

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a grey sweater, leaning over a young man with dark hair, wearing a blue patterned jacket. They are both looking at a tablet computer on a wooden table. The woman is smiling and pointing at the screen, while the young man is looking down at it with a focused expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or office setting.

# TECHNOLOGY & TRANSITION

Resource Guide To Creating and Sustaining  
an AT Team at the High School Level

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### **Connecticut Tech Act Mission**

Increase independence and improve the lives of individuals with disabilities through increased access to Assistive Technology for work, school, and community living.



### **SERC Mission**

Provide resources, professional development, and a centralized library to educators, families, and community members in collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education and other public and private partners.

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# Introduction

You can't have one without the other, or so the expression goes! Assistive Technology (AT) and Transition go hand in hand for ALL students at the secondary level. Transition is a “coordinated set of activities designed within a results oriented process,” and the use of AT must be considered as part of this “coordinated set of activities” (34 CFR 300.43 (a)). AT plays a vital role in providing access, participation, and progress in general education for students with disabilities. According to IDEA, **AT devices and services** must be considered in the development of the individualized education program (IEP) (34 CFR 300.324). Providing AT services to students requires interdisciplinary team work, support, and planning. High schools have an added responsibility of ensuring secondary students with disabilities are prepared to transition to the world of work, postsecondary education/training, community, and independent living.

**An assistive technology 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 children with disabilities (IDEA 2004, Sec. 602(1)(A); 34 CFR §.300.5). AT devices range from simple, low-technology (e.g., highlighters, pencil grips, straws or Velcro) through mid-technology (e.g., switch-operated toys, tape recorders, and calculators) to the most sophisticated and cutting-edge high-tech tools (e.g., computers or motorized wheelchairs).

**An assistive technology service** means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an AT device and includes

- 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 AT devices by children with disabilities;
- c) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing AT devices;
- d) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with AT devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs; training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family; and 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 (IDEA 2004, Sec. 602(2); 34 CFR §300.6).

Transition prepares high school students to successfully move into adulthood by combining the academic and functional components of the curriculum. Transition, at its best, is naturally embedded into all aspects of the high school community. Transition is part of math, science, language arts, and all core academic and elective classes. In a high school that embraces responsible inclusive practices, transition is part of extracurricular activities that include sports and clubs. Transition occurs not only in the classroom but also in the library, cafeteria, auditorium, gym, and hallways.



To benefit optimally from the high school curriculum, students need to be engaged in the learning process. Student engagement in learning is related to personal interest and authentic learning: students will be motivated and engage in subject matter that has relevance and context to their life at school, at home, and in the community (Moll, 2003). Students with and without disabilities have preferences for how new information is learned.

Although providing AT services can at times appear challenging, schools can equip themselves to meet the needs of students and ensure they are able to have successful and satisfying educational experiences. AT can facilitate development of literacy (e.g., Anderson-Inman, 2009; Edyburn, 2004; MacArthur, 2009), mathematics (e.g., Bouck & Flanagan, 2009; Edyburn, 2004), communication (e.g., Mechling & Cronin, 2006; Beukelman & Mirenda, 1998), and pre-vocational skills (Martin, 2009).

Learning critical academic and functional skills during the high school years is essential to the successful transition of students into the adult world. All students graduating from high school must possess functional literacy, mathematics, and computer skills in order to survive as adults in our society. Students with disabilities face numerous challenges in the acquisition and retention of these skills. These challenges not only impact their ability to make a smooth transition into postsecondary education/training, employment, and independent living, but also affect their ability to subsequently make progress and function as independently as possible in these areas.

Students with disabilities must be provided with the tools that will allow them access, participation, and progress in the general education setting and in the world beyond school. By teaming Transition and AT together, educators will be able to link the transition goals set for students with the broad range of AT tools available to enhance positive student outcomes. Technology-based instruction (the use of computers, including software to enhance learning) has been identified as evidence-based practice for teaching academic skills to students with disabilities (West, 2012).

Most schools provide some type of AT services to students with special needs as it is mandated by IDEA; however, these services may not be uniform in a district or even a school building. AT services must be planned and implemented systematically in order to maximize their effectiveness (Bausch, Ault, & Hasselbring, 2006). Systematic implementation of AT involves:

- creating and sustaining school AT teams,
- providing AT services, and
- monitoring and evaluating services (Bausch, Ault, & Hasselbring, 2006; Bugaj & Norton-Darr, 2010).

# Creating and Sustaining School AT Teams

The first step in providing sustainable school-wide AT services is to create a multidisciplinary AT team. This team will ensure that input and feedback from all stakeholders are represented and that AT is considered for all students with disabilities. The formation of a school AT team can be initiated by an administrator (principal, department chair) or an educator (Bugaj & Norton-Darr, 2010).

A balanced AT team must include administrators and professionals from both the special education and general education fields.

---

## Special Education and Related Services Professionals

Special Education Teachers  
Transition Specialists  
Assistive Technology Specialists  
Occupational Therapists  
Physical Therapists  
Speech and Language Pathologists  
Paraprofessionals

## General Education Professionals

General Education Teachers  
Curriculum Specialists  
Reading Specialists

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Special education and related services professionals have expertise in providing teaching strategies and tools to students with disabilities that complements the general education staff expertise in core content areas. Working together, educators can effectively incorporate AT in the classroom setting, benefiting many students with and without disabilities.

The success of an AT team largely depends upon administrative support and buy-in. Administrators who are committed to implementing effective AT services must:

- specifically describe the knowledge, skills, and responsibilities of all staff members who provide AT services;
- dedicate time for planning and meeting;
- allocate financial and professional resources;
- ensure that the AT implementation plan is carried out effectively and evaluated periodically;
- offer continuous learning opportunities for educators and other staff; and
- implement a systematic procedure to ensure teacher accountability for student progress.





## Providing AT Services

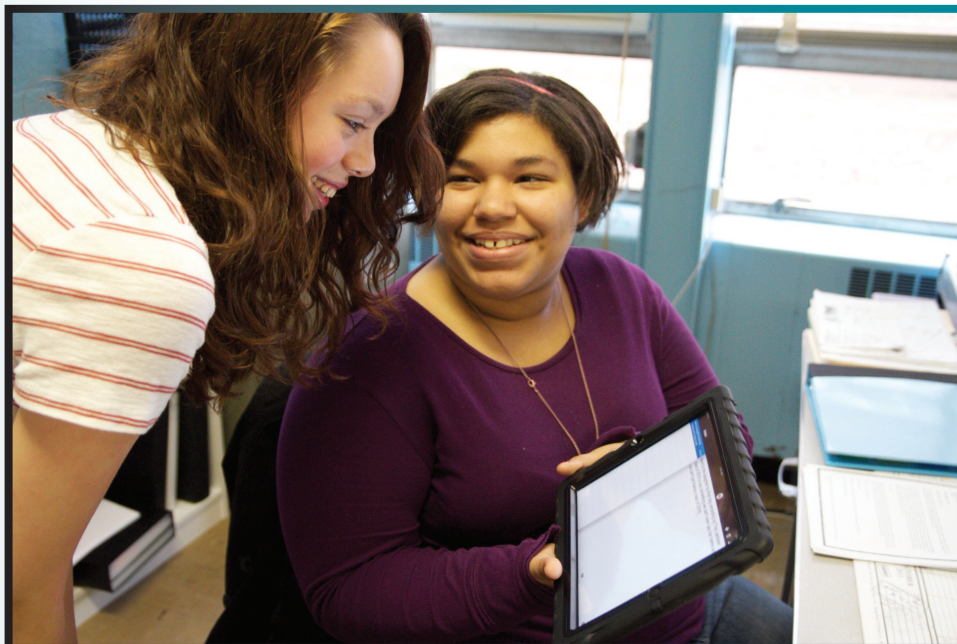
Providing effective AT services helps ensure that students with disabilities have opportunities to participate and progress in the general education curriculum. As students grow through adolescence into young adulthood, increased skills in self-advocacy, decision making, and problem solving become critical to successful participation in employment, postsecondary education/training, and independent living. In Connecticut, the State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators 13 & 14 for IDEA are clearly influenced by the use of AT when designing meaningful IEP goals and objectives that will affect positive post-school outcomes in adult life.

Ideally, the AT team in a school is responsible for:

- considering AT for students receiving services under IDEA;
- conducting an AT evaluation, including trials to determine the appropriate AT;
- documenting the use of AT in the IEP;
- ensuring that AT is being implemented efficiently;
- evaluating the effectiveness of AT; and
- re-evaluating, as necessary.

For more information on SPP Indicators 13 and 14, please see:

[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/State\\_Perf\\_Plan\\_2011.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/State_Perf_Plan_2011.pdf)



There is a continuum of low-, mid-, and high-tech AT that may meet the needs of identified students with disabilities.



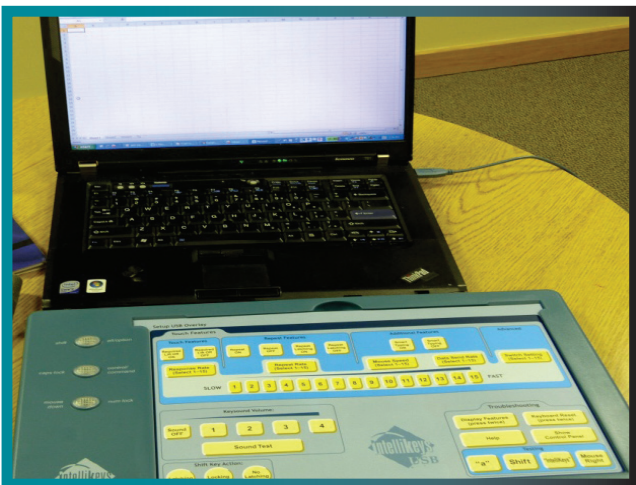
**Low-tech** AT are devices or equipment that do not require much training, may be less expensive, and do not have complex or mechanical features. For example:

- carbonless notebooks
- color coding systems
- ergonomic pen or pencil grips
- grid organizers
- large print text
- slant boards



**Mid-tech** AT devices or equipment may have some complex features, may be electronic or battery operated, may require some training to learn how to use, and are more expensive than the low-tech devices. Some examples include:

- alternate keyboard
- alternate mouse
- amplifiers
- audio books
- digital pens
- digital recorders
- electronic organizers
- larger computer monitors
- manual wheelchairs
- talking spell checkers

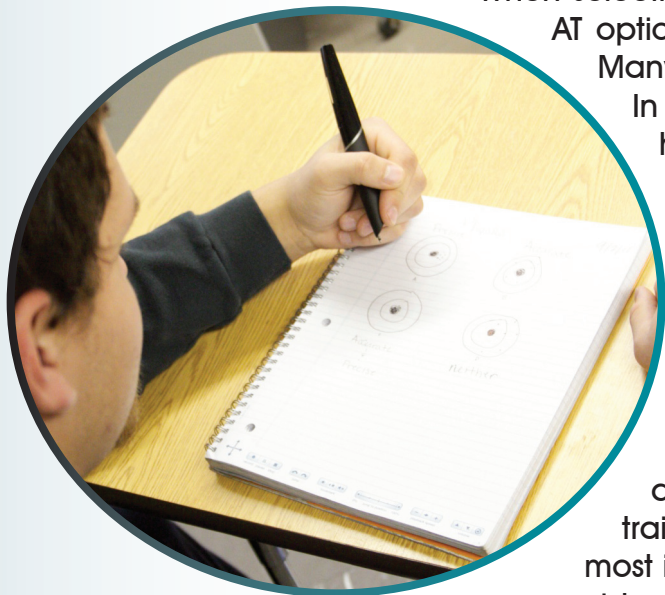


**High-tech** AT refers to the most complex devices or equipment that have digital or electronic components, may be computerized, will require in-depth training and effort to learn how to use, and cost the most. Examples include:

- communication devices with voice output
- computers with specialized software such as voice recognition or magnification software
- digital hearing aids
- electronic aids to daily living
- power wheelchairs or scooters
- prosthetic devices
- voice-activated telephones



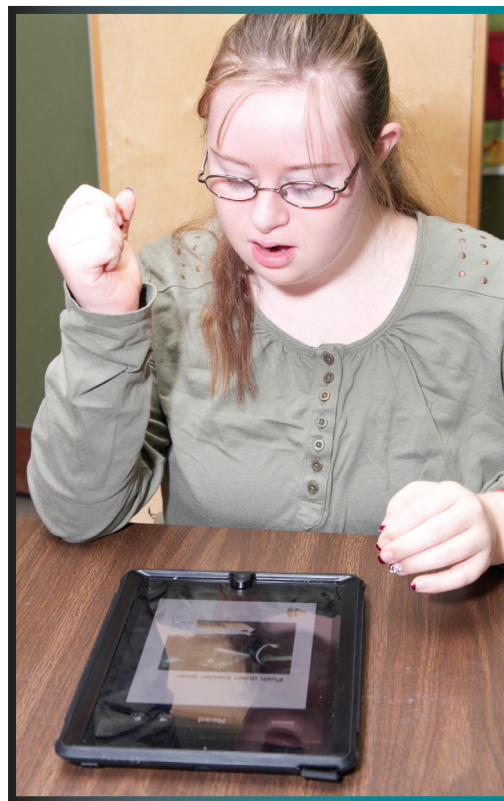
When selecting AT tools for students, it is important that low-tech AT options be considered before more expensive AT tools. Many economical solutions exist in the low-end range. In addition, schools already have technologies (e.g., highlighters, MP3 players, Smart Boards, etc.) that can be described as AT and used in lieu of new equipment.



Administrators often worry that expensive AT may be abandoned—i.e., provided but not used. Research shows close to one-third of the devices provided are abandoned. There are several reasons for this: the device not working as expected, difficulty in using the device (often due to lack of training), a change in the student's functioning, and, most importantly, not taking the student's preferences into consideration. Providing a trial period with the device is one effective way of reducing the abandonment rate (Ebner, 2004).

Cost of AT can be further reduced if schools create a list of all of the AT in the building and share it with all faculty. School-based AT teams can also assist the district in creating a district-wide AT inventory and encourage schools to share AT when it is no longer in use. Once this list is created, it can be placed in a centralized location, and any new AT equipment can be added to the list.

To ensure the AT services provided are effective, it is important that the school AT team has consistent face-to-face time to discuss, problem solve, and learn from one another and from experts in the field. Ongoing professional development and technical assistance can ensure the growth and sustainability of the AT team and that the team uses AT reliably and productively. This encourages the AT school team to enhance its knowledge and be well versed in evidence-based techniques to support the use of AT in the classroom, at home, at work, and in the community. Components of the in-service professional development should include theory, demonstration, coaching and practice, and feedback (Joyce and Showers, 1980, 2002).





# Monitoring and Evaluating AT Services



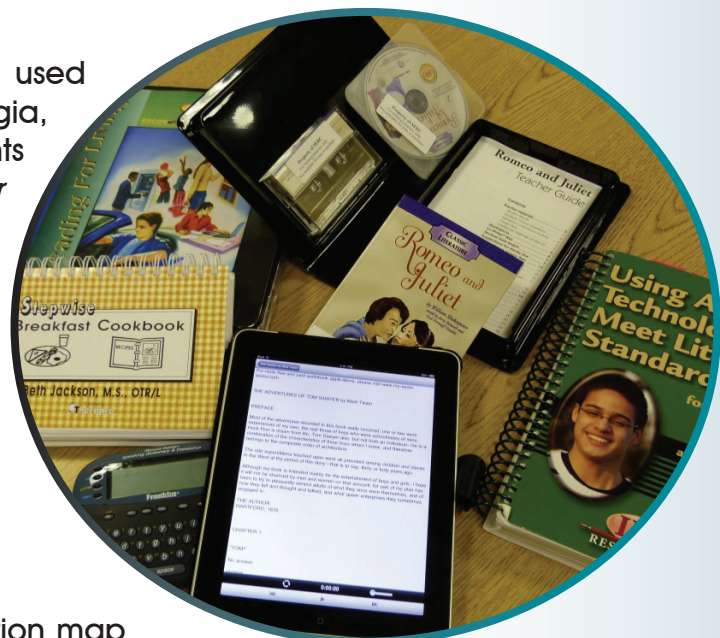
Sustainable school-wide AT teams require the opportunity for reflection and evaluation of AT services. The quality indicators in assistive technology (QIAT) self-evaluation matrices (Appendix A) can assist a group of diverse stakeholders to plan for changes and improve AT services for students with disabilities. The QIAT have been developed, revised, and validated by professionals representing various perspectives and roles within the field of AT who were concerned about the provision of AT to students (QIAT Consortium Leadership Team, 2000). The QIAT ([http://natri.uky.edu/assoc\\_projects/qiat](http://natri.uky.edu/assoc_projects/qiat)) provide guidance in the development and revision of AT policies and procedures related to the IEP, addressing the following eight areas:

- consideration of the need for AT during the IEP meeting;
- evaluation of the need for AT;
- including AT in the IEP;
- implementing the use of AT;
- evaluating the effectiveness of AT use;
- transitioning with AT;
- administrative support for AT services; and
- professional development and technical assistance in the implementation of AT.

These indicators are evidence based and are used by states (e.g., Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, Texas) to guide the AT services for students with disabilities. *The Assistive Technology Guidelines for Connecticut* (2013) also contain the QIAT indicators. These indicators enable an AT team to reflect upon their services and to review whether:

- AT services fulfilled the mandates and expectations of federal and state laws and were aligned with the district policies;
- AT services were provided collaboratively; and
- the team members involved were following the code of ethics for their specific profession.

These quality indicators serve as a master configuration map for teams to not only assess but also plan for changes that lead to continuous improvement of AT services.



# Creating and Sustaining AT Teams at the High School Level

According to the *National Longitudinal Transition Study-2* (<http://policyweb.sri.com>), 75% of students with disabilities in general education settings rarely or never use computers for academic drill and practice, and 42% rarely or never use the Internet. Building the use of the computer into the curriculum on a regular basis is an effective strategy for student engagement in literacy, numeracy, and all transition-related skills and has proven to boost achievement (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2005).

During the 2007-08 school year, the State Education Resource Center (SERC) and the CT Tech Act Project developed a partnership with the overarching goal of enhancing the use of AT at the high school level. Specific emphasis was placed on expanding educators' knowledge of the continuum of AT tools available to help students access curriculum and instruction in the classroom, workplace, home, and community. This partnership initially resulted in professional development for educational teams that included a general and special educator(s), AT professional, administrator, occupational therapist, transition specialist, paraprofessional, and job coach. The professional development and technical assistance included hands-on exploration of numerous AT tools, building a knowledge base of low-, mid-, and high-tech devices available for high school students.

Each school team received a toolkit of a continuum of AT tools (Appendix B). The professional development offered continuing education units (CEUs) to participants who used an AT device from their toolkit with a student who would benefit.

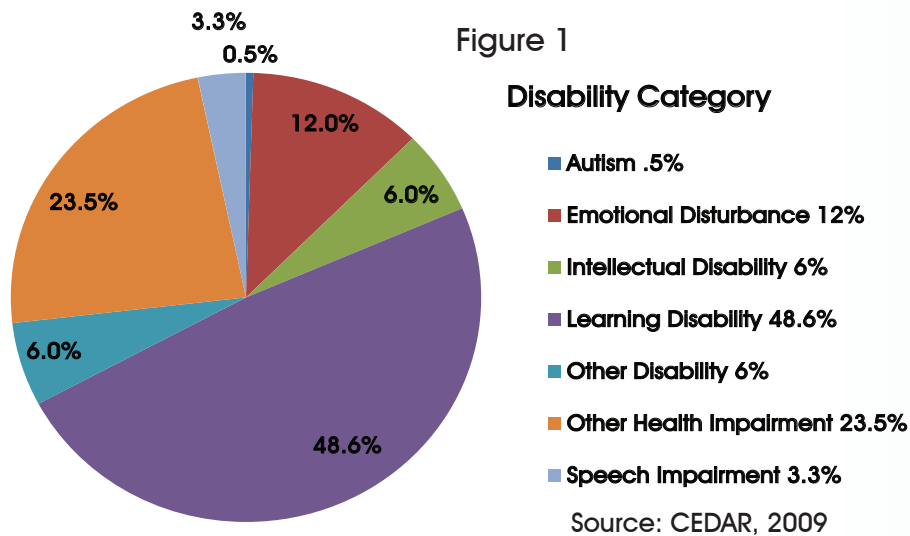
SERC and the CT Tech Act Project offered the professional development again during the 2008-09 school year (based on the 2007-08 professional development model) after numerous requests from districts. Hands-on application of identified AT tools, coupled with the use of a computer lab, also enabled school teams to tap into this greatly underutilized resource.

In 2009, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was announced statewide to districts interested in improving their current AT practices. Two districts were selected based on their current practices for utilizing AT across disciplines and anticipated (measurable) outcomes of participating in yearlong professional development and technical assistance.

SERC and the CT Tech Act Project provided three days of professional development and technical assistance, customized to meet the identified schools' needs, with the goal of increased, documented use of appropriate AT for students in transition. At the end of this grant period, a final TA session was conducted to celebrate successes, evaluate effectiveness, and plan for the schools' next steps for continued sustainability and growth of their AT Teams.

# CASE STUDY – Orville H. Platt High School

Orville H. Platt High School is one of the two secondary schools in Meriden, CT. According to the 2010 Census, the racial and ethnic composition of Meriden is diverse: 58.8% residents identified themselves as White, 28.9% as Hispanic, 9.7% as Black, 3.5% as multiracial, and 2.1% as Asian. The high schools serve approximately 2,300 students, ages 14-21. According to the 2009-10 strategic school profile, Platt had 1,114 students, including 16.4% identified with disabilities [Connecticut Education Data and Research (CEDAR)]. Figure 1 provides the disability category information on Platt students.



## INITIAL OBSERVATION RESULTS: YEAR 1

The SERC/CT Tech Act Project Team began its work with Platt by conducting a daylong on-site observation to:

- assess the current use of AT in core academic and electives courses;
- observe students/classes where an AT need may exist; and
- evaluate the extent that Transition services are naturally embedded in such classes.

Prior to this initial visit, the Platt AT team was given the responsibility to provide:

- documentation of its current AT inventory;
- current AT practices, including copies of all forms used when assessing a student's AT needs, providing AT, providing AT training, and re-evaluation;
- a QIAT Self-Assessment to be completed on an individual staff basis (Appendix A); and
- student data, including:
  - the number of students in high school with disabilities;
  - their ages;
  - their disabilities;
  - the number of students using AT; and
  - the types of AT used.



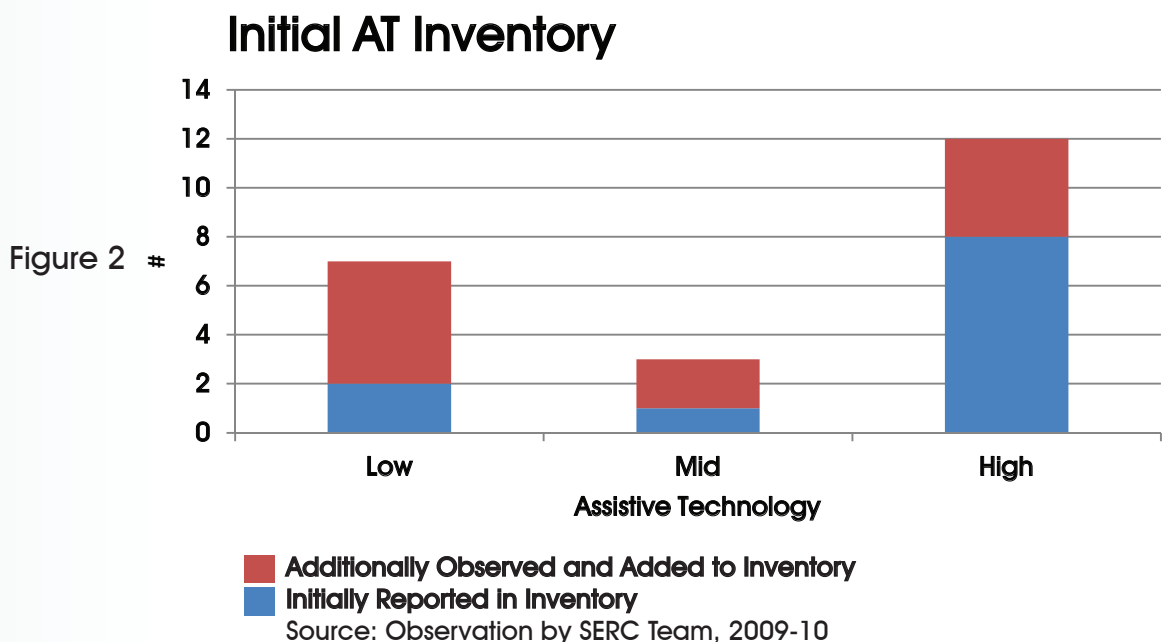
## Current AT Practices and the AT Team

A formalized system, involving consistent practices and structures for AT services, was at the beginning stage of development when the SERC/CT Tech Act Project began its partnership with Platt. The AT team wanted to create and standardize a protocol for considering AT for students with disabilities.

To implement schoolwide AT services consistently, it was critical to restructure and expand the existing AT team, which consisted of administrators, general and special educator(s), a transition specialist, a paraprofessional, an AT specialist, and an occupational therapist. It was recommended that five to eight staff members be identified, based on their interest, commitment, and availability for the duration of this project. This continued partnership aimed to create permanence and sustainability of this high school AT team, which could then serve as a model for the other district high school as well as the elementary and middle schools in the district.

## Documentation of Current AT Inventory

The initial observation revealed that the high school actually had more AT than reported. This may be due to a lack of communication between departments or the lack of awareness of what is considered AT. For example, several SMART boards in the core academic classes were being used successfully, yet these items were not considered AT by the classroom teacher. When AT for students with visual impairments was found but not included on the AT inventory, the educator for students who are blind and visually impaired was quickly invited to join the AT team. These are common scenarios for schools providing AT without the benefit of a formalized AT team and programmatic structure in place. See Appendix C for a list of the AT inventory that was reported at Platt High School and the additional AT that was found through observation. Figure 2 provides additional information.



## QIAT Self-Assessments

Each member of the Platt High School AT team completed the QIAT self-assessment survey prior to the beginning of on-site technical assistance. This self-rating summary sheet provided each member an opportunity to reflect upon the quality of the school's AT services to students with disabilities. The collective team results (Figure 3) indicated a score between 1.0 – 2.0 in all eight identified areas, with the *Documentation of AT in the IEP* and the *Assessment of AT* cited as the highest and lowest areas of need, respectively.

The results of this assessment provided a framework for yearlong professional development and technical assistance. At the end of the initial observation, the SERC and CT Tech Act Team further collaboratively prioritized the areas of need based on the results of the self-assessment survey, which then served as the basis for the next professional development and technical assistance. With funds allocated by the district, additional AT devices were purchased for use at the high school (see Figure 4 below and Appendix D).

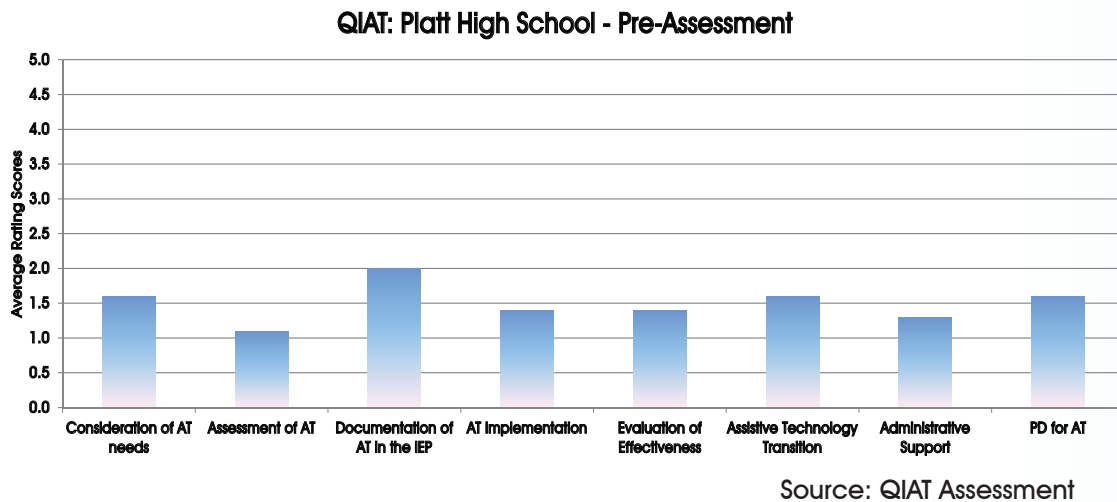


Figure 3

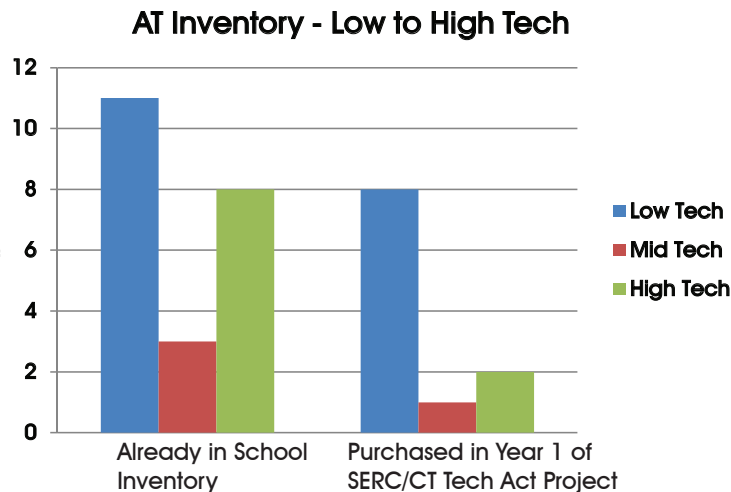


Figure 4

Source: Observation by SERC Team, 2009-10

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Professional development to the high school AT team commenced with a full-day session to discuss the findings of the initial observation and provide an overview of the technical assistance that would follow. This professional development addressed the following topics:

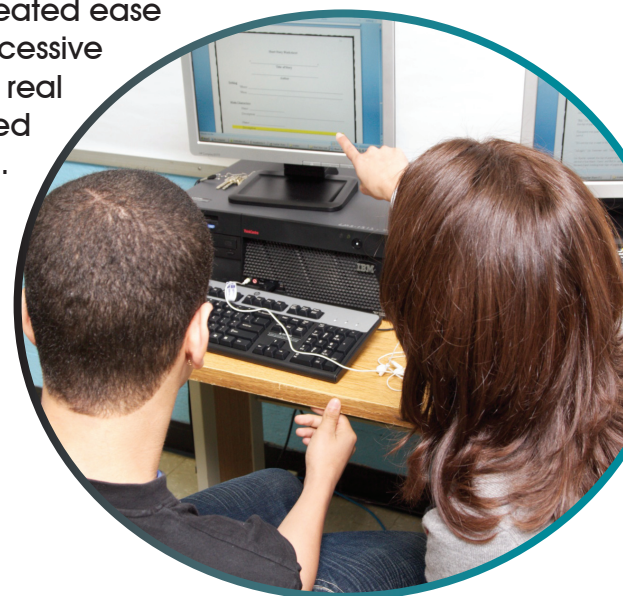
- documentation of the high school's AT inventory;
- development of a structure/protocol for maintaining a centralized AT inventory;
- creation of a language common to AT (accommodations and modifications);
- identification of four priority need areas based on the results of the QIAT indicators:
  - ♦ consideration of AT
  - ♦ assessment of AT
  - ♦ documenting AT in the IEP
  - ♦ AT Implementation and Integration;
- alignment of AT and Transition;
- hands-on demonstration and use of newly purchased AT devices; and
- action planning.

At the end of the first year, educators shared their experiences trying various AT devices for possible use with students in their classes. Both SERC and the CT Tech Act Project consultants could tell this school team had a special commitment and enthusiasm evidenced by the number of AT considerations, and therefore offered the school another year of support.

### Year 2 of the Project

In Year 2, the SERC/CT Tech Act Project consultants provided a half-day of technical assistance every other month, with the high school AT team convening monthly. The AT team used the *Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist* from the Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) (Appendix E) to consider AT for all students, and an AT team meeting protocol was developed to record the use of AT for students (Appendix F). This customized form created ease of documentation and follow-through for successive meetings. The meeting minutes were recorded in real time; as the discussions occurred, an identified AT member completed and shared the form. Meetings consistently concluded with "next steps," including:

- established timelines for building AT team capacity for using the AT inventory;
- consideration of AT for all students with an IEP;
- trial usage;
- documentation;
- implementation;
- re-assessment; and
- capacity building (beyond the AT team).

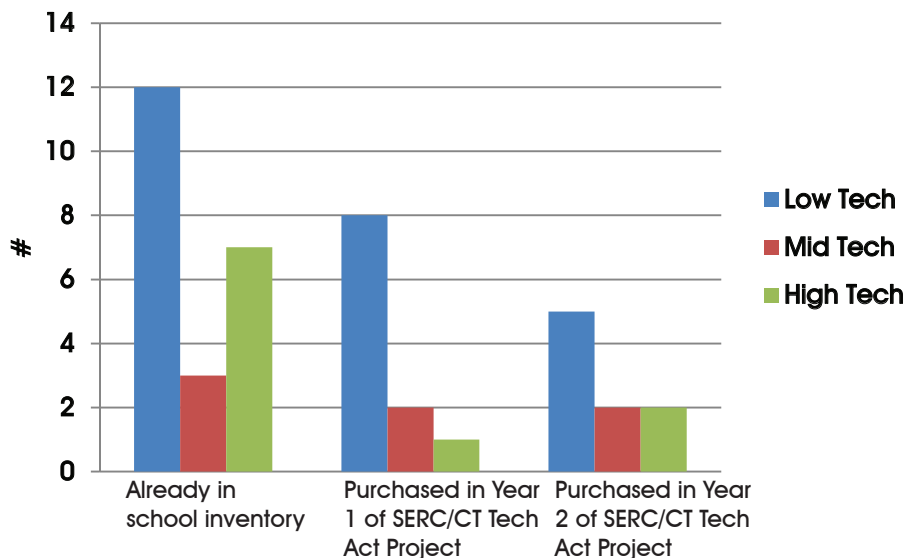




Members of the AT team made an individual commitment to learn how to use one new piece of AT equipment every month, then share their new knowledge at each successive AT meeting (for more details, see “Results of Professional Development and Technical Assistance” on page 15). The administration then allocated resources for the purchase of additional AT equipment to expand the AT inventory. Most of the equipment fell within the low-tech category (Figure 5).

**AT Inventory - Low to High Tech**

Figure 5



Source: Observation, 2009-11

### AT Team Membership Expands

As the AT team took shape and added additional staff, word spread in Meriden among the staff at central office, the elementary and middle schools, and the other high school in the district, Francis T. Maloney High School. The Platt team began including professionals from Maloney to form a comprehensive team that serviced all students at the secondary level.

Administrative support, which significantly contributes to the success of any AT team, was present from the onset of this partnership. Administration not only provided support and guidance to the team, it also provided resources—materials as well as time for planning and professional development—to ensure AT would be implemented at the classroom level.

District administration routinely participated in bimonthly TA sessions. Recognizing the potentially valuable contributions of key personnel representing the core academics, the central office invited the district’s English language arts and mathematics curriculum specialists to join the team. The bimonthly meetings were held at the Board of Education Board Room to accommodate the growing number of stakeholders.

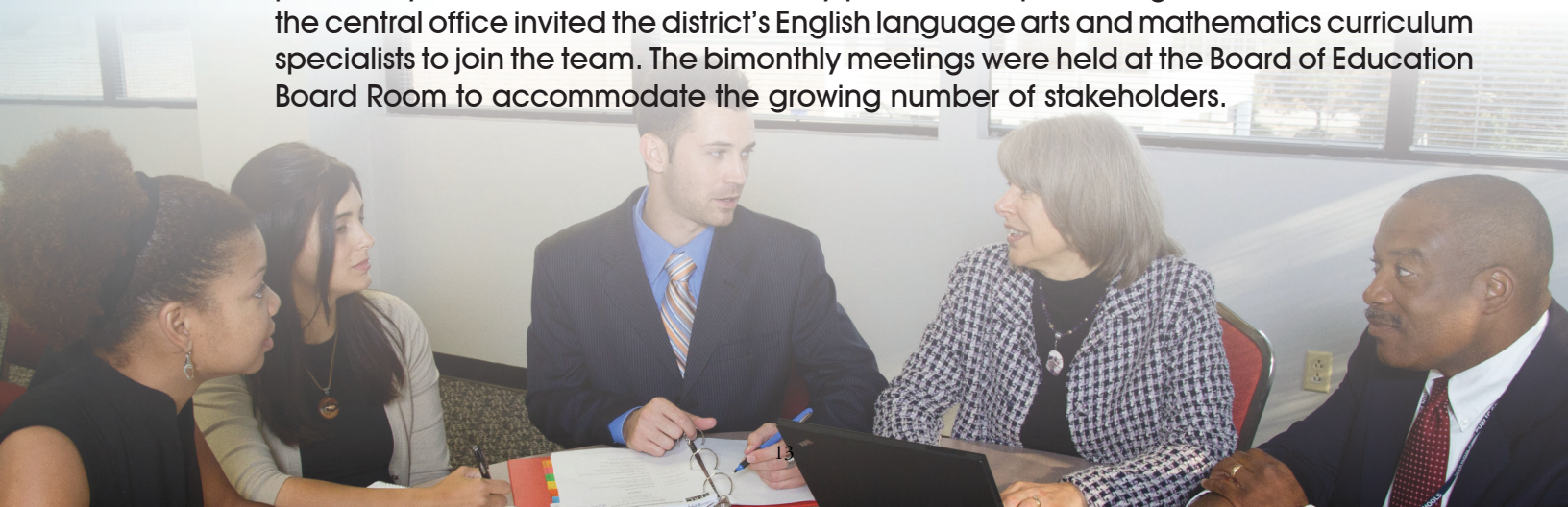


Figure 6 illustrates the increase in AT team membership and the change in demographics at the end of each year. It also notes an increase in membership in each of the subcategories. This is evidence of the school/district commitment to provide effective AT services. Particularly notable is the increased participation of administrators, general educators, and student support services professionals.

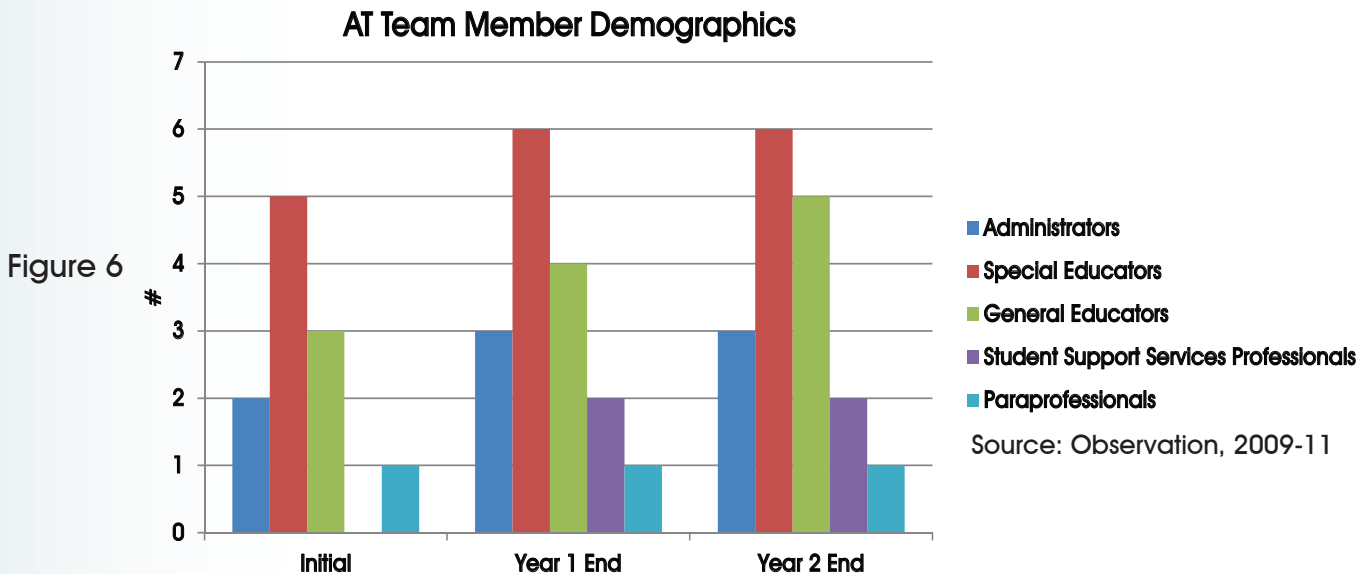


Figure 6

**QIAT Self-Assessment: Comparison Data**

Each member of the high school AT team completed the QIAT self-assessment survey three times: prior to Year 1; at the end of Year 1; and at the end of Year 2. Survey results indicated an increase in the AT team’s confidence in all eight areas evaluated in the QIAT (see Figure 7). The increase in the professional development category in Year 1 reflects the bimonthly TA sessions with the SERC/CT Tech Act Project consultants that were helping the AT team at the high school build their confidence and provide services to students. The dip in this same category in Year 2 may indicate the team’s increased awareness of the diversity of new and improved AT equipment available on the market and their recognition that there was a lot more to learn.

**QIAT Platt High School - Initial, Year 1, and Year 2**

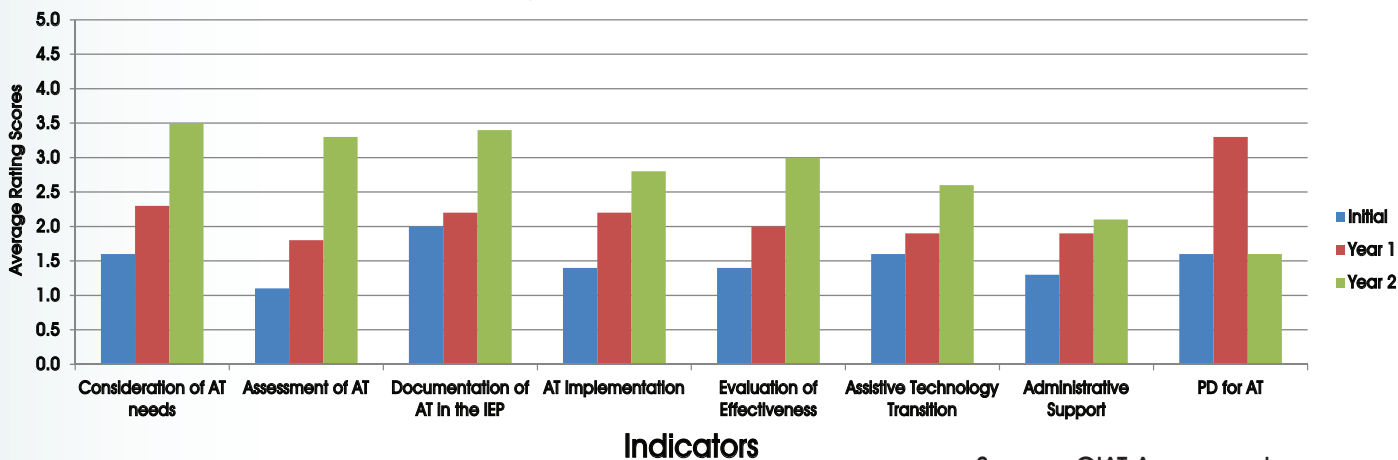


Figure 7

Source: QIAT Assessment

## RESULTS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

### Team Meetings: Participation and Structure

During the 2010-11 school year, the AT team held 10 monthly meetings (SERC/CTAP consultants attended every other month). The team used the meeting template form (Appendix F) specifically developed to provide structure, effectiveness, and efficiency to the AT process. The average team meeting participation was 12 staff (a low of 8 and a high of 16 participants were also recorded at monthly meetings).

Capacity building within the AT team continued to be a major goal of the bi-monthly TA sessions. A portion of each meeting included professional development on an identified device. Then, as the first step of capacity building, team members would voluntarily select a piece of AT equipment to learn over the course of the following month.

The second step in capacity building was to return to the monthly AT team meetings and help build the capacity of fellow team members. In summary, each team member developed an interest and potential specialty in the use of selected AT items, and then shared their knowledge and practical application experiences with their team colleagues. In this manner, a structure for capacity building was established within the team.

The third step in capacity building was to train identified general and special educators throughout the school building to increase their awareness of the school's AT inventory and possible uses for students in inclusive core academic classes.

Throughout this yearlong process, team members built their knowledge and skills with the following items:

- Audio Books and MP3 Player
- Carbonless Notebooks
- DigiMemo
- Don Johnston Start to Finish Books
- Ed Worksheets
- IntelliKeys
- iPad
- iPod Shuffle with Bookshare
- Livescribe Pulse Smartpen
- Mimio
- Read and Write Gold
- Type-O Word-Prediction Application  
on the iPod Touch
- Word Q and Inspiration





By the end of June 2011, the AT team had provided professional development covering:

- an overview of AT supports that could be utilized within English Language Arts, with a target audience of the 9th-grade English Department from both district high schools; and
- the use of Audiobooks, with a target audience of department chairs

### **Student Success: Identification, Trials, and Implementation**

The *Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist* (Appendix E) was completed for each student with an IEP and was prioritized by the student's annual Planning and Placement Team meeting date and/or a request made by staff or family members for the use of AT. Nineteen students benefitted from this process during the AT Team's initial year of operation; now the checklist is a routine part of the development of the annual IEP.

The *Assistive Technology Trial Use & Summary Form* (Appendix G), which was adapted from WATI, was completed for each student in need of AT identified through the *Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist*. Of the 19 students reviewed, 10 (53%) were recommended for AT trials.

One student, despite numerous AT trials and a variety of devices, refused to use AT. Another student continues to work with the AT team on securing the appropriate items to meet his needs. Despite numerous trials, an AT match has not yet been made that aligns this student's strengths, abilities, and needs. If this systematic approach does not result in an AT match, the student will be referred for a formal, comprehensive AT evaluation.

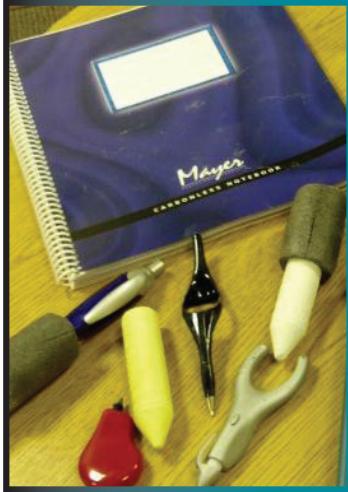
Possible AT solutions for the students included:

- Adaptive Switch for Computer\*
- Audiobooks\*
- Carbonless Notebook\*
- Computer with IntelliKeys\*
- Digital Player
- Dragon NaturallySpeaking
- Livescribe Pulse Smartpen\*
- Mat Bars, Automatic Soap Dispenser and Adaptive Faucet Handles\*
- Mimio and Cool Timer\*
- MP3 Player\*
- wordQ \*



The asterisk (\*) designates successful use of AT by the student. Most of these items fell within the low- and mid-tech range. Eight students continued to successfully use the identified AT.

## Student Success Stories



One student had extreme difficulty with handwriting. She could not write on or within the prescribed lines and wrote in large, unclear letters and numbers. After one of the first TA sessions, an AT team member borrowed the ergonomic pens and grips for trial use. Using the ergonomic PenAgain, the student was able to grasp the pen better and write straighter and smaller within a relatively short time. Staff and the student were encouraged that additional gains in this area were possible. Future goals for this student might include writing his name and identifying information, authoring a personal note, signing a bank check, and developing a grocery/shopping list.

A senior in high school (not receiving special education services) experienced two concussions within a short period of time, causing him to experience difficulty with memory, retention, and processing. This was a high-achieving student who had no difficulties prior to the concussions but was becoming increasingly frustrated by his new barriers. The AT team used the *Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist* and borrowed a Livescribe pen from its inventory. The student found he could relax while taking notes in class, confident that he could go back and listen to the audio recordings if he could not remember the information. He used the pen in all of his classes. At the end of the day, the student went to the resource room to transfer the data to a computer and e-mail them home for review and studying. He stated that the Livescribe pen was extremely helpful to him.



A student receiving special education services required one-on-one assistance with all writing assignments. Through the use of the *Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist* and AT device trial, an AT team member showed the student how to use the *wordQ word-prediction software program*. Instead of relying on a paraprofessional or other staff to help with his writing tasks, the student's requests changed to assistance in setting up his word bank and topic for the assignment. After instruction and practice, the student was able to use wordQ to independently generate sentences, choose words from the word bank to incorporate into his sentences, and listen to his sentences out loud for review.

## Summary/Conclusion

In order to provide effective AT services for students with disabilities district-wide, consideration must be given to establishing an AT team representative of all disciplines, including administrators. This model, as illustrated by the case study presented here, is instrumental in developing practices and structures that enhance the likelihood of the appropriate selection and use of AT by an identified student.

Of key importance was the administrative support for the AT team. High school staff from the Meriden school district initiated and completed the Request for Proposal for professional development and technical assistance offered through the CTTAP/SERC partnership. The staff then formed the AT team voluntarily and received support from administration. This support was evidenced by providing the team with:

- dedicated time to meet on a monthly basis;
- meeting space;
- resources to purchase identified AT equipment to add to the present inventory;
- ongoing professional development opportunities within the area of AT;
- additional staff diversity/expertise to the team, including curriculum specialists in the areas of English language arts and mathematics; and
- special education and related services participation from the other district high school and a middle school.

An administrator also participated in the professional development and bimonthly TA sessions provided by the CTTAP/SERC partnership. Her input and presence were critical to the continued sustainability of the AT team and the growth opportunity to expand this model to all schools in the district. AT team members effectively utilized support from administration, as evidenced by their:

- participation at several statewide conferences;
- high level of attendance and participation at bimonthly in-district professional development and TA sessions;
- acquisition of a working knowledge of the identified AT inventory; and
- consistent documented use of established AT team procedures to ensure educator accountability for student progress.

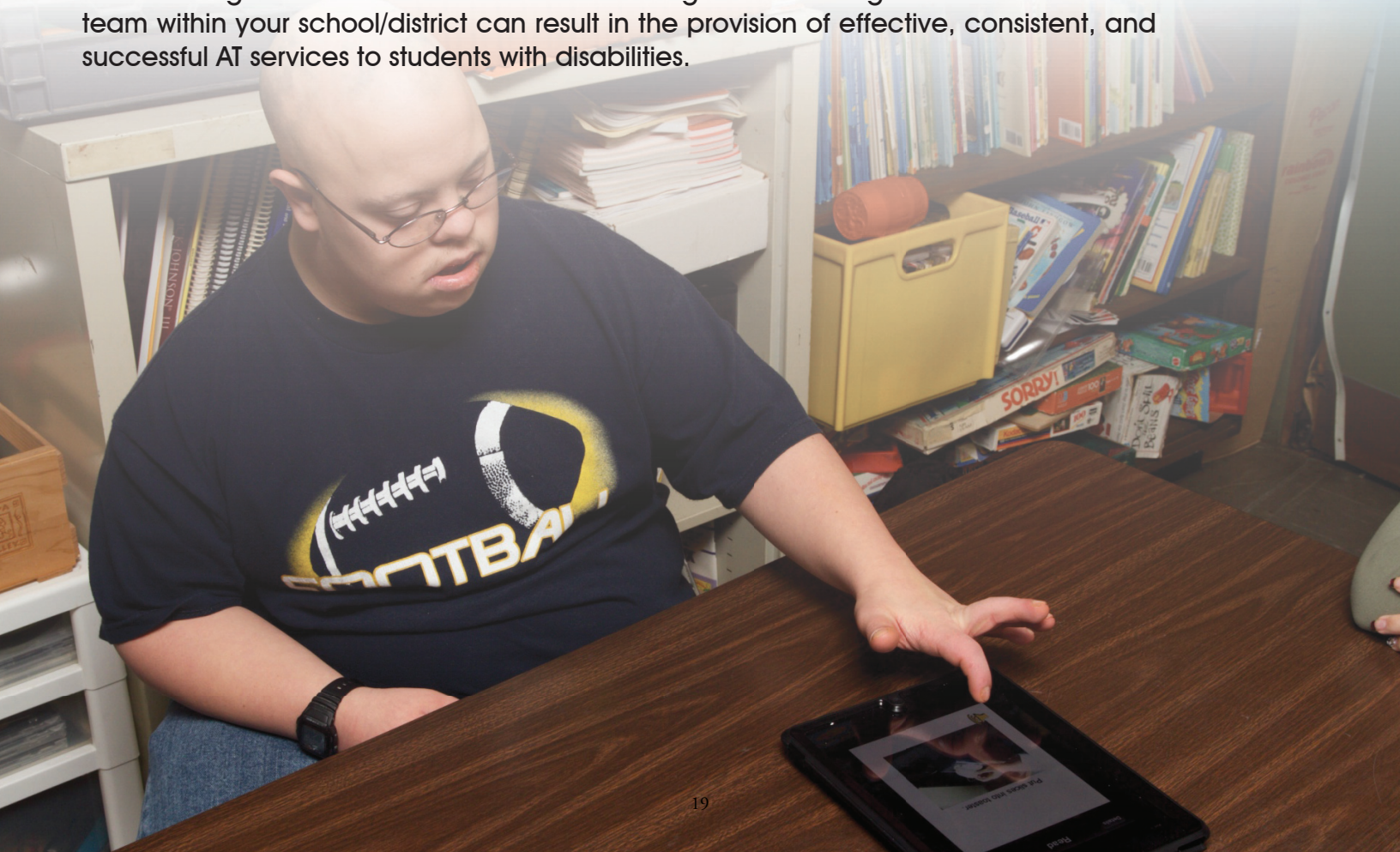


The identified selection and use of appropriate AT equipment by the AT team validated present research that indicates many AT solutions are not costly and can be classified as low- or mid-tech devices. During this two-year partnership, positive student outcomes were noted, and staff worked diligently with each identified student to find an AT match that would be accepted and used consistently. AT team members demonstrated an understanding of the consequences of AT abandonment by students, not only in terms of the negative impact on the district's stretched finances, but also on the loss of professional time spent researching possible AT solutions. Time and energy spent up front utilizing the *Assistive Technology Trial Use and Summary Form* documented student acceptance or refusal to use AT devices.

The QIAT was utilized effectively to review AT services and provided direction for continuing professional development and growth. The pre- and post-professional development scores suggest team members need and want additional professional development in AT. This conclusion coincides with the ever-changing, ever-growing availability of new and improved AT equipment on the market.

Secondary transition was naturally embedded in the AT team philosophy, as well as in its structures and practices. AT equipment was evaluated holistically: its effectiveness for use in the classroom, at home, and in the community and potential workplace/college setting.

In conclusion, possible AT solutions identified would enhance students' opportunities to access, participate in, and progress in the general education curriculum. The AT equipment was accepted and used by the identified students when they perceived the device as easy to learn (use) and socially acceptable (like typical peers) instead of something different from their classmates. Using this resource guide to establish an AT team within your school/district can result in the provision of effective, consistent, and successful AT services to students with disabilities.



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# Appendices

- Appendix A: Quality Indicators in Assistive Technology
- Appendix B: AT Tool Kit
- Appendix C: Platt High School Inventory
- Appendix D: Purchases at Platt High School 2009-11
- Appendix E: Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist
- Appendix F: Assistive Technology Team Meetings
- Appendix G: Assistive Technology Trial Use and Summary



## Quality Indicators in Assistive Technology

After reviewing the Quality Indicators for each area, record the self-rating numbers on this self-rating summary sheet. Enter variation numbers to the right of the appropriate indicator.  
All sections should be completed.

Rater's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District/School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

AREA: Consideration of AT Needs	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. Assistive technology devices and services are <u>considered for all students with disabilities</u> regardless of type or severity of disability.	
2. During the development of the individualized educational program, every IEP team consistently uses a <u>collaborative decision-making process</u> that supports systematic consideration of each student's possible need for assistive technology devices and services.	
3. IEP team members have the <u>collective knowledge and skills</u> needed to make informed assistive technology decisions and seek assistance when needed.	
4. Decisions regarding the need for assistive technology devices and services <u>are based on the student's IEP goals and objectives, access to curricular and extracurricular activities, and progress in the general education curriculum.</u>	
5. The IEP team <u>gathers and analyzes data</u> about the student, customary environments, educational goals, and tasks when considering a student's need for assistive technology devices and services.	
6. When assistive technology is needed, the IEP team <u>explores a range</u> of assistive technology devices, services, and other supports that address identified needs.	
7. The assistive technology consideration process and <u>results are documented</u> in the IEP and include a rationale for the decision and supporting evidence.	

AREA: Assessment of AT Needs	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. Procedures for all aspects of assistive technology assessment are clearly defined and consistently applied.	
2. Assistive technology assessments are conducted by a team with the collective knowledge and skills needed to determine possible assistive technology solutions that address the needs and abilities of the student, demands of the customary environments, educational goals, and related activities.	
3. 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.	
4. Assistive technology assessments, including needed trials, are completed within reasonable time lines.	
5. Recommendations from assistive technology assessments are based on data about the student, environments and tasks.	
6. 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.	
7. 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.	

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<b>AREA: Documentation in the IEP</b>	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. The education agency has guidelines for documenting assistive technology needs in the IEP and requires their consistent application.	
2. 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.	
3. 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.	
4. IEP content regarding assistive technology use is written in language that describes how assistive technology contributes to achievement of measurable and observable outcomes.	
5. Assistive technology is included in the IEP in a manner that provides a clear and complete description of the devices and services to be provided and used to address student needs and achieve expected results.	

<b>AREA: AT Implementation</b>	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. Assistive technology implementation proceeds according to a collaboratively developed plan.	
2. Assistive technology is integrated into the curriculum and daily activities of the student.	
3. Persons supporting the student across all environments in which the assistive technology is expected to be used share responsibility for implementation of the plan.	
4. 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.	
5. Learning opportunities for the student, family and staff are an integral part of implementation.	
6. Assistive technology implementation is initially based on assessment data and is adjusted based on performance data.	
7. Assistive technology implementation includes management and maintenance of equipment and materials.	

<b>AREA: Evaluation of Effectiveness</b>	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. Team members share clearly defined responsibilities to ensure that data are collected, evaluated, and interpreted by capable and credible team members.	
2. Data are collected on specific student behaviors that have been identified by the team and are related to one or more goal.	
3. Evaluation of effectiveness includes the quantitative and qualitative measurement of changes in the student's performance and achievement.	
4. Effectiveness is evaluated across environments during naturally occurring and structured activities.	
5. Data are collected to provide teams with a means for analyzing student achievement and identifying supports and barriers that influence assistive technology use to determine what changes, if any, are needed.	
6. 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.	
7. Evaluation of effectiveness is a dynamic, responsive, ongoing process that is reviewed periodically.	

<b>AREA: Assistive Technology Transition</b>	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. Transition plans address 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.	
2. Transition planning empowers the student using assistive technology to participate in the transition planning at a level appropriate to age and ability.	
3. Advocacy related to assistive technology use is recognized as critical and planned for by the teams involved in transition.	
4. AT requirements in the receiving environment are identified during the transition planning process.	
5. Transition planning for students using assistive technology proceeds according to an individualized timeline.	
6. Transition plans address specific equipment, training and funding issues such as transfer or acquisition of assistive technology, manuals and support documents.	

<b>AREA: Administrative Support</b>	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. 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, appropriate, public education (FAPE).	
2. The education agency broadly disseminates clearly defined procedures for accessing and providing assistive technology services and supports the implementation of those guidelines.	
3. The education agency includes appropriate assistive technology responsibilities in written descriptions of job requirements for each position in which activities impact assistive technology services.	
4. 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.	
5. The education agency includes assistive technology in the technology planning and budgeting process.	
6. The education agency provides access to on-going learning opportunities about assistive technology for staff, family, and students.	
7. The education agency uses a systematic process to evaluate all components of the agency-wide assistive technology program.	

<b>AREA: Professional Development and Training for AT</b>	
INDICATOR	Self-Rating #
1. 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.	
2. 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.	
3. The content of comprehensive AT professional development and training addresses all aspects of the selection, acquisition and use of assistive technology.	
4. AT professional development and training address and are aligned with other local, state and national professional development initiatives.	
5. Assistive technology professional development and training include ongoing learning opportunities that utilize local, regional, and/or national resources.	
6. Professional Development and Training in assistive technology follow research-based models for adult learning that include multiple formats and are delivered at multiple skill levels.	
7. The effectiveness of assistive technology professional development and training is evaluated by measuring changes in practice that result in improved student performance.	



**Appendix B: AT Tool Kit, 2007-08 Transition and Technology, 2008-09 Professional Development Training**

- Alphanumeric pad lock
  - AT&T Voices
  - Carbonless Notebook
  - Co-Writer (Solo)
  - Ergonomic Pen
  - Flash drive - preloaded
  - Fly Fusion Pen
  - iPod Shuffle
  - Locking Mobile Chest
  - Olympus 210 Digital Camera
  - Recorder
  - Retractable Highlighters
  - Text Aloud
  - Time Timer
  - Walkie Talkies
- 

**Appendix C: Platt High School Inventory through Observation**

**Reported AT Inventory**

- Level Communication Builder
- Adapted Equipment (scissors, paintbrushes, standers, etc.)
- Boardmaker
- Clarity
- Intellikeys
- Online Computer Games
- Picture Symbols
- Read 180
- Slant boards
- Switches
- System 44
- WriteToLearn

**Additional AT Inventory Found**

- Mimio Devices
  - Smart Boards
  - Adjustable Height Table
  - Bookshare Membership
  - Headsets
  - Laptops in the English Department
  - Microphones
  - Mounting Devices
  - RFB&D Membership
  - Victor Vibe Readers
  - Whiteboards
- 

**Appendix D: Purchases at Platt High School, 2009-11**

**Year 1**

- Carbonless Notebooks
- Ace Cad DigiMemo w/portfolio & MyScript
- edworksheets.com license
- Read & Write Gold Mobile
- Teen Tunes Plus
- Writing Flip Chart
- Grid Organizers
- Intellikeys
- Sight Words
- Using AT to Meet Literacy Standards (7-12)
- Using AT to Meet Math Standards

**Year 2**

- MP3 Players
- Headphones
- Earbuds
- Social Skill Picture Book
- iPad
- iPad Case

## Assistive Technology Consideration Checklist

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Please check (✓) the instructional or access areas in which the student is experiencing difficulty completing instructional tasks and/or meetings goals, benchmarks, or objectives. Record each of the checked areas in Column A of the boxes below (one area per box).  
 Writing                       Spelling                       Reading                       Math  
 Study/Organizational Skills                       Listening                       Oral Communication                       Seating/Positioning/Mobility  
 Daily Living Activities                       Recreation and Leisure                       Pre-vocational and Vocational                       Other Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Specify all relevant tasks (e.g. copying notes from board, responding to teacher questions, etc.) within each area in the space provided. Check the settings in which the task is required: GEC: General Education Classroom    SEC: Special Education Classroom    COM: Community    HOM: Home.
3. In Column B, specify the standard classroom tools (low technology to high technology) used by the student to complete relevant tasks identified in Column A. Place a check (✓) in the appropriate box in Column B regarding independence or lack of independence with the identified tasks using standard classroom tools. For areas in which the student can complete the tasks independently with standard classroom tools, it will not be necessary to complete Columns C-D.
4. In Column C, specify the accommodations/modifications and assistive technology solutions that are currently being utilized. Place a check (✓) in the appropriate box in Column B regarding independence or lack of independence with the identified tasks using the identified accommodations/modifications and assistive technology solutions.
5. Complete Column D if the student cannot adequately complete the task with accommodations/modifications and assistive technology solutions specified in column C.

A. Instructional or Access Areas	B. Independent with Standard Classroom Tools	C. Completes Tasks with Accommodations/Modifications and/or Assistive Technology Solutions Currently in Place		D. Additional Solutions/Services Considered including Assistive Technology
		Accommodations/Modifications	Assistive Technology Solutions	
<input type="checkbox"/> GEC <input type="checkbox"/> SEC <input type="checkbox"/> COM <input type="checkbox"/> HOM	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	
<input type="checkbox"/> GEC <input type="checkbox"/> SEC <input type="checkbox"/> COM <input type="checkbox"/> HOM	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	

A. Instructional or Access Areas	B. Independent with Standard Classroom Tools	C. Completes Tasks with Accommodations/Modifications and/or Assistive Technology Solutions Currently in Place		D. Additional Solutions/Services Considered Including Assistive Technology
		Accommodations/Modifications	Assistive Technology Solutions	
<input type="checkbox"/> GEC <input type="checkbox"/> SEC <input type="checkbox"/> COM <input type="checkbox"/> HOM	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	
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<input type="checkbox"/> GEC <input type="checkbox"/> SEC <input type="checkbox"/> COM <input type="checkbox"/> HOM	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Not Independent	

Consideration Outcomes:

- Student independently accomplishes tasks in all instructional areas using standard classroom tools. No assistive technology is required.
- Student accomplishes tasks in all instructional areas with accommodations and modifications. No assistive technology is required.
- Student accomplishes tasks in all instructional areas with currently available assistive technology. Assistive technology is required.
- Student does not accomplish tasks in all instructional areas. Required assistive technology devices are known. Assistive technology is required.
- Student does not accomplish tasks in all instructional areas. Appropriate assistive technology solutions are not known to the IEP team. Obtain additional assistance through consultation or refer for an assistive technology evaluation.

Specify any assistive technology services required by this student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Position	Name	Position



## Assistive Technology Team Meetings

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Members present: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_ Recorder: \_\_\_\_\_

### AT Team Capacity Building: Team members build knowledge & skills of AT devices

Staff Name	AT Device	Class Name	Duration of Use	Summary

### Upcoming PPT Meetings:

Upcoming PPT Dates	Student Name	AT Consideration Checklist Date to be Completed	Completed by:	Recommendations - AT is not needed - AT devices from inventory – Blue checklist - AT Eval (if checklist not working)

## Assistive Technology Team Meetings

**Review of AT Trial Use & Summary:**

Student Name	Grade Level	AT Device	AT Team Member	Summary (including frequency of use, duration, locations, outcomes) <i>Will report back after we complete checklist – record somewhere in IEP that it was completed ( mods page, page 2)</i>

**Staff training provided by AT Team: Yes  No**   
**(including department meetings, staff meetings, PD days)**

Trainer(s) name	Date	Time	Participant's Name/Position	AT Device(s)	Comments

**TO DO:**

**Parking Lot:**

**Updates:**

**Assistive Technology Trial Use & Summary – goes into student's file as part of the IEP**

## Assistive Technology Trial Use & Summary

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

AT Team Member(s) Completing Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

Task Being Addressed During Trial: \_\_\_\_\_

Classes: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria for Success (ex): \_\_\_\_\_

**Training by AT Team Member (including student, educator(s), para-professional, family member)**

Person(s) to be trained	Training Required (including set up, re-charge, troubleshoot, storage, program, etc)	Date Begun	Date Completed

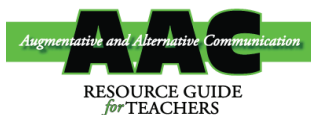
**To be completed by Implementer (educator, para-professional):**

AT Tried (2 week minimum)	Dates Used	Class(es)	Criteria Met?	Comments (including student's input, advantages, disadvantages, preferences, performance)

**Recommendations for IEP:** \_\_\_\_\_



Other AT/AAC documents available from SERC...



**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)** includes all forms of communication that can be used to enhance, substitute, and replace speech and voice.

The use of **AAC** to provide skills, concepts, communication, social interaction, school performance, and a feeling of self-worth.

**AAC** can be used to help people with CCHN see and communicate their voice.

**AAC** systems must be personalized to reflect individual interests and needs.

Sally Ward, Ph.D., Coordinator, State Education Resource Center, Middletown, CT  
 Sarah Orfanedes, M.Ed., Director, Coordinator, State Education Resource Center, Middletown, CT  
 David McLaughlin, Ph.D., Program, Coordinator, State Education Resource Center, Middletown, CT  
 Pam Kennedy, Manager, AAC, AEC, Vision Program

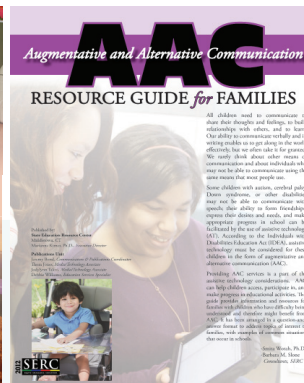
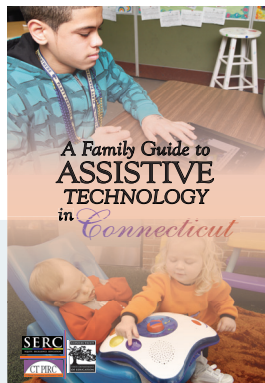
**SERC**  
2010

**Literacy and AAC**

Literacy plays an important role in all of our lives. It is an exciting and exciting skill to learn, and it is a skill that is essential for success in school, at work, and in life. Literacy is also an important skill for students who are augmentative and alternative communicators (AAC). For these individuals, literacy is not only important for work, school, and leisure, literacy also plays a key role in supporting communication with other people. By providing appropriate instruction and support, we can ensure that students who use AAC reap all of the benefits of literacy throughout their lives.

Sally Ward, Ph.D., Coordinator, State Education Resource Center, Middletown, CT  
 David McLaughlin, Ph.D., Program, Coordinator, State Education Resource Center, Middletown, CT

**SERC**  
2012



Also available in Spanish!

It is the policy of the State Education Resource Center (SERC) that no person shall be discriminated against or excluded from participation in any SERC programs or activities on the basis of race, color, language, religion, age, marital or civil union status, national origin, ancestry, sex/gender, intellectual disability, physical disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. Inquiries regarding SERC's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to Alfred P. Bruno, SERC General Counsel, at [bruno@ctserc.org](mailto:bruno@ctserc.org).



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For other Assistive Technology Resources, visit...

[www.cttechact.com](http://www.cttechact.com)

Connecting you to technology that connects you to a better life.

At the CT Tech Act Project, our goal is to increase independence at home, at work, and at school by making Assistive Technology more accessible. It's all in an effort to empower individuals with disabilities of all ages and abilities.

**What is Assistive Technology (AT)?**  
 Assistive Technology (AT) is any item or piece of equipment used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. AT devices can range from low-tech handheld magnifiers, canes or walkers to more high-tech equipment including power wheelchairs, digital hearing aids, specialized computers and software.

**What does CT Tech Act Project provide?**  
 The CT Tech Act Project offers individuals living with disabilities access to a wide range of assistive technology that can help improve their independence and overall quality of life. We provide information and access to family members, employers, educators and professionals as well. Working together, we can identify and connect you to the right pieces of technology and services.

**Our programs and services include:**  
**AT Device Demonstration Centers**  
 These locations offer individuals a chance to interact with AT devices while working with an expert to learn about features, compare similar devices and make an informed decision about whether a device is the right one for their needs.

Every day, new Assistive Technology is being developed to make the lives of people living with disabilities easier.





Connecticut Tech Act Project

