



DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

Vol. 4, No. 1

August 1997

What Can You Do With a Switch?

by Susan Strejc, OTR, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

Editor's Note: This piece was originally published on The Alliance for Technology Access (ATA) web site at <http://www.ataccess.org>. Please see the end of the article for information about contacting the ATA.

Meet Jonathan, a five-year old Kindergarten student with a quick, engaging smile! Jonathan also has lots of courage and is a power user of technology.

Medically speaking, Jonathan is ventilator-dependent and has quadriplegia. He is able to move his head, but has no movement from his neck down. A nurse is with him at school, assisting with his physical needs. With the help of a committed family and school team, positive attitudes and some adaptive technology, Jonathan has successfully been included in a general education Kindergarten classroom in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools.

In September of 1995, when Jonathan began attending a Preschool Exceptional Children's classroom at Reid Park Preschool, his School Based Team included his parents, the teacher, physical therapist and myself, the occupational therapist. We all immediately began working on low- and high-tech strategies that might allow Jonathan to experience success with the curriculum and participate equally with his fellow students.

Jonathan, his mother, nurse, and the rest of the team visited CCAC [Carolina Computer Access Center] in October of that year to determine the most effective way for him to use a computer. A sensitive switch mounted on the end of a flexible gooseneck rod (Ultimate Switch by Enabling Devices) was felt to be the easiest for Jonathan to use at that time, since his neck muscles were weak. The switch was positioned so he pushed it with his chin. With the addition of a Macintosh Interface and switch-compatible software (Blocks in Motion by Don Johnston Inc.), Jonathan used the classroom computer as well as other electronic devices like a tape player. In fact, Jonathan was the "Music Master" when the class played Musical Chairs and he operated the blender for many cooking activities.

Please see Jonathan on Page 6



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My Dear Friends



8/97

This issue of *DIRECTIONS* begins our 4th year of publication. WOW! When I look back just 4 short years ago, I don't think I was really sure that our newsletter for parents and teachers of kids with disabilities was going to make it for very long. Assistive Technology was a relatively new area, but we knew that we had something to say! Self publishing is also expensive. But we wanted very much to keep our subscription costs low so that our information could be available to all. (This meant we had a very creative budget!) But here we are going strong, and reaching a large number of parents, teachers, therapists and administrators each month! Thank you to all of you for helping us turn our idea into a vehicle that continues to help you with your assistive technology issues and concerns.

This new volume contains a new format for our Conferences & Events section. We will be listing conferences for the next 3 months in order to give you more time to plan your schedules. Also, we are trying to include e-mail and web addresses with each article so that more of you can contact these agencies electronically for more information.

Finally, along with a new volume of *DIRECTIONS*, comes the end of the summer with kids home, scrambled schedules, muggy nights and bugs. And, although I look forward to the beautiful autumn colors and the glorious cool fresh air, I will miss the hectic (dishes always dirty) household, the plans gone awry for some spur of the moment fishing expedition, and the heat from good old Mr. Sunshine! (I can guarantee you though, I will definitely NOT miss the bugs <vbg>!

Kind Regards,

Janet

DIRECTIONS

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IDEA Sails Through Congress!

Source: CEC Today Vol. 3, No 10

After 2 years of struggle and a last-minute spat in the Senate, the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) sailed through both Houses of Congress. As this issue of *CEC Today* goes to press, we are waiting for President Clinton, who has expressed his support for the bill, to sign the legislation into law.

“This law will serve students with disabilities well into the next century” said Joseph Ballard, CEC’s Director of Public Policy.” It moves our focus from ensuring students with disabilities receive educational services to ensuring they have the supports they need to learn and achieve in appropriate educational settings. CEC is proud to have helped lead the way in this important legislation.”

The legislation marks a new milestone in its compromise measure on discipline. The law protects the educational rights of students with disabilities who are violent or dangerous while enabling educators to more easily remove such students from their current educational placement. The bill also requires schools to include students with disabilities in local, state, and district assessments, thus ensuring accountability for students with special needs, and increases the amount of information to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). In another change from the previous legislation, the bill requires states to provide mediation for parents and schools to more easily resolve differences about a child’s placement.

To address the cost of special education, the new legislation revamps

the way schools receive federal funding. Rather than using a child count formula as the basis for special education funding, the new bill will gradually base new federal aid on census data and account more accurately for poverty. In addition, the legislation makes provisions to reduce the financial burden of special education on local districts by permitting them to share the costs of services such as assistive technology devices, supplementary aids and services, related services, and transition services with other agencies.

CEC is pleased that many of its recommendations, made in 1994 when IDEA first came up for reauthorization, have been enacted. In addition to many of the provisions mentioned above, CEC also advocated for, among others, the following changes in the law: allowing children with disabilities ages 3-9 to be identified as developmentally delayed, new mechanisms to support professional development for special educators, reasonable attorney fees, and the appropriate inclusion of general education teachers on WP teams.

What Does the IDEA Reauthorization Mean to Teachers?

The new law offers special education teachers several advantages. Though the reauthorization ensures that schools cannot terminate educational services for students with disabilities, it makes it easier to remove dangerous or violent students with special needs from the classroom and ensures those students receive appropriate educational interventions. In the new legislation, students who are involved with drugs,

as well as children who bring weapons to school, can be removed from the current educational setting.

The reevaluation process also has undergone significant revision. Rather than a mandated complete evaluation process every 3 years, the WP team and a student’s parents can identify what further data is needed to ensure the student is in the best program. Therefore, only part of the assessment process - or none - may be conducted, depending on the student’s needs. This change can save educators and districts time and money, and students will not lose valuable class time for testing they don’t need.

The new IDEA legislation also ensures that states provide more mechanisms for general and special education teachers to receive quality professional development to learn about the newest advances in the field.

Teachers may find that further professional development is necessary to meet the demands of the reauthorization’s IEP requirements. These requirements ask teachers to address the areas of behavior intervention, transition, and assessment in the IEP and provide implementation strategies in the classroom. These changes will make IEPs more complete and complex. It will also likely add to the time it takes to write them.

Highlights of the Bill Discipline

*The school’s authority to place students with disabilities in alternative placements

Please see IDEA on Page 8

ATFSCP Notes

The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project

http://www.ucpa.org/html/innovative/atfsc_index.html

ACQUISITION, PLANNING AND PROCUREMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS PART I

By Susan Goodman, Esq.

The procurement process by which school districts identify and purchase goods and services including educational technology, has been identified as a major challenge to broadening access to technology for students with disabilities. Decision making at the initial stages of procurement often determines whether the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities will be easily met or whether access will be a long, difficult process if it can be achieved at all. It is a timely issue now because so much money is being spent at the federal and state level on school technology and "wiring the school" initiatives. This technology includes computers, Internet access multimedia software, and other similar items. Despite advocacy efforts around school technology, procurement is seldom mentioned. For most advocates, it remains a mysterious process.

Procurement has several meanings. In education, procurement means obtaining a particular device, such as a computer, desk, audio/visual equipment, or other instructional devices and equipment, or supplies used in the school. It can also mean the purchase of whole systems like databases, word processing or other technology systems. For students with disabilities, the issues surrounding procurement include ensuring that programs and services offered by the school will be accessible to them. This means that any piece of equipment bought by the school system needs to be accessible. It also means educating

the "regular education" technology decision makers about meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

In this paper, we will give an example of how procurement works; discuss the effect of federal laws on the process of procurement; identify barriers to procurement of accessible technology; examine a system in which these barriers are being overcome; and, recommend actions that will influence decision making at this important level.

ACQUISITION SYSTEMS

The technology acquisition process varies greatly from state to state. The purchase of technology may be the function of the local school, the school district, a group of schools in cooperating school districts, or area education agencies. Decisions about technology may be made by staff in individual departments, a department representative, or by a technology director. Items may be acquired by purchase orders. If items are needed which require bids from vendors, a Request for Proposal (RFP) or other invitation to bid is developed by a designated individual. The RFP is then published in the local newspaper, or otherwise disseminated to the potential bidder community. After bids are received by the school district, a decision is made about whom the vendor will be. The item is "then purchased.

The critical point of decision-making

about what to purchase, of course is made at the initial stages of the process.

This is the point at which the needs of individuals with disabilities must be considered. Unfortunately, the decision makers are often not aware of, and therefore have not considered, the accessibility issues for persons with disabilities. Equipment is seldom purchased with these needs in mind, although schools are required by law to ensure equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

Federal and state educational technology initiatives make it critical that these issues are considered. Because a large amount of federal and state funds are allocated for the purchase of technology, advocacy by the disability community is greatly needed during the decision making process. School districts are required by law to make services and programs (which includes equipment) accessible to students with disabilities. This does not mean that every computer must be accessible or able to be accessed. It means that the student must have the same opportunities to use a computer as students without disabilities. However, often a great deal of money is spent on technology that is not accessible. Inaccessible technology is often, at great expense, "retrofitted" (if it can be at all) to meet the varying needs of students with disabilities. This requires yet another expenditure of

funds. It also results in frustration for those who must “retrofit” the technology for the individuals that might have been avoided with some forethought. Considering the needs of individuals with disabilities at the outset benefits everyone involved and is often more cost efficient.

To help advocates become involved in the procurement process, understanding what barriers exist is helpful and what laws are relevant.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Several federal laws ensure access to information technology for individuals with disabilities. Some laws specifically address the rights of individuals with disabilities to access to information technology and telecommunications devices. Most of these laws apply to both schools and educational services.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. ~794)

The Rehabilitation Act is well known in the disability community because Title I of the Act, (34 C.F.R. Part 361) provides grants to states to furnish employment-related vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to eligible individuals with disabilities. However, there are two other important sections of this law that have a great impact on the issues of equal access and opportunity for individuals with disabilities. These sections are: 1) Section 504 which prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities by recipients of federal funds; and 2) Section 508 which requires federal agencies to purchase equipment

(including hardware or software) that is or can be made fully accessible.

Section 504

Section 504 provides, in relevant part, that “no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance...”. Regulations implementing Section 504 prohibit recipients of federal financial assistance from affording a “qualified individual with a disability” with an opportunity to participate in or benefit from an aid, benefit or service to that is not equal to that afforded others, or to provide a student with a disability with an aid, benefit or service that is not equal to that afforded to others. 34 C. F. R. 104.4(b) (ii)-(iii).

This requirement applies to schools because they are recipients of federal funds. Therefore, a student with a disability must have the same opportunity to benefit from a program or service as a student without disabilities. Access barriers to telecommunications and information technology must be removed to give students with disabilities these opportunities. For example, if students in a school can access the Internet through computers that are available to them for one hour per day, a student with a disability must have the same access. If a computer needs an adaptation to make it accessible, it must be provided.

Section 504 provides an enforcement process for individuals who believe they have been discriminated against because of their disability. When an individual believes that discrimination has occurred, they may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

(OCR) in their region. The OCR has 11 regional offices located throughout the country. The OCR will investigate complaints and make findings about acts of discrimination. An attorney is not needed to file a complaint with the OCR. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the OCR findings or wishes to pursue action further, s/he may sue the school in court.

Section 504 also requires that schools provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for individuals with disabilities. 34 O. F. R. §104.33 *et seq.* Access to the basic technology infrastructure system may be required to provide FAPE, but will also go far towards avoiding a discrimination claim and the need for retrofitting (causing more expense) after the purchase is made.

Section 508 (29 U.S.C. ~794d)

This section of The Rehabilitation Act requires that federal agencies and contractors (because they act on behalf of the federal agency) purchase and use electronic equipment and information technology that is or can be made fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. It also mandates that guidelines be developed for federal agencies’ purchase of accessible technology. Individuals with disabilities.

In other words, Federal agencies are required by law to ensure that equipment (including software) and technology purchased by them is accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. The General Services Administration in

Please see ATFSCP on Page 9

Jonathan Continued from Page 1

His long-awaited power wheelchair came in February of 1995. Using a chin control (he was a pro by then!), he practiced cruising down the school hallways with his physical therapist by his side. As his neck strength and head control improved, the Team decided a head pointer would give Jonathan a more direct option for using the computer keyboard. He had already tried a commercially available (Zygo) head pointer for manipulating materials in class and for doing art work. I collaborated with another local occupational therapist to make a customized one. This gave Jonathan even more opportunities to use the computer, turn book pages, activate push-button toys and play games. Now he was a real technology power user! He worked with his head pointer throughout the summer and started Kindergarten in 1996, excited and anxious about new adventures.

In his Reid Park Elementary classroom this year, Jonathan participates in the usual Kindergarten activities, including Circletime, Centers, and French. He answers questions, recites, and directs his classmates (although never out of turn!). Some of his high-tech tools are a Ke:nx interface by Don Johnston Inc, and a Tash Mini Keyboard, used with his customized head pointer. Often Jonathan works cooperatively with a friend at the computer for literacy and math activities. He is also learning to maneuver his power wheelchair carefully within his classroom. Sometimes he even plays "catch me" during recess with his friends and teachers.

I think I can speak for Jonathan's Team when I say that he truly is an

example of the power that technology can bring to a child with a severe physical disability. Our Team will continue to learn and adapt to Jonathan's changing needs, helping him participate to his maximum potential in each new school adventure. As technology advances and the academic demands of each grade level change, we all will be seeking even better ways for him to become a successful and contributing student. Jonathan and his Team are looking forward to the challenge! §

The Mission of The Alliance for Technology Access

The Alliance for Technology Access (ATA) seeks to redefine human potential by making technology a regular part of the lives of people with disabilities. The ATA is accomplishing this by raising public awareness and implementing programs and initiatives that provide access to conventional, assistive and information technologies, related services and resources.

Headquartered in San Rafael, CA, the Alliance for Technology Access is a national network of technology resource centers and technology vendors: 41 community-based technology centers in 27 states and the Virgin Islands, and 60 technology designers and developers.

ATA technology resource centers help children and adults with disabilities, (parents, teachers, employers, and others to explore computer systems, adaptive devices and software. Centers directly serve over 100,000 people annually and impact the lives of another 300,000 people by working with teachers and other professionals.

The technology tools to turn dreams into realities for people with disabilities exist. It is the job of the ATA to make these tools available on a vastly larger scale than they are today.

Guiding Principles

The Alliance for Technology Access operates in accordance with the following values:

*People with disabilities have the right to maximum independence and participation in all environments, without barriers.

*Technology can be harnessed to diminish or eliminate environmental barriers for people with disabilities.

*People with disabilities have the right to control and direct their own choices, and the right to access the information they need in order to make informed decisions according to their goals and interests.

*People with disabilities have the right to employ assistive technologies, strategies for implementation, and necessary training support to maximize their independence and productivity.

Please contact the Alliance for Technology Access for further information.

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San Rafael, CA 94939
(415) 455-4575 §

The National Center to Improve Practice (NCIP)

The National Center to Improve Practice (NCIP) promotes the effective use of technology to enhance educational outcomes for students with sensory, cognitive, physical and social/emotional disabilities.

The National Center to Improve Practice seeks to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities by promoting the effective use of assistive and instructional technologies among educators and related personnel serving these students.

In order to accomplish this goal NCIP is creating a national community of educators - technology coordinators, staff developers, teachers, specialists, clinicians, administrators, university faculty, advocates and consumers - who play a leading role in promoting and implementing assistive and instructional technologies for students with disabilities at a local, regional or national level.

To support this community, NCIP:

*Links community members through a series of facilitated discussion forums known as NCIPnet, which provide opportunities to exchange information and build knowledge through collaborative dialogue. In a field that is rapidly changing, NCIPnet offers the community current up-to-date information and guidance from practitioners, researchers, advocates, and consumers, who are grappling with related issues.

*Gathers, synthesizes, and disseminates information about technology, disabilities, practice, and implementation through a broad range of resources located in the NCIP Library.

*Offers a series of video profiles which vividly illustrate how students with differing disabilities use a range of assistive and instructional technologies to improve their learning. Each video, approximately 10 minutes in length, is accompanied by supporting print materials which explore topics more fully.

NCIP, located at Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) in Newton, MA, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP), Grant #HI 80N20013.

NCIP

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<http://www.edc.org/FSC/NCIP/> §

Conferences & Events

Date: September 18

Assistive Technology Trade Fair.
New Haven CT. Contact: 860-298-2043

Date: September 22-24

Technology and Inclusion Fifth Annual Conference. Austin, TX.
Contact: 512-891-9288;
TAICenter@aol.com

Date: September 25

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) Annual Conference.
Dover, DE. Contact 302-651-6790

Date: October 16-19

6th Annual Florida Assistive Technology Impact Conference (FATIC). Orlando, FL
Contact: 813-781-1239;
104325.74@compuserve.com;
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/FATIC/>

Date: October 23-25

14th Annual Closing the Gap Conference. Minneapolis, MN.
Contact: 507 -248-3294;
info@closingthegap.com; <http://www.closingthegap.com>

Date: November 9-11

New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education: Innovations '97, 32nd Annual Conference. Buffalo, NY.
Contact: 800-479-4830;
nyscate@aol.com

Date: November 12-16

American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (MPM&R) Assembly. Atlanta, GA.
Contact: 312-464-9700

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for up to 45 days would be expanded to include students who “knowingly” possess, use, or sell illegal drugs. (Currently, schools can place students with disabilities in alternative settings if they carry weapons.)

*If it is determined that the child’s behavior was not a manifestation of the child’s disability, the child may be disciplined in the same manner as a child without a disability. However, educational services would not be terminated for children with disabilities.

*For a child who is a danger to self or others, hearing officers, not just courts, could order an emergency change in a student with a disability’s placement when parents disagree with the placement.

*The IEP teams must determine the student’s interim alternative education setting (IAES). The IAES selected must enable the child to continue to participate in the general curriculum, receive services and modifications that will enable him or her to meet the IEP goals, and include services and modifications designed to address the problem behavior.

Performance Goals and Indicators

States would be required to establish performance goals for children with disabilities and develop indicators to judge their progress.

States must require that children with disabilities, with accommodations where necessary, be included in state- and district-wide assessment programs by 1998. Alternative assessments must be developed for children who cannot

participate in regular assessments by July 1, 2000. Schools must report the results (protecting the identity of individual children).

The IEP

Under the new legislation, the IEP will include the following:

A statement of the student’s present level of functioning and measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives. The IEP will also explain how the student’s disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

*At age 14, a statement of the student’s transition service needs. The transition services would focus on the student’s course of study such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational program.

*An explanation of the extent to which a student will not participate in the general education class.

*Any modifications the student will need to participate in state or district-wide assessments. If the IEP team determines that the student will not participate in the assessment, the IEP will include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate and how the student will be assessed.

*The projected date for the beginning of a special education services and modifications and their anticipated frequency, location, and duration.

*A statement of how the student’s progress toward the annual goals will be measured and how the student’s parents will be regularly informed (which must

be as often as general education students’ parents are informed of their child’s progress). The IEP will also state the extent to which students must progress to achieve their goals by the end of the year.

The IEP Team

The bill expands the number of members required on an IEP team. The IEP team will consist of a special and, where appropriate, a general education teacher; an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results; the student’s parents; a special education administrator; and, at the discretion of the parent or the school, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student.

Development of the IEP

A new section of IDEA outlines what the IEP team should consider when developing a student’s IEP including:

*The strengths of the child, the parents’ concerns for their child’s education, and the results of the child’s most recent evaluation.

*If a student’s behavior has impeded his or her learning or that of others, the strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, and supports needed to address that behavior.

*If the student has limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student as they relate to the IEP.

*If the student is blind or visually impaired, provision of instruction in Braille and the use of Braille.

Please see IDEA on Page 10

ATFSCP Continued from Page 5

conjunction with the NIDRR, Interagency Council on Accessibility and the electronic and information technology industry are required under the law to develop and establish guidelines for federal agencies for electronic and information technology accessibility designed to:

“Ensure, regardless of the type of medium, that individuals with disabilities can produce information and data, and have access to information and data, comparable to the information and data and access, respectively, of individuals who are not individuals with disabilities. Such guidelines shall be revised as necessary, to reflect technological advances or changes.” (Sec. 508 (a)).

Key language in the legislative history says that:

“...the reference to electronic and

information technology means any equipment, software, interface systems, operating systems, or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment used in the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. Comparable access means that regardless of the type of interface between the user and information processing resources being used, that individuals with disabilities can produce and have access to the same or equivalent information processing resources, with or without special peripherals, as individuals without disabilities.” (Senate Report 102-357)

The logic behind these provisions appears to be that if federal agencies were required to purchase accessible equipment wherever possible, potential vendors would have a strong economic incentive to make sure that their

products were accessible. Since the federal government uses a great deal of electronic equipment, major technology vendors would design all their products with accessibility in mind. This would eliminate a need to design and build accessible devices for one major customer and non-accessible devices for other customers.

In spite of this common sense logic, it is questionable whether this goal has yet been achieved. However, the discussion as to why this goal has not been met is beyond the scope of this paper.

Since Section 508 applies to federal agencies, what relevance does it have to the states or local public schools? The answer to this can be found in the discussion about the *Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (Tech Act)*.§

Continued Next Month!

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*The student's communication needs.

*Whether the student requires assistive technology devices.

Parent's Participation in Placement

A new IDEA provision clarifies that each state or local education agency shall ensure that the parents of each child with a disability are members of any group that makes decisions about the educational placement of their child.

Student Reevaluations

For an initial evaluation and reevaluation, the IEP team and the student's parents can identify what additional data is needed to ensure the student is in the best program. If no additional data are needed, the school must notify the parents of that determination, the reasons for the decision, and their right to request an assessment to determine if the student still has a disability .

Services for Children Ages 3 -9

The state and local district has the option of changing the definition of "child with a disability" for children ages 3-9 to developmentally delayed. This allows schools to serve these children without identifying their disability, thus avoiding labeling.

Preschool Program

Rather than a maximum of \$1,500 for each eligible child, the new legislation authorizes a flat \$500 million for FY 1998 and such sums as necessary for each subsequent fiscal year for preschool programs. Also, the preschool formula allows states to retain an

amount equal to 25% of the amount the state received for FY 1997 plus future increases at the lesser of the rate of inflation or federal appropriations increases.

Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

States are encouraged to expand opportunities for children under 3 years of age who would be at risk of having substantial developmental delays if they do not receive early intervention services.

Race Disproportionality

New provisions require that the state examine data to determine if a significantly disproportionate number of students from diverse races are placed in special education programs. If so, the .state must review and, if appropriate, revise its policies and practices.

Personnel Standards

State educational agencies must establish and maintain standards to ensure personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. Also, states may require local education agencies to make an ongoing effort to recruit and hire appropriately and adequately trained personnel. In areas experiencing a shortage of such personnel, school districts should hire the most qualified individuals available who are working toward completing the coursework necessary to meet the standards within 3 years. A new provision allows the use of paraprofessionals and assistants if they are appropriately trained and supervised.

Mediation

*States will be required to establish a

mediation system in which parents and schools may voluntarily participate. However, mediation may not be used to deny or delay a parent's rights to due process.

*Schools will be permitted to require parents to attend a mediation promotion session if they have chosen not to use the mediation process.

*Attorney fees for successful mediations undertaken before parents started to pursue due process will be eliminated.

*Attorney fees for IEP meetings will be eliminated unless the IEP meetings were convened as a result of an administrative or judicial hearing.

Support Programs

The 14 support programs have been consolidated into Subpart I: State Program Improvement Grants for Children with Disabilities and Subpart 2: Coordinated Research, Personnel Preparation, Technical Assistance, Support, and Dissemination of Information. Subpart 2 includes two chapters: Chapter I, Improving Early Intervention, Educational, and Transitional Services and Results for Children with Disabilities through Coordinated Research and Personnel Preparation, and Chapter 2, Improving Early Intervention, Educational, and Transitional Services and Results for Children with Disabilities through Coordinated Technical Assistance, Support, and Dissemination of Information.

Funding Changes

*Language that entitles states to 40% of the average per pupil expenditure for

every child served under IDEA has been eliminated. The Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Interior will provide grants and use the most recent population data to determine funding.

*Once the federal appropriation reaches \$4.9 billion, new dollars will be allocated based 85% on census numbers and 15% on poverty rates. However, no state will receive less than before the new formula took effect.

*The set-aside for state administration and programs will be capped at the fiscal 1997 amount plus inflation.

*The burden of special education on local districts can be reduced by sharing costs among the state education department and public agencies. For example, a public agency may be assigned responsibility to pay for assistive technology devices,

supplementary aids and services, or transition services.

*Part B funds can be used for special education and related services provided to a child with a disability in accordance with the IEP even if one or more non-disabled children benefit from those services.

*The federal government can withhold part of a state's payment or all funds if it fails to comply with requirements.

Professional Development Fund Requirement

A state education agency that receives a State Program Improvement Grant is required to use not less than 75% of the funds to ensure that there are enough general education, special education, and related services personnel who have the skills and knowledge necessary to

meet the needs of children with disabilities or to work with other states on common certification criteria. If a state can demonstrate that it has the personnel needed, the state may use not less than 50% of the funds for these purposes.

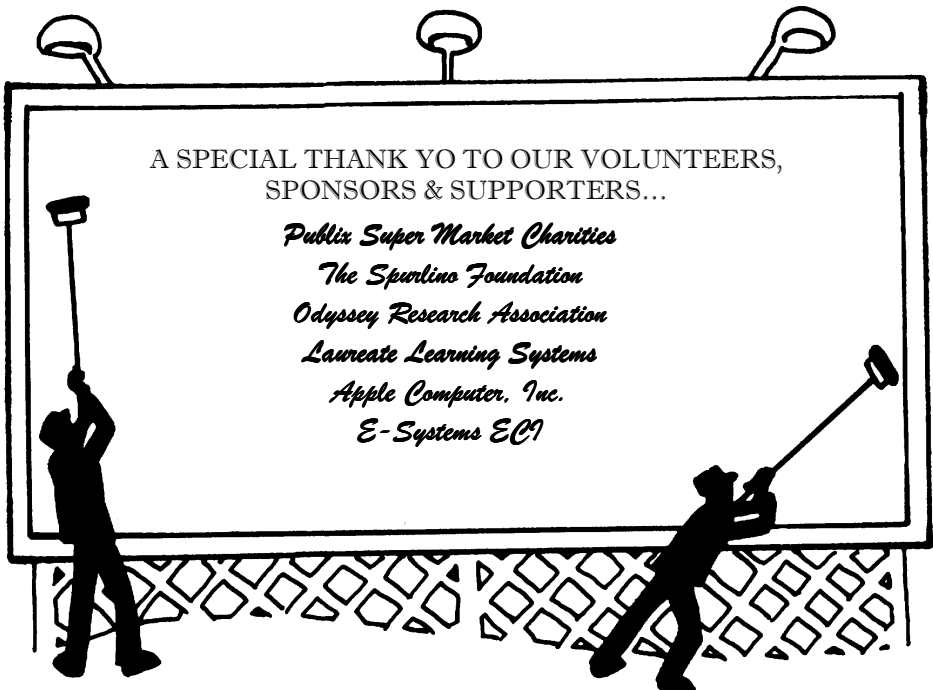
Examples of professional programs that would meet these criteria include preparing general and special education personnel with content knowledge and collaborative skills; enhancing the ability of teachers and others to address the conduct of children with disabilities that impedes learning; acquiring and disseminating educational research findings to school personnel; and adopting promising practices, materials, and technology.

For a summary of the IDEA reauthorization, see the CEC Web site: <http://www.cec.sped.org>. §



THE DREAM GOES ON!
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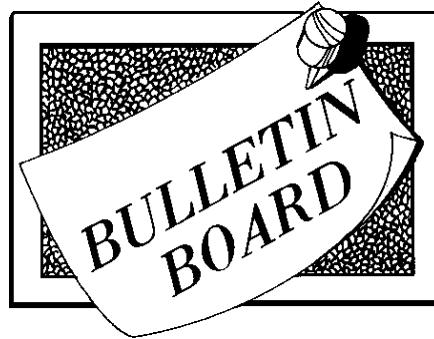


"Dear Parents" Website from Edmark

REDMOND, WA - Edmark, an IBM Company, developer of award-winning educational software, today launched "Dear Parents," a new site on the World Wide Web designed as a resource for parents who have questions about learning and technology. It can be accessed at www.dearparents.com or through Edmark's site at www.edmark.com.

Edmark plans to update the *Dear Parents* site weekly with new questions on topics ranging from learning styles to girls and computers to your child at school. Drawing on her own experience as a parent, classroom teacher for 20 years and award-winning developer of children's software, Stanger will provide answers that can be read and heard using RealAudio™, a technology that allows users to hear audio over the Internet.

Edmark Corporation
6727 185th Ave. NE
Redmond, WA 98052
800-426-0856



Switch Latch & Timer

AJAX, ONTARIO - New and improved from Tash. This Switch Latch & Timer is used with adapted toys, tape recorders, radios, etc. You may use it with up to two switches and with up to two devices. It allows for a switch to activate the device in any of the three activation modes: momentary, latched and timed. The Switch Latch & Timer comes with a free toy/ battery cable.

Technical Aids & Systems for the Handicapped; Inc.
Unit I -91 Station Street
Ajax, Ontario, Canada LIS 3H2
800-463-5685

Ultra-Sensitive Saucer Switch

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NY - The Saucer Switch is a new capability switch developed and manufactured exclusively by Enabling Devices/Toys for Special Children, Inc. Just the lightest touch on the edge of the sloping yellow saucer will activate this switch which has been especially designed for these individuals who are unable to control or sustain hand and/or wrist movement necessary to reach up, over and unto the surface of traditional plate switches. The Saucer Switch is ergonomically engineered for easy access and will respond to the slightest pressure from any part of the body. It can be used to operate communication and educational aids, environmental controls, mobility aids, adapted toys. It attaches almost anywhere - suction cups for secure tray/table placement, double side tape is provided for difficult spots, and there is a magic arm connection for mounting on a gooseneck!

Enabling Devices
Toys for Special Children
385 Warburton Ave.
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706
800-832-8697

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