Assistive Technology FAQs
As of 6/15/15

1. What is the definition of Assistive Technology?
- technology used because there is no other way the student can make adequate progress on goals or access general curriculum

Assistive Technology (AT) is defined as both a "device" and a "service." According to IDEA 2004, an "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." An assistive technology service is defined as "any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device" (IDEA 2004). AT devices and services can be used to assist students in making adequate progress toward IEP goals, as well as provide access to general education instruction and content. Per IDEA 2004, local education agencies must consider assistive technology needs when developing IEPs for all students with disabilities.

2. If technology is available to all students, when do you have to put it on the IEP?

It becomes "Assistive Technology" and must go on the IEP if the team has determined that the student needs it in order to have a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), even if the technology is available to all students. Otherwise, the student might move out of the district, to a district that does not have the technology available to all students and it would not be clear from the IEP that the receiving district must provide the (assistive) technology to the student.

3. Does AT Consideration need to be done at each IEP meeting?

Yes! – AT must be considered annually for all students on IEPs/IFSPs, starting prior to their annual IEP due date. This is

a Federal Law. Use the SCRED AT Consideration Form to do this. Remember that only a few students will go the formal AT Evaluation route, using the SETT process.

4. Do we have to consider AT for each evaluation?

Yes. Use the AT Flow Chart to decide what to do for the evaluation plan. This needs to happen prior to sending out the evaluation plan.

5. When do we need to do the SCRED SETT Framework (formal evaluation) instead of the consideration process for a comprehensive evaluation?

For a comprehensive evaluation, the team can decide to use the SCRED AT Consideration Form or the SCRED SETT Framework. Use the SCRED AT Flow Chart to determine which of these is needed.

6. How do we document the consideration of AT on the evaluation report?

There is a section in the SpEd Forms ESR template that specifically addresses the outcome of the AT Consideration. The AT Section of the ESR template also includes a prompt at the bottom to insert the SCRED SETT Framework from the local test bank for those cases in which a formal AT evaluation was part of the evaluation plan.

7. How do we determine if a student needs a formal evaluation (SCRED SETT Framework)?

Use the SCRED AT Flow Chart to guide the consideration process for every evaluation plan to determine when a formal evaluation is needed.

8. What if the student uses technology but the parents purchased it?

- How do we document this?
- What happens if it is stolen, broken, or lost - is the school liable to replace it?

If the parents are providing it, and the team determines that it is necessary for the student to receive FAPE, it must be written into the IEP, and the school would be responsible for repairing/replacing it.

If the device is not determined to be necessary for the student to receive FAPE, but the parents choose to send it to school with their child, the district is not responsible if it's lost/stolen/broken. Local districts are working to address the issue of responsibilities when students (IEP and non-IEP) choose to bring technology to school.

9. At any IEP meeting, who is going to be the person who knows what AT ought to be considered?

AT is the responsibility of everyone on the student's IEP team. It's a broad issue (36,000 plus items), so we all need to work toward becoming more familiar with the AT available in our respective areas: teachers, collaborative planners, Low Incidence staff, etc.

Reading the ATFYI newsletter that comes out monthly, as well as copies of past newsletters is a good place to start. The state of Minnesota has an AT Listserv that you can join. The QIAT Listserv is the preeminent AT listserv, but be prepared to receive many emails a day!

One website that lists the multitude of available devices and allows you to search based on the student's identified need area is www.abledata.com.

10. What if all trials fail to make a difference?

This may happen; the outcome is that the AT tried did not result in an increase in the student's functional capacity/performance on IEP goals. Teams should continue to problem-solve regarding ways to improve student progress – instructional changes, try new technology as it becomes available, consider conducting formal AT evaluation, etc.

11. What if we want to try another device later - do we have to have another IEP meeting? Amendment to IEP?

Teams are always trying out different things with students, so you may continue to do that. If you want to trial something that could be considered "invasive"/something that may impact the student's physiology (e.g., OT/sensory) or is a "big deal" item (expensive device), it is best practice to talk with the parent in advance so they know what's going on and can give their ok (document contact in the communication log). When/if the team determines that the student needs the AT device for FAPE is when you should add AT to the IEP through an IEP meeting or the amendment process including a Prior Written Notice.

12. How long do trials have to be? How many data points in trials?

This is up to the team to decide; collect enough data to help you make the determination of whether or not the device/s result in student progress that cannot be achieved through other interventions/devices (remember that we want to go with the most cost-effective/low-tech device available).

13. Staff need to have access to various devices in order to do trials, how will we provide for that?

This can be challenging – if you become aware of AT devices in your area that are innovative/new, talk with your Collaborative Planner about the possibility of SCRED loaning or purchasing the item.

Inventories have been completed in the member districts to promote within-district sharing and possibly, sharing across SCRED districts. SCRED is also working on a better system for making our inventory list more easily accessible.

PACER, UCP, the Metro intermediate units, etc. may have devices to trial. Also, the companies themselves may offer free trials for computer software or free/low cost trials for their mid- and high-tech devices.

14. Does AT have to be listed on the Prior Written Notice?

The ongoing AT that is listed on the IEP doesn't have to be re-listed, but yes, document that AT was considered and the outcome. If there was a specific plan to trial a device(s), give the outcome(s), other options considered, or note when the trial will end/how the outcome of the trial will be reported. IEP decisions to provide new AT to a student should be documented on the PWN.

15. What is the time frame for an AT Evaluation?

Like any other evaluation, you have 30 school days to complete a formal AT Evaluation, which should include the SETT Process and any other appropriate assessment tools. The purpose of the evaluation is to describe the student's current skills and needs and to identify the features that a device should have. Although device trials may be started during that time frame, they may continue beyond the due date, because they are interventions. Or, device trials may be implemented after the evaluation has been completed.

16. Can an AT Evaluation "stand-alone" or must it be a part of a "full/comprehensive eval?"

It must be incorporated into a comprehensive evaluation,

which may be comprised of review of records for the other areas addressed. However, your current levels must be updated and eligibility criteria must be readdressed.

17. When is medical equipment, etc considered AT? If so, should the device be documented somewhere in addition to the Individualized Health Plan?

No. Medical equipment goes in the student's IHP.

18. What are the general rules for documenting AT on a student's IEP?

- **Identify the FEATURES of the device(s) (vs. device names) needed by the student in the accommodations section.**
- **Major items that relate to the student's functional capacity should be listed in the PLAAFP.**
- **Training for student/staff re: how to use a device could be reflected as service minutes on the IEP service grid, if it is not already included in a service provider's service time.**
- **Bringing in a person on a short-term basis for training staff could be listed under "Program Supports for School Personnel" section.**
- **The team needs to consider/decide how to include the device/service aspects of AT on the student's IEP.**

19. When a family requests an AT Evaluation, is it appropriate to start with our AT Consideration Form/Process?

Yes, that's exactly where to start; parents may request an evaluation and our obligation is to consider that request in the context of an IEP Team Meeting. Working through the AT Consideration Form will provide objective support re: whether a Formal AT Eval is needed. If the decision is that no evaluation is needed, document that and reasons on a Prior

Written Notice.