

AEMs Consideration for Reading Accommodations

A Systematic Decision-making Process

This is a general supervision technical assistance document provided to districts for the development of local district procedures for the consideration of Accessible Educational Materials (AEMs) for students with disabilities.

Any of the products mentioned in this document are used as examples and are not a recommendation or endorsed by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

The contents of this document have been modified with permission from the 5 Step Process Guide developed by the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency.

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Notations

Limitations: This process is intended specifically for students identified with an “organic dysfunction” (i.e., learning disability, dyslexia) print-based disability. Students who are blind, visually impaired, and/or physically disabled may require Accessible Educational Materials (AEMs) as well. Additional information for consideration for these students is provided in the document entitled AEMs Consideration for Students with Visual and Physical Disabilities.

Related documents: These instructions are designed to provide additional guidance for the [Team Checklist](#) for the determination of reading accommodations which is found at the end of this document.

Step 1: Indicator

1.1-1.3

Critical Question: Does the student have a reading weakness described in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)?

Indications: Complete for all students Grades 1-12 with IEP or in referral if reading ability is questionable.

Timeframe (when consideration should be done):

- Initial Evaluation Eligibility
- Re-eligibility determinations
- When requested or suspected

Directions:

If the answer to the Critical question is “yes” continue to Step 2:

Step 2: Screening

2.1 to 2.4

Indications: Complete for all students with a defined reading weakness (e.g., problems with decoding or comprehension) in PLAAFP

Directions: Answer all 4 questions and proceed to step 3 if the answer to any of the questions is “yes”.

Step 3: Data-based Decisions

The following are exemplars of products that may be used to collect accommodation data. This is not intended to be a complete list.

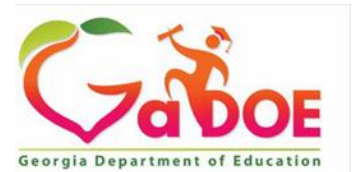
3.1 Trial Usage

3.11 District/Building Level Technology

Technology access is evident in most applications used in today’s classrooms. Applications such as Word and Adobe Reader offer built in text-to-speech abilities, and accessibility features are incorporated into

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computer operating systems for computers and mobile devices. These technologies provide access to curriculum for students. NOTE: Some students may require additional supports that are not included in mainstream software. In this case, specifically designed commercially available software and/or apps should be considered.

Additionally, many publishers offer a variety of access methods to audio files (e.g., mp3). These can provide additional information about how a student performs by listening to text.

3.12 AIM Explorer

FREE: The AIM Explorer is a free simulation that combines grade-leveled digital text with access features common to most text readers and other supported reading software. Magnification, custom text and background colors, text-to-speech (synthetic and human), text highlighting, and layout options are presented in a logical sequence to help struggling readers decide which of these supports might help them to access and understand text. (National Center on Accessible Educational Materials)

3.2 Data Collection Tools

3.22 Reading Accommodation Inventories

Protocol for Accommodations in Reading ([PAR/uPAR](#))

FREE: PAR provides a systematic procedure for making data-based reading accommodation recommendations for students. PAR gives concrete documentation needed for IEP meetings, while also guiding appropriate decisions about suitable reading accommodations that are based on student-specific evidence. (Don Johnston, developed by Dr. Denise DeCoste)

AIM Navigator

AEM Navigator is an interactive tool that facilitates the process of decision-making around AEMs for an individual student. Four major decision points in the process include 1) determination of need, 2) selection of format(s), 3) acquisition of format(s), and 4) selection of supports for use. The AEM Navigator also includes a robust set of guiding questions and useful references and resources specifically related to each decision point. Different scaffolds of support are built-in so teams can access information at the level needed to assist them in making informed, accurate decisions.

3.24 Reading Assessments

Formal Test

Types of formal tests are: standardized, reading readiness, and diagnostic. Two types of formal tests are norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests. Norm-referenced tests compare student results against other peers who have previously taken the test. Criterion-referenced test measure a student's performance against a set of performance standards.

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Norm and criterion referenced tests are listed in the following table.

Formal Tests and Their Applications	
Norm-referenced	Criterion-referenced
Compare students from year to year	Determine acquisition of skills
Evaluate teaching effectiveness	Determine emergent literacy (readiness tests)
Monitor program or curriculum	Highlight problem areas (diagnostic)
	Plan instruction

Informal Assessments

Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs) IRIs are comprised of a series of graded passages which are used to determine a student's: reading level, strengths, and instructional needs. IRIs assess both decoding and comprehension.

Types of IRIs include interest inventories, checklists, reading Interviews, anecdotal notes, and reading portfolios. A criteria for rating students is the perceived difficulty of reading at different grade level content. Levels can be described as independent, instructional, and frustration. Observed activities include reading words in isolation, accuracy in context, and comprehension. (Formal and Informal Methods of Assessing Reading Development, http://www.uwgb.edu/education/files/foundreadwebmaterial/8assessment_ppt.pdf, on 3/7/16))

3.3 Outcomes:

"Yes"

Student can access *grade level text* with higher comprehension using a text reader.

Student can access *grade level text* with higher comprehension using an adult reader or audio file. However, additional exposure to text readers will continue to be explored to increase student's independence

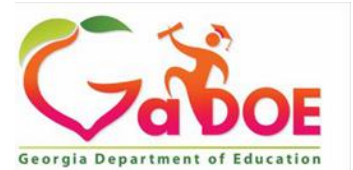
Student can NOT access *grade level text* with higher comprehension using a text reader, adult reader, or audio file. However, the student's reading comprehension was improved above independent reading levels with the introduction of a (text reader) or (adult reader) or (audio file). The student will require **accommodations** for comprehension* with *grade level text*. Additional exposure to text readers will continue to be explored to increase student's independence.

"No"

Student can access *grade level text* at the same level regardless of the way in which it is presented. No alternative media is recommended at this time.

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“Additional Consideration”

Student can NOT access *grade level text* at the same level regardless of the way in which it is presented due to cognitive and/or language disabilities. However, the student may be in classrooms using *grade level text* and will require **modifications** for comprehension*.

**Support for comprehension may include activation of background knowledge, reading for specific content, vocabulary instruction, graphic organization, etc.*

***Modified content includes similar content but with reduced grammatical complexity and additional supports.*

Step 4: IEP Documentation

Notation:

Please follow the local district’s procedures for the documentation AEMs and supporting Assistive Technology (AT) in the student’s IEP.

Sections

4.1 PLAAFP Elements* (use Data Collection from AEMs protocols (table below), Outcomes statements, and additional information.

- Name the protocol used
- Provide rationale for consideration (Assessment Scores)
- Include objective data from AEMs protocol
- Write outcomes statements
- Supplement with additional Information as needed

Data Collection from AEMs protocol	Grade	Comprehension Rate (%)	Difficulty Level*
Academic Placement			
Graded Reading Level (Independent)			
Graded Reading Level (Adult Reader)			
Graded Reading Level (Text-Reader)			

*Difficulty Level, Independent, Instructional, and Frustration

Name the situation(s) in which the AEMs/AT is required (e.g., textbooks, short narrative, web-based text...)

4.2-4.5 Other Areas: Continue with the Team Checklist to ensure documentation for IEP.

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Step 1 (Determination)		Yes	No
1.1	Student is in grade (1-12)		
1.2	Student has a documented reading disability in (PLAAFP)		
1.3	Student has a reading goal in the IEP.		
If yes to Questions 1.1-1.3, continue to Step 2.			
Step 2 (Screening)			
2.1	Student will be reading below grade level if current IEP reading goal is met.		
2.2	Student understands at least grade level text when it is read aloud.		
2.3	Student has IEP accommodations requiring an adult reader.		
2.4	Student reads near grade-level, however, time required to read with comprehension limits access to core-related materials.		
If "YES" to any questions 2.1-2.4, continue to Step 3.			
Step 3 (Data-based Decisions)			
3.1	Trial Usage 3.11 Building or District Assistive Technology 3.12 Other trial		
3.2	Data Collection Tools 3.21 Information collected from Step 2.1-2.4 3.22 Reading accommodation inventories (e.g., PAR) 3.23 Student Preference Statements 3.24 Reading Assessments 3.25 Current IEP statements reading goals 3.26 Student/Parent/Staff Reporting 3.27 Student trial from Step 3.1		
3.3	Outcome: Does the student require AEMs?		
If "YES" to 3.3, continue to Step 4			
Step 4 (IEP Documentation)			
4.1	Reading weaknesses documented in PLAAFP		
4.2	Accommodations align with documented weakness		
4.3	Provision of AEMs and AT are specifically addressed for access		
4.4	Provision of AEMs and AT are specifically addressed for testing		
4.5	IEP goals are standards-based and supported with AEMs and/or AT		
4.19	AEMs and AT are evident in transition plan goals or activities		
4.20	AEMs and/or AT acquisition and implementation is documented.		