



CT AEM

Connecticut Accessible
Educational Materials

For more information, visit ctaem.org

Accessible Media Producers (AMPs)

Digital Books & Text Books BookShare

www.bookshare.org

Bookshare is an online library of copyrighted content for people with qualifying print disabilities. Schools receive free access to Bookshare. They will need to set up an account in order to access its educational materials which are derived from the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS).

Audio Books & Text Books Learning Ally

www.learningally.org

Learning Ally is a nonprofit organization that provides a library of accessible audiobooks using human narration for people who cannot effectively read standard print. Schools will need to set up an account with Learning Ally in order to access its NIMAS-derived materials.

Braille and Large Print

Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)

Conversion of educational materials into large print or braille takes longer than other accessible formats. Districts should make their requests six months in advance to ensure students receive the materials in a timely manner.

Eligibility for AEM

Individuals are eligible to receive AEM under the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) if, regardless of any other disability, they: a) have a diagnosis of blindness; b) have a visual impairment or perceptual or reading disability that cannot be improved to give visual function substantially equivalent to that of a person who has no such impairment or disability, and so is unable to read printed works to substantially the same degree as a person without an impairment or disability; or c) are otherwise unable, through physical disability, to hold or manipulate a book or to focus or move the eyes to the extent that would be normally acceptable for reading.

However, collaborative educational teams are responsible for a) identification of eligibility in individuals; b) selection and acquisition of formats that best meet the requirements of such individuals; and c) provision of technology and training on using AEM to access, participate in and making progress in educational activities.

STEP 1

IDENTIFICATION

A collaborative, school-based team first determines if the student can gain information from standard print-based educational materials used across the curriculum by all students or if the student needs the materials in a specialized format.

These collaborative teams may include:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) team
- Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) team
- Planning and Placement Team (PPT)
- Section 504 team
- Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) team

STEP 2

SELECTION

Once it is determined that a student needs AEM, the team selects which specific formats are needed. The selection process includes a series of checkpoints:

1. List the instructional print materials used across the curriculum.
2. Consider the instructional context.
3. Select formats needed.

STEP 3

ACQUISITION

A collaborative, school-based team first determines if the student can gain information from standard print-based educational materials used across the curriculum by all students or if the student needs the materials in a specialized format.

These collaborative teams may include:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) team
- Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) team
- Planning and Placement Team (PPT)
- Section 504 team
- Scientific Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) team

STEP 4

USE

To utilize the accessible format(s) for educational participation and achievement, technology is frequently needed to deliver student-ready accessible materials. Other than hard-copy braille and hard-copy large print, all other specialized formats are based on the use of technology to deliver content to students.

AEM Navigator

The AEM Navigator is an interactive tool that facilitates the process of decision-making around accessible formats of print educational materials for an individual student. The four major decision points in the process include 1) determination of need, 2) selection of format(s), 3) acquisition of format(s), and 4) selection of supports for use. The AEM Navigator also includes a robust set of guiding questions and useful references and resources specifically related to each decision point. The AEM Navigator is NOT a screening or diagnostic tool that results in a prescriptive report. Rather, it is a process facilitator that guides the work of a collaborative team as they work through the AEM-related needs of individual students.

<http://aem.cast.org/navigating/aem-navigator.html>

Purchase Accessible Learning Materials (PALM)

The PALM Initiative (Purchase Accessible Learning Materials) is focused on encouraging purchasers to buy, and publishers and developers to create, accessible learning materials. Schools and classrooms are increasingly using digital technologies. As this change takes place, it is imperative that all students have equal access to learning. Though there are many different factors that contribute to equal access, such as high-quality instruction, one particular important aspect for students with disabilities is accessibility. When materials are designed to be accessible from the start, all students have the opportunity to gain the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as students without disabilities.

<http://aem.cast.org/navigating/palm.html>

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For support and technical assistance to implement AEM please contact the [State Education Resource Center \(SERC\)](#) or the Connecticut State Department of Education/Bureau of Special Education at ctaem.org.

The [Connecticut State Department of Education](#) is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.