

Frequently Asked Questions about the Assistive Technology Assessment and Implementation Plan (ATIP)

“What is assistive technology?”

IDEA defines an assistive technology device as “any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that are used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.”

Some low, mid and high tech examples are:

- a page-up to hold paper upright for a student to read or copy from on the desk
- an augmentative communication device with recorded messages
- a laptop with Bookshare or Learning Ally (audio books) for access to reading materials

The definition concludes, “assistive technology devices are used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability”. Some items or tools may be used by anyone, but what makes them assistive technology is that they are needed by a student with a disability to access the curriculum.

IDEA defines “assistive technology service” as any service that helps a student with a disability select an appropriate assistive technology device, obtain the device or train the student to use the device.

“What is a LATS?”

A Local Assistive Technology Specialist (LATS) is a public school employee that has been designated by an ESE supervisor to provide comprehensive assistive technology services and devices/materials for students with disabilities (IEP, 504) served by the district. A LATS may be any professional within the district that has knowledge of state curriculum standards and/or access points, Exceptional Student Education (ESE), and familiarity with current technology tools. A LATS may be a teacher, a technology specialist, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a speech/language pathologist, or other designated personnel.

“What support services do the LATS provide in the schools?”

Specific LATS supports include:

- Technical assistance, information, and training regarding assistive technology assessment and implementation
- Assist school based teams to use instructional and assistive technologies to support ESE students.
- Assist school based teams to provide AT assessment, implementation, follow up, and documentation of AT in the IEP.
- Assist school based teams in collecting, documenting and managing data regarding AT tools and services (assessment, follow up, provision of devices/materials to students).

- Provide assistive technology tools/devices and assist school staff in accessing equipment from the state AT loan library.

“How do I get Assistive Technology for my student?”

In Miami-Dade County Public Schools, assistive technology for an ESE student is determined and provided using the AT assessment process. AT assessment consists of a device trial (or trials) within the student’s customary environments, using the Assistive Technology Assessment and Implementation Plan, FM 7067.

In addition, there are there are many low tech and high tech tools in M-DCPS classrooms that support ALL students:

- A graphic organizer may be a tool a teacher uses with all students in the class, but it may function as an AT support (or accommodation) for a student with a disability that affects his/her learning.
- Using MyOn Reader, any M-DCPS student can access audio books. But a student with a reading disability may need to access the built-in word/sentence highlighting to follow the text visually. This and many other features of MyOn support ALL students.
- Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office applications (on all computers, laptops and tablets in the district) have a number of accessibility features built in.

“Where can I find out what AT is available?”

The ATIP, FM 7067, is full of possible AT tools for you and the student’s support team to consider. You will notice on page 2 a number of tools you may consider. Some of the options are in bold, blue font. Those are live web links to information, photos or free downloads to get you started on your student trials. The key to using these links is to read and use the ATIP “live” on your computer.

“How do I obtain an AT device for the school based 60 day trial period if we do not have it at our school?”

If you choose a tool that you think will support your student, but you do not have access to that tool at your school, the LATS will assist you in obtaining it.

“How do I get a specific device?”

If a student has been documented to be successfully using a specific tool or device in another district or at home, and if that device was significantly customized or programmed, a comparable device will be provided for a trial in the student’s current educational environment. If the student has not yet successfully used the requested device, the Student Support Team, including a LATS if needed, will commence a trial with that tool or with another appropriate comparable device.

“Can my child bring a device from home?”

M-DCPS is a Bring Your Own Device district, so students can bring personal devices to school. Please see http://wifi.dadeschools.net/BYOD_faqs.asp for requirements and permission form. In

addition, a student **may**, but **is not required to** use a personal device as his/her assistive technology. If a student/family-owned device is not used in school, the district will provide an appropriate device.

“Who is responsible for filling out/completing the ATIP?”

The Assistive Technology Assessment and Implementation Plan (ATIP, for short) is a problem-solving document, **NOT** just a “form to fill out”. Best practices in special education require that no single person does AT assessment. No team member completes the ATIP alone. There may be one person on the team that writes, types or submits the form, but all relevant staff play a role in planning and carrying out the AT assessment.

AT assessment is carried out by the support personnel - teacher(s), therapist(s), family member(s), etc. - that are most familiar with the student’s needs.

“When does the timeline start?”

House Bill 1255, Section 24 Assistive, Technology – Amended Memo, requires that if an IEP team makes a recommendation for a student with a disability to receive an assistive technology assessment, that assessment must be completed within 60 school-days. The **first full school day after a parent/guardian gives consent** by signing FM 7641 (Notice of Intent and Parental Consent to Conduct an Assistive Technology Assessment) is counted as “Day 1”. The assessment team will determine the end of the assessment period by counting 60 days that school is in session (no weekends, holidays, Teacher Planning Days, etc.). The 60-day timeline **cannot** be adjusted due to student absence.

“How long is the trial period?”

The timeline = the trial period = (up to) 60 school days. If the team has enough data to decide on the appropriate AT tool for a student prior to the end of the 60 school days, the trial may be stopped and the tool may be added to the student’s IEP.

“Do we have to wait 60 days to get a device?”

Absolutely NOT. In fact, securing/obtaining a device, tool, or material is necessary to begin the trial. The “60 school days” refers to the conclusion of the trial(s) and the decision of the assessment team.

“What do you mean by ‘data’?”

Data is evidence you will collect to show the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the AT tool used in the trial. As you will see below, it is evidence that is typically collected as part of quality teaching and therapy practices. The type of data depends on the task and AT tool. Below are some examples:

- classwork/test grades
- comprehension scores
- participation in group discussions
- completion of assignments

- number of communication exchanges or increased length/detail of messages communicated
- reduced assistance needed to complete work
- less time needed to complete work
- percentage of tasks completed on time/at scheduled time

“Who teaches the student how to use his technology?”

Teaching the student how to use the technology within the curriculum is the shared responsibility of the school support team (teacher, therapist, parent, etc.) with the support of a LATS when requested.

“When is the form done? What do we do with it?”

The form, FM 7067 Assistive Technology Assessment and Implementation Plan, is the AT assessment document. At the conclusion of the AT trial(s), the team will complete page 7 – “Assistive Technology Assessment Report” to document:

- the tool used in the trial
- the task the tool supports
- the environment (class, home, specific classes)
- set up/support needed by the student to be successful
- the school support team member(s) who will provide support
- the level of support needed

Next, an IEP meeting is held to document the student’s need for assistive technology tools and supports as a result of the assessment.

“How often do we need to review the ATIP?”

At least yearly, as part of the annual IEP meeting, more often if needed.

“Where is the report? Who will provide a report to the parent?”

Page 3 OF THE ATIP IS THE REPORT – “Assistive Technology Assessment Report” - and, once completed, it is reviewed at an IEP meeting and goes in the student’s cumulative folder. The school team is responsible for the report, for carrying out the plan, and for providing a copy to the parent.

“Do I need to do an ATIP if the student is bringing the device from home?”

Yes – If a student with an IEP uses a personal (family owned) technology device to access his/her IEP goals and/or cannot access the curriculum without the technology device, it is the student’s assistive technology and needs to be documented on the IEP. If, at any time, the student/family decide not to use that device at school, the district must provide an appropriate AT tool.

“The student has a device from home but they want us to provide one. What do I do?”

Contact the AT department at assistivetech@dadeschools.net to request LATS assistance in providing what the student needs.

“Does a student that has difficulty writing but types well on a classroom computer and has the accommodation, “keyboarding as an alternative to writing” on his IEP or 504 need an ATIP?”

The ATIP does not replace IEP accommodations. A student who needs accommodations using technology does not need an ATIP to receive those accommodations. For example, a student who has an accommodation for typing written work may not need an ATIP if the accommodation solves the student’s problem of access.

Does a student need to be receiving therapy (speech/language, physical, occupational) to receive assistive technology?

The need for, or the use of, assistive technology is not tied to a student’s services. A student does not need to be receiving Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, or Speech/Language Therapy to receive/use assistive technology.

Is an ATIP required for a student to receive test accommodations?

No, accommodations for standardized tests are generally incorporated into the tests if they are computer-based, or can be specially requested if they are considered unique accommodations.