroom, playground, home, community setting, or work place.	The assessment process includes activities that occur in the student's current or anticipated environments because characteristics and demands in each may vary. Team members work to gather specific data and relevant information in identified environments to contribute to assessment decisions.

❑ **Guideline 20**	Intent
Recommendations from assistive technology assessments are based on data about the student, environments and tasks.	The assessment includes information about the student's needs and abilities, demands of various environments, educational tasks, and objectives. Data may be gathered from sources such as student performance records, results of experimental trials, direct observation, interviews with students or significant others, and anecdotal records. Note: One resource for data collection is How Do You Know It? How Do You Show It? Penny Reed, Gayl Bowser and Jane Korsten, 2002

❑ **Guideline 21**	Intent
The assessment provides the IEP team with clearly documented recommendations that guide decisions about the selection, acquisition, and use of assistive technology devices and services.	A written rationale is provided for any recommendations that are made. Recommendations may include assessment activities and results, suggested devices and alternative ways of addressing needs, services required by the student and others, and suggested strategies for implementation and use.

❑ **Guideline 22**	Intent
Assistive technology needs are reassessed any time changes in the student, the environments and/or the tasks result in the student's needs not being met with current devices and/or services.	An assistive technology assessment is available any time it is needed due to changes that have affected the student. The assessment can be requested by the parent or any other member of the IEP team.

Assistive Technology in the IEP

❑ **Guideline 23**	Intent
The education agency has guidelines for documenting assistive technology needs in the IEP and requires their consistent application.	The education agency provides guidance to IEP teams about how to effectively document assistive technology needs, devices, and services as a part of specially designed instruction, related services, or supplementary aids and services.

❑ **Guideline 24**	Intent
All services that the IEP team determines are needed to support the selection, acquisition, and use of assistive technology devices are designated in the IEP.	The provision of assistive technology services is critical to the effective use of assistive technology devices. It is important that the IEP describes the assistive technology services that are needed for student success. Such services may include evaluation, customization or maintenance of devices, coordination of services, and training for the student and family and professionals, among others.

❑ **Guideline 25**	Intent
The IEP illustrates that assistive technology is a tool to support achievement of goals and progress in the general curriculum by establishing a clear relationship between student needs, assistive technology devices and services, and the student's goals and objectives.	Most goals are developed before decisions about assistive technology are made. However, this does not preclude the development of additional goals, especially those related specifically to the appropriate use of assistive technology.

❑ **Guideline 26**	Intent
IEP content regarding assistive technology use is written in language that describes how assistive technology contributes to achievement of measurable and observable outcomes.	Content which describes measurable and observable outcomes for assistive technology use enables the IEP team to review the student's progress and determine whether the assistive technology has had the expected impact on student participation and achievement.

Assistive Technology Implementation

❑ **Guideline 27**	Intent
Assistive technology implementation proceeds according to a collaboratively developed plan.	Following IEP development, all those involved in implementation work together to develop a written action plan that provides detailed information about how the AT will be used in specific educational settings, what will be done and who will do it.

❑ **Guideline 28**	Intent
Assistive technology is integrated into the curriculum and daily activities of the student across environments.	Assistive technology is used when and where it is needed to facilitate the student's access to, and mastery of, the curriculum. Assistive technology may facilitate active participation in educational activities, assessments, extracurricular activities, and typical routines.

❑ **Guideline 29**	Intent
Persons supporting the student across all environments in which the assistive technology is expected to be used share responsibility for implementation of the plan**.**	All persons who work with the student know their roles and responsibilities, are able to support the student using assistive technology, and are expected to do so.

❑ **Guideline 30**	Intent
Persons supporting the student provide opportunities for the student to use a variety of strategies–including assistive technology–and to learn which strategies are most effective for particular circumstances and tasks.	When and where appropriate, students are encouraged to consider and use alternative strategies to remove barriers to participation or performance. Strategies may include the student's natural abilities, use of assistive technology, other supports, or modifications to the curriculum, task or environment.

❑ **Guideline 31**	Intent
Training for the student, family and staff is an integral part of implementation.	Determination of the training needs of the student, staff, and family is based on how the assistive technology will be used in each unique environment. Training and technical assistance are planned and implemented as ongoing processes based on current and changing needs.

❑ **Guideline 32**	Intent
Assistive technology implementation is initially based on assessment data and is adjusted based on performance data.	Formal and informal assessment data guide initial decision-making and planning for AT implementation. As the plan is carried out, student performance is monitored and implementation is adjusted in a timely manner to support student progress.

❑ **Guideline 33**	Intent
Assistive technology implementation includes management and maintenance of equipment and materials.	For technology to be useful it is important that equipment management responsibilities are clearly defined and assigned. Though specifics may differ based on the technology, some general areas may include organization of equipment and materials; responsibility for acquisition, set-up, repair, and replacement in a timely fashion; and assurance that equipment is operational.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Assistive Technology

❑ **Guideline 34**	Intent
Evaluation of effectiveness includes the quantitative and qualitative measurement of changes in the student's performance and achievement.	Changes targeted for data collection are observable and measurable, so that data are as objective as possible. Changes identified by the IEP team for evaluation may include accomplishment of relevant tasks, how assistive technology is used, student preferences, productivity, participation, and independence, quality of work, speed and accuracy of performance, and student satisfaction, among others.

❑ **Guideline 35**	Intent
Effectiveness is evaluated across environments including during naturally occurring opportunities as well as structured activities.	The team determines the environments where the changes in student performance are expected to occur and prioritizes appropriate activities for data collection in those environments.

❑ **Guideline 36**	Intent
Changes are made in the student's assistive technology services and educational program when evaluation data indicate that such changes are needed to improve student achievement.	During the process of reviewing evaluation data, the team decides whether changes or modifications need to be made in the assistive technology, expected tasks, or factors within the environment. The team acts on those decisions and supports their implementation.

❑ **Guideline 37**	Intent
Evaluation of effectiveness is a dynamic, responsive, ongoing process that is reviewed periodically.	Scheduled data collection occurs over time and changes in response to both expected and unexpected results. Data collection reflects measurement strategies appropriate to the individual student's needs. Team members evaluate and interpret data during periodic progress reviews.

Assistive Technology Transition

❑ **Guideline 38**	Intent
Transition plans address the assistive technology needs of the student, including roles and training needs of team members, subsequent steps in assistive technology use, and follow-up after transition takes place.	The transition plan assists the receiving agency/team to successfully provide needed supports for the AT user. This involves the assignment of responsibilities and the establishment of accountability.

❑ **Guideline 39**	Intent
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.

❑ **Guideline 40**	Intent
Transition plans address specific equipment, training and funding issues such as transfer or acquisition of assistive technology, manuals and support documents.	A plan is developed to ensure that the AT equipment, hardware, and/or software arrives in working condition accompanied by any needed manuals. Provisions for ongoing maintenance and technical support are included in the plan.

Administrative Support of Assistive Technology

❑ **Guideline 41**	Intent
The education agency has written procedural guidelines that ensure equitable access to assistive technology devices and services for students with disabilities, if required for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).	Clearly written procedural guidelines help ensure that students with disabilities have the assistive technology devices and services they require for educational participation and benefit. Access to assistive technology is ensured regardless of severity of disability, educational placement, geographic location, or economic status.

❑ **Guideline 42**	Intent
The education agency broadly disseminates clearly defined procedures for accessing and providing assistive technology services and supports the implementation of those guidelines.	Procedures are readily available in multiple formats to families and school personnel in special and general education. All are aware of how to locate the procedures and are expected to follow procedures whenever appropriate.

❑ **Guideline 43**	Intent
The education agency employs personnel with the competencies needed to support quality assistive technology services within their primary areas of responsibility at all levels of the organization.	Although different knowledge, skills, and levels of understanding are required for various jobs, all understand and are able to fulfill their parts in developing and maintaining a collaborative system of effective assistive technology services to students.

❑ **Guideline 44**	Intent
The education agency includes assistive technology in the technology planning and budgeting process.	A comprehensive, collaboratively-developed technology plan provides for the technology needs of all students in general education and special education.

❑ **Guideline 45**	Intent
The education agency provides access to ongoing learning opportunities about assistive technology for staff, family, and students.	Learning opportunities are based on the needs of the student, the family, and the staff and are readily available to all. Training and technical assistance include any topic pertinent to the selection, acquisition, or use of assistive technology or any other aspect of assistive technology service delivery.

❑ **Guideline 46**	Intent
The education agency uses a systematic process to evaluate all components of the agency-wide assistive technology program.	The components of the evaluation process include, but are not limited to, planning, budgeting, decision-making, delivering AT services to students, and evaluating the impact of AT services on student achievement. There are clear, systematic evaluation procedures that all administrators know about and use on a regular basis at central office and building levels.

Quality Indicators for Professional Development and Training in Assistive Technology

❑ **Guideline 47**	Intent
Comprehensive assistive technology professional development and training support the understanding that assistive technology devices and services enable students to accomplish IEP goals and objectives and make progress in the general curriculum.	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) defines FAPE for each student. The use of AT enables students to participate in and benefit from FAPE. The focus of all AT Professional Development and training activities is to increase the student's ability to make progress in the general curriculum and accomplish IEP goals and objectives.

❑ **Guideline 48**	Intent
The education agency has an AT professional development and training plan that identifies the audiences, the purposes, the activities, the expected results, evaluation measures and funding for assistive technology professional development and training.	The opportunity to learn the appropriate techniques and strategies is provided for each person involved in the delivery of AT services. Professional development and training are offered at a variety of levels of expertise and are pertinent to individual roles.

❑ **Guideline 49**	Intent
AT professional development and training address and are aligned with other local, state and national professional development initiatives.	Many of the effective practices used in the education of children with disabilities can be enhanced by the use of assistive technology. The functional use of AT is infused into all professional development efforts.

❑ **Guideline 50**	Intent
Assistive technology professional development and training include ongoing learning opportunities that utilize local, regional, and/or national resources**.**	Professional development and training opportunities enable individuals to meet present needs and increase their knowledge of AT for use in future. Training in AT occurs frequently enough to address new and emerging technologies and practices and is available on a repetitive and continuous schedule. A variety of AT professional development and training resources are used.

Region IV Assistive Technology Consortium, 2007

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