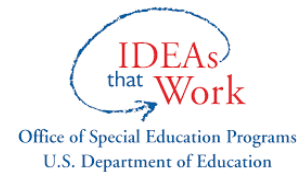


# Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Materials in PreK-12 Systems

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# Table of Contents

Purpose .....	1
Development Process .....	2
Intended Audience .....	4
Understanding the Two Sets of Quality Indicators.....	5
Using the Quality Indicators.....	2
Quality Indicators with Critical Components for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials .....	3
Quality Indicators with Critical Components for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats ..	12
Acknowledgements.....	21
Contact NCADEMI .....	23
References .....	23
Recommended Citation .....	23
Appendix A: Quality Indicators Comparison Table .....	24
Appendix B: Decision-making Guide .....	25
Appendix C: Glossary .....	27

## Purpose

Students with disabilities are at risk of falling behind in educational progress when the learning materials provided in schools are inaccessible to them. For example, consider the following common experiences for students with disabilities across preK-12:

- A preschooler who is visually impaired is denied an equal opportunity for cognitive and social development when a suite of digital learning tools adopted by the district requires sight for interaction.
- An elementary school student who has cerebral palsy, which creates involuntary muscle movements, falls behind in basic computational skills at an early age because the digital mathematics curriculum wasn't designed to work with [assistive technology](#).
- A middle schooler who has a reading disability becomes disengaged and stigmatized when given print books at a third-grade level or read to by a class volunteer, rather than provided grade-level digitally [accessible](#) materials.
- A deaf high schooler's ability to achieve at the highest possible level in advanced courses is repeatedly compromised because videos and other multimedia are poorly [captioned](#) or transcribed.
- Dozens of students with disabilities are left waiting or without access to grade-level content when their district relies on print textbooks and lacks staff trained to provide [accessible formats](#) like [braille](#), [digital text](#), audio, or [large print](#).

Learning barriers created by inaccessible materials, whether print or digital, are avoidable. When state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) work together to translate awareness of accessibility into practice, they overcome these barriers by ensuring the materials selected or created for use in general education are consistently usable by students with and without disabilities.

*The Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Materials in PreK-12 Systems* ("Quality Indicators") define the actions state and local educational agencies take to build sustainable systems that achieve continuous improvement in the selection, [procurement](#), creation, evaluation, and use of materials that work for students with and without disabilities. The ultimate goal of implementing these interdependent indicators with fidelity is to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to educational materials, allowing them to participate in the curriculum at the same time and with the same effectiveness and ease of use as students without disabilities.

## Development Process

The Quality Indicators are grounded in a fifteen-year foundation set by the following projects funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): the [Accessible Instructional Materials \(AIM\) Consortium](#), the [National AIM Center](#), and the [National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for Learning \(AEM Center\)](#).

Led by [CAST](#) and the fifteen states of the AIM Consortium, the development of the original *Quality Indicators for the Provision of AIM* (AIM Quality Indicators) was guided by the research-based *Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology* (Reed et al., 2024). The AIM Quality Indicators were developed to support [state educational agencies](#) with meeting new requirements in the 2004 reauthorization of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#). Specifically, the AIM Quality Indicators outlined actions for states, in coordination with [local educational agencies](#), to provide [accessible formats](#) of print instructional materials for eligible students in a timely manner.

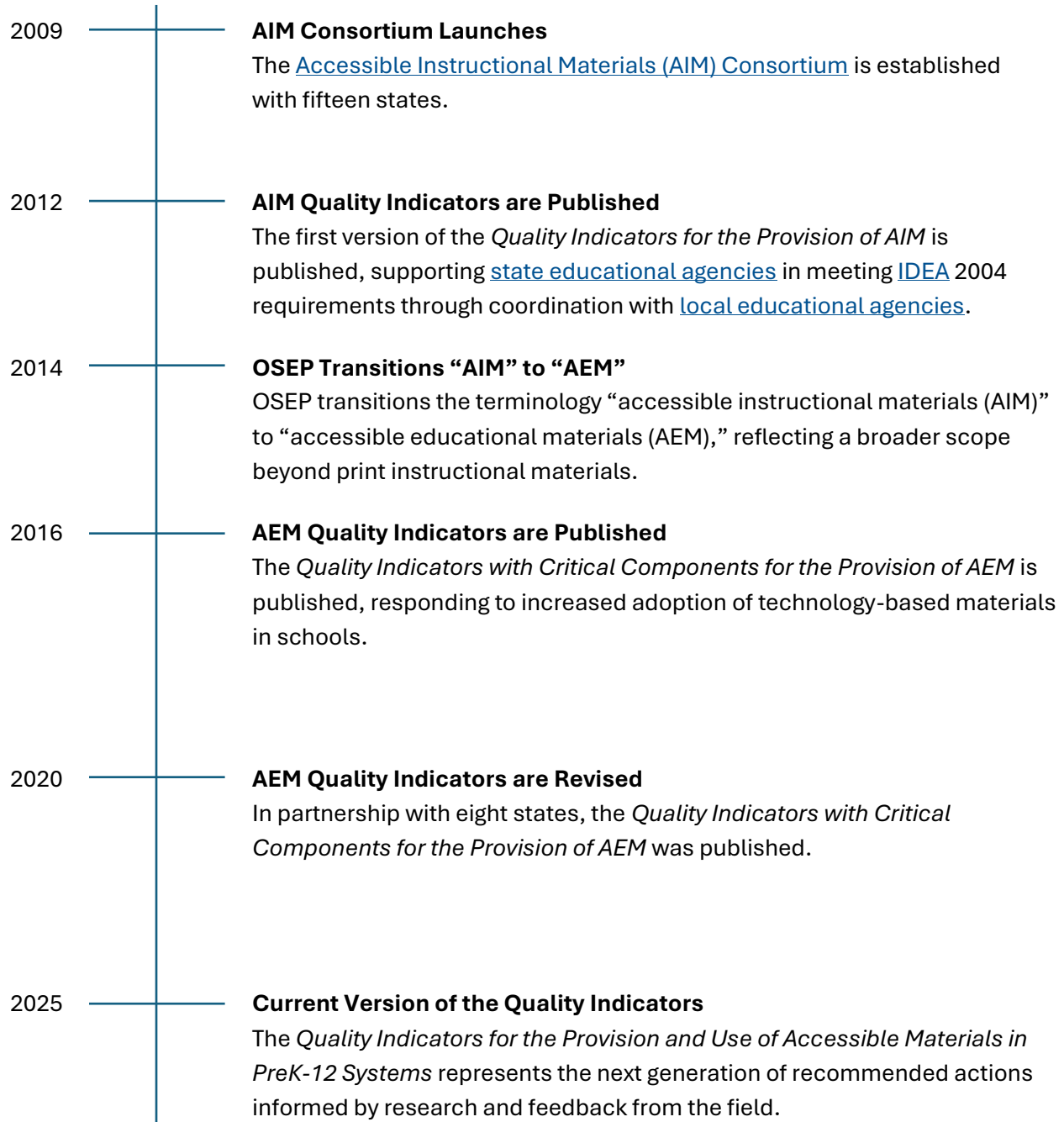
In 2014, OSEP transitioned to the term “[accessible educational materials \(AEM\)](#)” and the AEM Center, led by CAST, revised the AIM Quality Indicators. The *Quality Indicators with Critical Components for the Provision of AEM* (AEM Quality Indicators) responded to the increase in adoption and use of technology-based materials in schools. The AEM Quality Indicators were again revised and published in 2020 by the AEM Center at CAST in partnership with eight states (National AEM Center, 2020).

The current Quality Indicators serve as the next generation of recommended actions for state and local educational agencies. Developed by the [National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction](#) at Utah State University (NCADEMI, pronounced “N-cademy”), the Quality Indicators are informed by the research base of previous iterations (Shaheen & Curry, 2023; Shaheen, 2024). Cycles of feedback were provided by representatives from state and local educational agencies with experience implementing the 2020 AEM Quality Indicators, as well as members of NCADEMI’s National Advisory Council.



## Quality Indicators Development Timeline

A 15+ year foundation for building sustainable systems for the selection, [procurement](#), creation, evaluation, and use of [accessible educational materials](#).



## Intended Audience

The Quality Indicators are intended for use by a broad audience:

- Administrators and staff at the state level who are prepared to assess and improve their current policies, guidelines, and infrastructure for leading a statewide system of providing [accessible](#) materials;
- Administrators and staff at the local level who are prepared to assess and improve their current policies, guidelines, and infrastructure for providing accessible materials within their schools;
- Policymakers who are prepared to consider the provision of [accessible educational materials](#) from the perspective of a coordinated state-local system; and
- Researchers interested in aligning studies with best practices for enacting K-12 digital accessibility policy at the state and local levels.

## The Need for a Team

Primarily designed for implementation teams, each Quality Indicator includes a series of Critical Components that target specific areas of an effective system. Coordinated teams of representatives from diverse departments, roles, and responsibilities will experience more success and drive change faster than any one individual or group from a single unit.

## Adapting for Your Setting

Readiness to adopt the Quality Indicators varies across educational agencies, education structures, and models of school systems. Administrators and educators within the U.S. territories, charter schools, tribal schools, virtual schools, etc., will benefit from taking the time to selectively adapt the Quality Indicators to their context. The tools introduced in the [Using the Quality Indicators](#) section below, as well technical assistance provided by NCADEMI, are available to all audiences.



## Understanding the Two Sets of Quality Indicators

The Quality Indicators are designed to be implemented by [state educational agencies \(SEAs\)](#) in coordination with [local educational agencies \(LEAs\)](#). States play an important leadership role in establishing policies and guidelines that LEAs can adopt or adapt to ensure they properly implement practices aligned to the federal statutes on which the Quality Indicators are based. Furthermore, by proactively modeling best practices and providing resources, states effectively minimize duplication of effort at the local level.

The Quality Indicators are presented in two distinct sets, reflecting the two pathways by which [accessible](#) materials are provided in schools. The need for two sets is driven by the [legal foundations](#) that guarantee students with disabilities the right to [accessible educational materials](#).

### Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials

These indicators are aligned with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Title II](#) final rule, *Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability: Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities*.

In an ideal system, digital accessibility is prioritized, resulting in the consistent provision of edtech products and digital materials that are accessible for students with disabilities from the beginning. This ensures immediate access and reduces the need to create [accessible formats](#) of non-accessible materials.

This set of indicators supports agencies with creating and sustaining such systems and is referenced as the “Quality Indicators for Accessible Digital Materials.”

### Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats

These indicators are aligned with the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#).

When SEAs or LEAs procure print materials, students with sensory, physical, and learning disabilities will require [accessible formats](#). Under IDEA, SEAs and LEAs must provide these formats in a timely manner when an IEP team determines a qualifying student needs a specific format (e.g., [braille](#), [digital text](#), [large print](#), or audio).

This set of indicators supports agencies with creating and sustaining systems for providing accessible formats. It is referenced as the “Quality Indicators for Accessible Formats.”

More information about the [distinctions between the two sets of Quality Indicators can be found in Appendix A](#). For agencies deliberating how to prioritize the two sets of Quality Indicators, see the [Decision-making Guide in Appendix B](#).



## Using the Quality Indicators

Both sets of Quality Indicators include seven indicators that describe exemplifying conditions for creating and sustaining a statewide system for providing [accessible](#) materials. Critical Components serve as action items toward achieving the conditions of each Quality Indicator.

Each set is distinguished by notation: ‘DM’ for the Quality Indicators for Accessible Digital Materials and ‘AF’ for the Quality Indicators for Accessible Formats.

To get the most out of the Quality Indicators, it’s helpful to start with a few foundational principles (Shaheen & Curry, 2023; Shaheen, 2024):

- Use of the Quality Indicators requires a coordinated team approach. At all stages of use, collaboration must be continuous and ongoing.
- High-level agency leadership is critical to successful implementation of the Quality Indicators. The need for changes to an agency’s system will be inevitable, requiring authority and timely decision making.
- Within each set, the Quality Indicators are interdependent. The successful implementation of any individual Quality Indicator is dependent on at least some components of the others. Teams are advised to take a holistic rather than linear approach to their use.

The following supplemental resources are available to state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) preparing to implement either set of the Quality Indicators:

- [Readiness Protocol](#): Guides a state or local educational agency through a deliberation process to assess the fit and feasibility of implementing the Quality Indicators. This process is based on the Hexagon Tool developed by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP).
- [Self-Assessment Tool](#): A tool for conducting cycles of self-assessment toward achieving the Quality Indicators. This tool is based on the Innovation Configuration model developed by the CEEDAR Center.





## Quality Indicators with Critical Components for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials

- [Quality Indicator DM1: Commitment from Leadership to Prioritize Digital Accessibility in the Provision of Educational Materials](#)
- [Quality Indicator DM2: Guidelines for Accessibility in Procurement](#)
- [Quality Indicator DM3: Guidelines for Accessibility of Educator-selected Digital Materials](#)
- [Quality Indicator DM4: Guidelines for Accessibility of Educator-created Digital Materials](#)
- [Quality Indicator DM5: Professional Development and Technical Assistance](#)
- [Quality Indicator DM6: Data Collection and Use](#)
- [Quality Indicator DM7: A Sustainability Plan](#)



### Quality Indicator DM1: Commitment from Leadership to Prioritize Digital Accessibility in the Provision of Educational Materials

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) establish a leadership structure for the provision and use of high-quality [accessible digital educational materials](#) to ensure students with disabilities can access the curriculum at the same time and with the same ease, privacy, and independence as students without disabilities.

**Intent:** Commitment from leadership is essential for initiating and sustaining a coordinated system for providing accessible digital educational materials. This commitment is demonstrated through public messaging, internal structures, and the alignment of roles and responsibilities across the agency. Leadership includes at least one individual with decision-making authority and a cross-disciplinary steering committee. This leadership structure is needed at both the state and local levels to ensure parallel efforts and consistent coordination.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator DM1

To effectively address Quality Indicator DM1, the following components should be present:

DM1.1 A cross-disciplinary digital accessibility steering committee at both the SEA and LEA levels, determined by the size and organizational structure of the agency. At a minimum, the following roles and responsibilities are included:

- Administration from both general and special education
- Technology (education, information, instruction, and assistive)
- Instructional materials adoption
- Curriculum and instruction
- Assessment
- General education
- Special education and related services
- [Procurement](#)
- Finance
- Students, staff, parents and caregivers, and community members with and without disabilities

DM1.2 A publicly available agency statement of commitment to digital accessibility. The SEA leads by modeling this statement, which can be adopted or adapted by LEAs.

- A shared definition of what accessibility means, explicit to the agency's obligation to students, staff, and community members with disabilities.
- A shared vision and goal of a coordinated system for providing accessible digital educational materials.
- Incorporation of [W3C/WAI recommendations for an accessibility statement](#), such as
  - Measures the agency takes to support digital accessibility of its website and educational materials provided to students
  - Process by which staff, students, families, community members, and others can provide feedback or inform the agency of accessibility barriers
  - Technical specifications the agency uses to ensure accessibility
  - Conformance status of websites and digital materials provided by the agency
  - Methods by which the agency evaluates its websites and digital materials for accessibility
  - Name and title of agency representative authorizing the statement

DM1.3 Clear expectations regarding roles and responsibilities across the agency.

- Accessibility responsibilities embedded in position descriptions
  - Use of accessibility practices included in performance evaluations
-



## Quality Indicator DM2: Guidelines for Accessibility in Procurement

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) follow guidelines with deliberate actions to ensure accessibility is embedded in all components of edtech [procurement](#)—from initial bidding through product selection and contracting.

**Intent:** Agencies consider a range of factors in the edtech procurement process. The intent of Quality Indicator DM2 is to ensure all edtech solutions, including assessments, are [accessible](#) for students with disabilities. Processes for evaluating and vetting edtech applications and products include clearly defined accessibility criteria. Contracts with vendors include accountability for current and future product accessibility. The SEA leads by modeling these guidelines, which can be adopted or adapted by LEAs.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator DM2

To effectively address Quality Indicator DM2, the following components should be present:

DM2.1 Procurement tools and resources used by the agency embed accessibility as a requirement of the bidding process.

- [Requests for Information \(RFI\)/Requests for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) explicitly reference [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) 2.1 Level AA as the accessibility standard.
- Accessibility criteria are integrated into the product scoring system at the same level of importance as other requirements.
- Contracts, purchase agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other similar documents include language holding the vendor to account for claims regarding product accessibility, including the commitment to continuous improvements documented within an accessibility roadmap.

DM2.2 The agency requires vendors to demonstrate evidence of product accessibility.

- A third-party Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR), based on the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT®), is used to disclose product conformance to WCAG standards.
- Responses to the following questions are used to measure vendor accessibility maturity:
  - Who is your organizational contact for product accessibility questions?
  - What internal training does your organization provide to build capacity for producing accessible products?
  - What processes and workflows does your organization use to ensure accessibility is embedded in all phases of product design and development?

- What tools does your organization use to ensure that design and development teams are integrating accessibility in production?
- An accessibility-specific demonstration by the vendor shows how the product works with common [assistive technology](#) used by students with disabilities without relying on an [accessibility overlay](#).

DM2.3 The agency conducts direct testing to evaluate for accessibility.

- Testing conducted by a native assistive technology user, trained staff member, or trusted contractor.
- The extent of the testing (full/partial, manual/automatic) is dependent on the sufficiency of accessibility documentation and evidence provided by the vendor.



## Quality Indicator DM3: Guidelines for Accessibility of Educator-Selected Digital Materials

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) provide clear, actionable guidelines for educators or designated staff to evaluate the accessibility of digital content selected for classroom use.

**Intent:** These guidelines ensure that learning materials selected by educators (e.g., teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers) meet accessibility expectations. Examples of digital learning materials include websites, interactive tools, and multimedia resources. To conserve educators' time and effort, the agency considers the roles and responsibilities of staff to distribute the load of implementing these guidelines. For example, a trained staff member or team may be designated to provide support for difficult accessibility evaluation tasks. While either the SEA or LEA can initiate the provision of these guidelines, the SEA can minimize duplication of effort by taking the lead.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator DM3

To effectively address Quality Indicator DM3, the following components should be present:

DM3.1 Guidelines for testing website accessibility, including:

- Recommended automated tool(s)
- Methods for manual testing

DM3.2 Guidelines for testing digital document accessibility (e.g., Word, Google Docs, [PDFs](#)), including:

- Recommended automated tool(s)
- Methods for manual testing

DM3.3 Guidelines for manually testing interactive applications and tools (e.g., apps and simulations), including:

- Identification of common barriers in interactive tools
- Recommended tests

DM3.4 Guidelines for selecting [accessible](#) multimedia, including:

- [Captioned video](#)
- [Audio described video](#)
- [Transcripts for audio](#)



## Quality Indicator DM4: Guidelines for Accessibility of Educator-Created Digital Materials

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) provide clear, actionable guidelines for creating [accessible](#) digital learning materials with agency-supported tools.

**Intent:** These guidelines help educators (e.g., teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers) make informed decisions, use the right tools, and apply accessibility best practices during content creation. To conserve educators' time and effort, the agency considers the roles and responsibilities of staff to distribute the load of implementing these guidelines. While either the SEA or LEA can initiate the provision of these guidelines, the SEA can minimize duplication of effort by taking the lead.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator DM4

To effectively address Quality Indicator DM4, the following components should be present:

DM4.1 Guidelines for implementing accessibility criteria of educator-created content by media type:

- Text (e.g., heading structure, lists, descriptive hyperlinks, use of columns and tables)
- Images (e.g., alt text and image descriptions)
- Video (e.g., [closed captioning](#) and audio description)
- Audio (e.g., text transcript)

DM4.2 Guidelines include an agency-approved list of content creation tools that support accessibility, including third-party integrations used in a learning or content management system (LMS or CMS).

DM4.3. Guidelines for using product-specific accessibility supports when creating content with tools on the agency-approved list.



## Quality Indicator DM5: Professional Development and Technical Assistance

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) provide or arrange for coordinated, sustainable training and support that builds the capacity of all staff to meet their responsibilities related to digital accessibility.

**Intent:** All agency staff involved in evaluating, procuring, selecting, creating, and using digital educational materials are provided with the necessary knowledge, support, and resources to effectively carry out their roles. Training matches specific roles with appropriate tools and techniques. To minimize cost and duplication of effort across LEAs, the SEA coordinates learning opportunities and resources with federally and state-funded partners.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator DM5

To effectively address Quality Indicator DM5, the following components should be present:

DM5.1 Digital accessibility is appropriately integrated into all relevant professional development (PD) priorities, including the use of high-quality instructional materials and edtech in subjects across the curriculum.

DM5.2 Training is differentiated by staff role and responsibilities, including digital accessibility in:

- Instructional materials review
- [Procurement](#)
- Teacher selection of supplemental curriculum materials
- Teacher creation of learning materials

DM5.3 Training materials are exemplars of digital accessibility, modeling best practices for providing [accessible](#) content.

DM5.4 Federally and state-funded training and TA resources are leveraged for evidence-based content and cost savings, including the state's [AT Act Program](#) and the [National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction](#) (NCADEMI).

DM5.5 A centralized online repository of resources and archived training materials is maintained to stay current with accessibility standards and tools used by the agency.

DM5.6 A designated digital accessibility coordinator(s) or team is named for staff to request technical assistance and provide feedback on agency-provided resources and professional development.



## Quality Indicator DM6: Data Collection and Use

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) continuously measure progress toward a sustainable coordinated system for the provision and use of [accessible digital educational materials](#).

**Intent:** Ongoing assessment is necessary to ensure the agency’s actions are effectively contributing to improvements in the accessibility of digital educational materials. Feedback is gathered from multiple sources—products, students, families, and educators—with strong protections for privacy. These data are used to inform decisions about [procurement](#), training, instructional practice, and student support.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator DM6

To effectively address Quality Indicator DM6, the following components should be present:

DM6.1 An ongoing inventory of accessibility information available for all edtech applications, products, and curriculum provided by the agency, and use of this record to prioritize the replacement of inaccessible products over time.

DM6.2 Methods for protecting student privacy while collecting feedback from students with and without disabilities about their user experience with the digital educational materials and technology provided for the curriculum, and use of this information to make corrections and improvements.

DM6.3 Methods for protecting student and family privacy while collecting feedback from families of students with and without disabilities about their observations of their children’s experience with the digital educational materials and technology provided for the curriculum, and use of this information to make corrections and improvements.

DM6.4 Methods for protecting student privacy while collecting feedback from educator observations of students with and without disabilities using the digital educational materials and technology provided for the curriculum, and use of this information to make corrections and improvements.





## Quality Indicator DM7: A Sustainability Plan

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) plan for sustaining the activities and resources that support a coordinated system for providing [accessible digital educational materials](#).

**Intent:** Sustainability is the process of turning an initiative into a lasting, established program and keeping it going over time. Using assessment data in cycles and adopting a continuous improvement mindset are critical to sustainability. An agency uses transparent communication and dissemination strategies to sustain its ongoing efforts and success. Resources are allocated and responsively adjusted to sustain continuous improvement.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator DM7

To effectively address Quality Indicator DM7, the following components should be present:

DM7.1 Conduct routine self-assessments to identify areas for growth and measure continuous progress toward meeting the Quality Indicators with Critical Components for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials.

DM7.2 An internal communication strategy to keep staff informed of:

- The status of the agency's progress toward implementing guidelines for providing accessible digital educational materials
- Training and professional development (PD) opportunities
- Ways to request technical assistance and support
- Opportunities to provide feedback on what's working and what needs to be improved

DM7.3 An external communication strategy to keep families and community members informed of:

- The status of the agency's progress toward digital accessibility improvements
- Ways to provide feedback on their children's experience with the educational materials provided by the agency
- Services and resources for supporting their children who require accessible digital educational materials
- For parents and caregivers with disabilities, a way to provide feedback on their own experience with supporting their children's education

DM7.4 A dissemination strategy to ensure guidelines are widely available through varied means to reach all applicable parties.

DM7.5 Allocation of resources to sustain coordinated fiscal, human, and infrastructure needs, including consideration of:

- Alignment of staff roles and responsibilities with the agency's digital accessibility obligations
- Funding models
- Grant opportunities
- Budgeting strategies

## Quality Indicators with Critical Components for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats

- [Quality Indicator AF1: Commitment from Leadership to Provide Accessible Formats in a Timely Manner for Students Who Need Them](#)
- [Quality Indicator AF2: Guidelines for State and Local Coordination with the National Instructional Materials Access Center \(NIMAC\)](#)
- [Quality Indicator AF3: Guidelines for Documenting the Consideration of Accessible Formats in the IEP](#)
- [Quality Indicator AF4: Guidelines for Acquiring Accessible Formats](#)
- [Quality Indicator AF5: Professional Development and Technical Assistance](#)
- [Quality Indicator AF6: Data Collection and Use](#)
- [Quality Indicator AF7: A Sustainability Plan](#)



### Quality Indicator AF1: Commitment from Leadership to Provide Accessible Formats in a Timely Manner for Students Who Need Them

**Statement:** The state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) establish a leadership structure for the provision and use of high-quality [accessible formats](#) of educational materials for students with disabilities who need them.

**Intent:** Commitment from leadership is essential for initiating and sustaining a coordinated system for providing high-quality accessible formats in a timely manner. This commitment is demonstrated through public messaging, internal structures, and the alignment of roles and responsibilities across the agency. Leadership includes at least one individual with decision-making authority and a cross-disciplinary steering committee. This leadership structure is needed at both the state and local levels to ensure parallel efforts and consistency in coordination.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator AF1

To effectively address Quality Indicator AF1, the following components should be present:

AF1.1. A cross-disciplinary steering committee at both the SEA and LEA levels, determined by the size and organizational structure of the agency. Examples of roles and responsibilities include:

- Administration from special education
- Technology (education, information, instruction, and assistive)

- General education
- Special education and related services
- Assessment
- Instructional materials adoption
- [Procurement](#)
- Data management
- Students with disabilities and their parents or caregivers
- Additionally, at the state level:
  - NIMAC State Coordinator
  - AT Act Program representative
  - State Parent Center representative

AF1.2. A publicly available agency statement of commitment to the provision of accessible formats for students with disabilities who need them. The SEA leads by modeling this statement, which can be adopted or adapted by LEAs.

- An explanation of the agency’s obligation to provide accessible formats under the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), like the provision of other [accommodations](#) and supplementary aids and services for students with disabilities.
- A shared vision and goal of a coordinated system for providing high-quality accessible formats of educational materials in a [timely manner](#).

AF1.3. Clear expectations regarding roles and responsibilities for ensuring the timely provision of accessible formats.

- Embedded in position descriptions
- Included in performance evaluations



## Quality Indicator AF2: Guidelines for State and Local Coordination with the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)

**Statement:** The state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) coordinate with the [NIMAC](#) to facilitate the production and distribution of high-quality [accessible formats](#) in a timely manner.

**Intent:** SEAs understand the requirement to adopt the [National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard \(NIMAS\)](#). Both SEAs and LEAs understand the process for opting in to the NIMAC. Procedures are established requiring publishers to send NIMAS files to the NIMAC as part of all instructional materials purchase agreements and adoption contracts. SEAs and LEAs also

establish and uphold procedures to ensure NIMAS source files are effectively utilized to provide accessible formats to eligible students in a timely manner.

## Critical Components for Quality Indicator AF2

To effectively address Quality Indicator AF2, the following components should be present:

AF2.1. On an annual basis, both the SEA and all LEAs opt in to coordinating with the NIMAC.

- The SEA adopts NIMAS and chooses to opt in to coordinating with the NIMAC under the assurances section of the [IDEA](#) Part B State Application.
- As part of the LEA's assurances to the SEA for eligibility to receive IDEA funds, the LEA chooses to opt in to coordinating with the NIMAC.
- SEAs that coordinate with the NIMAC keep a signed NIMAC Coordination Agreement on file with the NIMAC, submitting a new agreement only when the NIMAC State Coordinator changes.
- LEAs *do not* submit a NIMAC Coordination Agreement to the NIMAC.

AF2.2. The SEA provides a definition of “timely manner.”

- The widely adopted definition of “timely manner” is a variation of “at the same time” (i.e., a student who requires an educational material in an accessible format receives that format at the same time students without disabilities receive the same educational material).

AF2.3. The SEA and all LEAs direct publishers to submit NIMAS source files to the NIMAC.

- The SEA provides recommended language for LEA contracts and purchase orders.

AF2.4. The SEA identifies a NIMAC State Coordinator.

- The State Coordinator is the individual that formally opts into the NIMAC on behalf of the SEA and serves as the primary contact for NIMAC-related assistance for the state.
- The State Coordinator is responsible for designating and managing the state's [Authorized Users](#) of the NIMAC, adding and deleting accounts as needed.



## Quality Indicator AF3: Guidelines for Documenting the Consideration of Accessible Formats in the IEP

**Statement:** The [state educational agency \(SEA\)](#) develops IEP team guidelines for adoption or adaptation by [local educational agencies \(LEAs\)](#).

**Intent:** While [IDEA](#) does not specify a requirement that the IEP team consider a child's need for [accessible formats](#) of educational materials, the IEP development process is the most appropriate mechanism for ensuring that students with disabilities who need accessible formats receive them in a timely manner. As with [assistive technology \(AT\)](#) devices and services, the IEP team determines the type of accessible format or formats that the student needs. The SEA minimizes duplication of effort across the state by developing IEP team guidelines for LEA adoption or adaptation.

## Critical Components for Quality Indicator AF3

To effectively address Quality Indicator AF3, the following components should be present:

AF3.1. An explanation of the right of students with disabilities to receive accessible formats of materials in a timely manner.

AF3.2. Sample or required forms with language that prompts the IEP team to consider the student's need for accessible formats.

AF3.3. Guidelines that describe relevant information to include when documenting a student's need for and use of one or more accessible formats in the IEP, such as:

- Accessibility features of format(s) needed by the student to interact with the educational materials
- [Assistive technology](#) and necessary features for accessing the accessible format(s)
- Instructional strategies for the student to use the accessible format(s) in all environments
- Use of accessible format(s) for participation in all assessments, including the statewide assessment
- Postsecondary goals and transition services
- Training required for the student, staff, and family, including self-advocacy skills



## Quality Indicator AF4: Guidelines for Acquiring Accessible Formats

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) provide guidelines that support the timely acquisition of high-quality [accessible formats](#).

**Intent:** When the IEP team determines that a student needs an accessible format to access the materials used in the general education curriculum, the SEA or LEA is responsible for providing those educational materials in the format(s) required by the student in a timely manner. The amount of time it can take to acquire an accessible format varies widely, depending on the format required and whether the material has already been produced in the needed format by one or more

organizations. Federally funded programs are available to help SEAs and LEAs meet the [IDEA's](#) requirement to provide accessible formats to a student with a disability in a timely manner.

## Critical Components for Quality Indicator AF4

To effectively address Quality Indicator AF4, the following components should be present:

AF4.1. Guidelines for initiating the process of acquiring accessible formats as early as possible.

- The search for accessible formats of educational materials needed by a student must begin as soon as possible following the development of the IEP.
- Because [braille](#) materials can take months to produce, agencies should consider placing orders from [accessible media producers \(AMPs\)](#) at least six months in advance of the date needed.

AF4.2. Guidelines include a description of federally and state-funded sources of accessible formats, including information about:

- [Bookshare](#), an OSEP-funded project that provides a range of accessible digital formats at no cost to schools and families of eligible students
- The state's Instructional Resource Center (IRC), which typically maintain a library of accessible formats and manage requests for materials for eligible students, can be accessed through [State AEM Contacts](#)
- The [Federal Quota Program](#), through which states are allocated annual funds to purchase specialized educational materials from the American Printing House for the Blind, including but not limited to braille and [large print](#)
- The [Louis Database of Accessible Materials](#), in which accessible formats from over 50 organizations can be searched
- The [National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled \(NLS\)](#) and its network of State libraries, which provide braille and audio
- The [Described and Captioned Media Program \(DCMP\)](#), an OSEP-funded project that provides accessible educational videos at no cost to schools and families of students with disabilities

AF4.3. Guidelines include a description of options for producing accessible formats locally, including scanning materials and recording audio.

AF4.4. Guidelines include a means for schools to protect [copyright](#) by ensuring accessible format files are securely distributed to eligible students.





## Quality Indicator AF5: Professional Development and Technical Assistance

**Statement:** State and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) provide or arrange for comprehensive professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) that address all areas of the provision and use of [accessible formats](#).

**Intent:** All agency staff involved in ensuring effective IEP development and implementation, including technology (educational, instruction, information, and assistive) and general and special education, are provided with the necessary knowledge, support, and resources to effectively carry out their roles. Training matches specific roles with appropriate tools and practices. To minimize cost and duplication of effort across LEAs, the SEA coordinates learning opportunities and resources with federally and state-funded partners.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator AF5

To effectively address Quality Indicator AF5, the following components should be present:

AF5.1. Topics related to the provision and use of accessible formats by students with disabilities are appropriately embedded in relevant professional development priorities, including core and elective subjects/coursework.

AF5.2. Training is differentiated by staff role and responsibilities.

AF5.3. Training materials are exemplars of accessibility, modeling best practices for providing [accessible](#) content for all participants.

AF5.4. Federally and state-funded training and TA resources are leveraged for evidence-based content and cost savings, including the [National Instructional Materials Access Center \(NIMAC\)](#), the state's [AT Act Program](#), [State AEM Contact](#), and the [National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction \(NCADEMI\)](#).

AF5.5. A centralized online repository of resources and archived training materials is maintained to stay current with available resources and best practices.

AF5.6. A designated accessible formats coordinator(s) or team is named for staff to provide feedback on professional development and related supports, request technical assistance, and receive timely guidance.



## Quality Indicator AF6: Data Collection and Use

**Statement:** The state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) continuously measure progress toward a sustainable coordinated system for the provision and use of [accessible formats](#) for eligible students with disabilities.

**Intent:** While protecting student privacy, data are routinely collected and used to assess the effectiveness of all areas of the system and inform actions needed to improve practice, program planning, and resource allocation. The targets of self-assessment are clearly defined to help the agency ensure that students who need accessible formats are identified as early as possible and that those students receive high-quality, usable materials in a timely manner.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator AF6

To effectively address Quality Indicator AF6, the following components should be present:

AF6.1. Methods for securely collecting and reporting the number of students with disabilities who require accessible formats.

- By grade level
- By disability category
- By other demographics (e.g., gender, race, school/district)
- By type of accessible format required

AF6.2. Methods for securely collecting and reporting the number of students with disabilities who require and are provided accessible formats.

- By grade level
- By disability category
- By other demographics (gender, race, school/district)
- By type of accessible format provided

AF6.3. Methods for securely collecting and reporting the number of days between the date the accessible format is required (for timely manner) and the date it is provided to the student with a disability.

- By student detail (grade level, disability category, other demographics)
- By accessible format type

AF6.4. Methods for protecting student privacy while collecting feedback from students about their use of accessible formats, and use of this information to make corrections and improvements.

AF6.5. Methods for protecting student and family privacy while collecting feedback from families of students with disabilities about their observations related to their children's use of accessible formats, and use of this information to make corrections and improvements.

AF6.6. Methods for protecting student privacy while collecting data from educator observations of students with disabilities using accessible formats, and use of this information to make corrections and improvements.

AF6.7. A means to consider a student’s potential need for accessible formats when analyzing [IDEA](#) Part B data.

- For data indicating that a student is not making expected progress in subject areas, a team considers whether the formats of curriculum materials or the design of educational technologies used for teaching, learning, and assessment are presenting functional barriers, such as physical, sensory, or perceptual.
- For data indicating that a student is experiencing suspension, expulsion, or risk of dropping out, a team considers whether functional barriers to educational materials are interfering with efforts to promote Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).



## Quality Indicator AF7: A Sustainability Plan

**Statement:** The state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) plan for sustaining the activities that support a coordinated system for providing high-quality [accessible formats](#) in a timely manner.

**Intent:** Sustainability is the process of turning an initiative into a lasting, established program and keeping it going over time. Using assessment data in cycles and adopting a continuous improvement mindset are critical to sustainability. An agency uses transparent communication and dissemination strategies to sustain its ongoing efforts and success. Resources are allocated and responsively adjusted to sustain continuous improvement.

### Critical Components for Quality Indicator AF7

To effectively address Quality Indicator AF7, the following components should be present:

AF7.1. Conduct routine self-assessments to identify areas for growth and measure continuous progress toward meeting the Quality Indicators with Critical Components for the Provision and Use of Accessible Formats. [NCADEMI’s Self-Assessment Tool](#) is freely available to agencies.

AF7.2. An internal communication strategy to keep staff informed of the:

- Status and any updates to the agency’s obligations for providing accessible formats
- Training and professional development (PD) opportunities
- Opportunities to provide feedback on the implementation of accessible formats

- Ways to request technical assistance, including training and coaching

AF7.3. An external communication strategy to keep families informed of the:

- Status and any updates to the agency's obligations for providing accessible formats
- Ways to provide feedback on their children's experience with accessible formats provided by the agency
- Services and resources for supporting their children who require accessible formats

AF7.4. A dissemination strategy to ensure guidelines are widely available through varied means to reach all applicable parties.

AF7.5. Allocation of resources to sustain coordinated fiscal, human, and infrastructure needs, including consideration of:

- Alignment of staff roles and responsibilities with the agency's obligation to provide accessible formats in a timely manner
- Funding models
- Grant opportunities
- Budgeting strategies

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## Contact NCADEMI

Please reach out to NCADEMI for support with using the Self-assessment for the Quality Indicators for the Provision and Use of Accessible Digital Educational Materials.

E-mail: [ncademi@usu.edu](mailto:ncademi@usu.edu)

Voice or Text: (435) 554-8213

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## Appendix A: Quality Indicators Comparison Table

Comparison Factor	Quality Indicators for Accessible Digital Materials	Quality Indicators for Accessible Formats
<b>Legal Foundation</b>	<a href="#">Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II</a>	<a href="#">Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</a>
<b>Primary Students Served</b>	All students, staff, and parents/caregivers with disabilities	Students who are dually eligible to receive <a href="#">accessible formats</a> under IDEA and <a href="#">Section 121/Chafee Amendment of the Copyright Act</a>
<b>Beneficiary Impact</b>	Universal benefit for all users with disabilities	Targeted benefit for specific students with identified needs
<b>Primary Focus</b>	Prevention of accessibility barriers	Remediation of existing accessibility barriers
<b>Timing and Approach</b>	Proactive accessibility – materials <a href="#">accessible</a> from the beginning	Reactive accessibility – materials converted to accessible formats on an as needed basis
<b>Examples of Material Types and Scope</b>	Websites, apps, digital textbooks, multimedia, online platforms, and edtech tools	Print materials converted to accessible formats (e.g., <a href="#">braille</a> , <a href="#">digital text</a> , <a href="#">large print</a> , <a href="#">audio</a> ).
<b>Technical Standards</b>	<a href="#">WCAG</a> 2.1 Level AA	<a href="#">National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)</a>

## Appendix B: Decision-making Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help an agency determine which set of Quality Indicators to prioritize for implementation. In the process of using this guide, an agency may decide to focus on specific Quality Indicators of both sets.

### Path 1: Improve Digital Accessibility

**Goal:** To ensure all digital educational materials and tools are [accessible](#) to students with disabilities from the beginning. This aligns with the [ADA Title II Final Rule](#) which requires state and local government entities, including [SEAs](#) and [LEAs](#), to ensure their web content and mobile apps meet [WCAG](#) 2.1 Level AA. This guarantees access for all students, staff, and parents and caregivers with disabilities.

**Decision Point:** Are you focused on ensuring your agency's websites, apps, digital textbooks, multimedia, etc. are accessible?

- **If YES:** Focus on Quality Indicators for Accessible Digital Materials (Path 1) or consider Path 3
- **If NO:** Consider Path 2, focusing on the Quality Indicators for Accessible Formats

### Path 2: Improve the Provision of Accessible Formats

**Goal:** To ensure students with disabilities who need [accessible formats](#) (e.g., [braille](#), [large print](#), [audio](#), [digital text](#), and [tactile graphics](#)) get them in a timely manner. This aligns with [IDEA](#) which requires agencies to provide accessible formats of non-accessible educational materials (mainly print) to students with IEPs who require them as part of their Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

**Decision Point:** Are you focusing on materials such as print-based textbooks and/or materials students can't access without conversion?

- **If YES:** Focus on Quality Indicators for Accessible Formats (Path 2) or consider Path 3
- **If NO:** Re-evaluate your primary goal to determine your agency's priorities for improving the accessibility of materials provided to students.

### Path 3: Comprehensive Implementation

**Goal:** To ensure complete accessibility across all educational materials and platforms, addressing both immediate conversion needs for print materials for students with disabilities and long-term digital accessibility from the beginning.

**Decision Point:** Do you want to create a comprehensive accessibility system by integrating indicators from both sets based on your agency's needs and priorities?

- **If YES:** Consider using the flexible implementation strategy below to customize your approach
- **If NO:** Choose to focus on one set first using Paths 1 or 2, with plans to expand later

**Implementation Strategy:** Since several Quality Indicators overlap between the two sets, agencies can create a customized implementation plan by selecting relevant indicators from both sets. Consider this flexible approach:

1. **Identify Overlapping Areas:** Review both sets to find common indicators (e.g., leadership commitment, staff training, policy development)
2. **Integrate Complementary Elements:** Combine digital accessibility planning with accessible format systems where they naturally align
3. **Prioritize Based on Need:** Select Quality Indicators from either set based on your agency's immediate priorities and existing gaps
4. **Build Systematically:** Create a unified accessibility system that draws from both sets rather than maintaining separate parallel processes
5. **Monitor Progress:** Track progress across all selected Quality Indicators to measure comprehensive accessibility improvements

## Appendix C: Glossary

### Accessibility Overlay

A tool that attempts to improve the accessibility of a website by modifying the presentation of the content to users in real-time, such as by changing the font or color contrast. Overlays are typically third-party tools and can interfere with assistive technologies like screen readers. The [Overlay Fact Sheet](#) provides detailed information about accessibility overlays and cautions to consider.

### Accessible

A widely accepted definition of “accessible” comes from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education: Accessible means “an individual with a disability can access the same information, engage in the same interactions, and otherwise participate in or benefit from the same services, programs, and activities as individuals without disabilities, in a manner that provides substantially equivalent timeliness, privacy, independence, and ease of use.” An original version of this statement appeared in a 2010 joint Dear Colleague Letter to university presidents regarding the adoption of non-accessible technology. References to student privacy and independence were added in the 2024 [ADA Title II Final Rule](#).

### Accessible Digital Educational Materials

Digital materials intentionally produced to be [accessible](#) from the beginning. Digital textbooks, videos, apps, websites, and even learning management systems can be accessible. Essentially, any digital material provided by state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) must meet minimum accessibility standards under [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) (U.S. Department of Justice, 2024). The [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) Version 2.1, Level AA is the minimum technical standard required by ADA Title II. States and school districts are covered entities under ADA Title II and are therefore required to ensure digital educational materials provided by schools meet WCAG 2.1 AA.

### Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)

Defined by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education, “accessible educational materials (AEM)” are “print- and technology-based educational materials, including printed and electronic textbooks and related core materials that are required by state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) for use by all students, produced or rendered in accessible media, written and published primarily for use in early learning programs, elementary, or secondary schools to support teaching and learning.” AEM can be digitally [accessible](#) from the beginning, such as [accessible digital educational materials](#), or rendered in [accessible formats](#).

**Accessible Format**

Under U.S. [copyright](#) law, an “accessible format” is “an alternative manner or form that gives an eligible person access to the work when the copy or phonorecord in the accessible format is used exclusively by the eligible person to permit him or her to have access as feasibly and comfortably as a person without such disability.” In other words, an accessible format is an alternative presentation of information that provides access to otherwise inaccessible materials for individuals with disabilities. While a list of specific examples doesn’t exist, common types of accessible formats for text-based materials include [braille](#), [large print](#), [audio](#), [digital text](#), and tactile graphics. Videos can be made [accessible](#) with [closed captioning](#), [audio description](#), and synchronized American Sign Language (ASL). Audio can be made accessible with [text transcripts](#).

**Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Consortium, 2007-2008**

The AIM Consortium was a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education from 2007-2008. Led by CAST, teams from fifteen states received technical assistance in the implementation of the [National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard \(NIMAS\)](#) and [National Instructional Materials Access Center \(NIMAC\)](#). The states included Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. These states benefited from constructive collaborations and were the first to develop and use Quality Indicators related to the provision of [accessible](#) materials.

**Accessible Media Producer (AMP)**

Agencies, organizations, or other services that convert materials, including textbooks, related curriculum materials, and assessments, to one or more student-ready [accessible formats](#).

**Accommodation**

An allowed adjustment or alteration to a curriculum or assessment that provides access for a student with a disability. An accommodation does not change what a student is expected to master; rather, it provides access. The learning or assessment objective remains intact.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

An anti-discrimination law that protects people with disabilities in many areas of public life, including education. It is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Title II of the ADA applies to state and local government entities, including state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)). In 2024, DOJ published a final rule under Title II, specifying accessibility requirements for web content and mobile apps.

**Assistive Technology (AT)**

An AT device is defined under [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) as “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child and specifically excludes a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of such device” (e.g., a cochlear implant). AT devices are often viewed on a continuum of low-tech (e.g., a pencil grip), mid-tech (audio book), or high-tech (e.g., dynamic communication device).

**Audio**

An [accessible format](#) that uses human-recorded or synthetic voice narration to present information. Audio can be stored and transmitted through both analog and digital means.

**Audio Described Video (also commonly referred to as Audio Description)**

The verbal explanation of essential visual elements in a video or other multimedia resource, providing access to the visual content when the audio component alone is insufficient for perceiving on-screen actions.

**Authorized User (AU)**

An agent of a [state educational agency](#) who has access to the [NIMAC](#) database in order to download or to assign [NIMAS](#) fileset(s) for conversion to [accessible formats](#) in accordance with established agreements with the NIMAC. An AU can be a nonprofit organization or a governmental agency. Examples of AUs include [accessible media producers \(AMPs\)](#), such as Bookshare and State Instructional Resource Centers (IRCs).

**Braille**

Braille code is a tactile system of raised dots that enables students who are blind or have low vision to read through touch. Braille consists of patterns of raised dots arranged in cells of up to six dots in a 3×2 configuration. Each cell represents letters of the alphabet, punctuation, numbers, and whole words. (iii) In the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, provide for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child’s reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child’s future needs for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child; Sec. 300.324 (a) (2) (iii)

## Captions

Synchronized text representations of audio content in videos or multimedia productions that include spoken words and other important audio information. Closed captions are captions that can be turned on and off by the user while open captions are always visible and cannot be turned off.

## Copyright

Legal protection for intellectual property that controls reproduction, distribution, and adaptation of original works, preventing their use or duplication without the owner's permission.

## Digital Text

An [accessible](#) file format that contains both text and images. Examples of file types include accessible EPUB, HTML, MathML, and tagged [PDF](#).

## Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A legal document for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) regulations. An IEP has specific requirements, such as mandatory team membership, an annual review, annual measurable student goals, participation in the state assessment, and participation in the general curriculum.

## Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The U.S. special education law that ensures services for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities through age 21. IDEA governs services provided by states and public agencies.

## Large Print

An [accessible format](#) provided in a hard copy document containing a font size of 18 points or larger. Additional formatting considerations pertain to styles used for font face and punctuation, format options, use of color, paper selection, and document size.

## Local Educational Agency (LEA)

A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools. (Source: [IDEA Sec. 303.23](#))

## National Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center, 2014-2019



The National AEM Center was a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education from 2014–2019. Led by CAST, teams from eight states developed partnerships and received technical assistance in the use of the Quality Indicators. The states included Alaska, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio, and Texas.

### **National Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center, 2009-2014**

The National AIM Center was a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education from 2009–2014. Led by CAST, teams from ten states developed partnerships and received technical assistance in the use of the Quality Indicators. The states included Connecticut, Idaho, Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and West Virginia.

### **National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for Learning (AEM Center 2.0), 2019-2024**

The National AEM Center 2.0 was a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education from 2019–2024. Led by CAST, teams from seven states developed partnerships and received technical assistance in the use of the Quality Indicators. The states included Georgia, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, and West Virginia.

### **[National Instructional Materials Access Center \(NIMAC\)](#)**

An online repository operated by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) that receives [National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard \(NIMAS\)](#) source files in accordance with instructional material contract language set by states and school districts. Once a file is received, the NIMAC validates, reviews, and catalogs it in its repository.

### **National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)**

A technical standard used by publishers to produce electronic source files of textbooks and related instructional materials that can be converted into different types of formats, including [braille](#), [large print](#), and accessible [digital text](#). NIMAS files are not in a student-ready format. Rather, they're in a code programmed to speed the process of conversion to [accessible formats](#). NIMAS source files are made available via a secure, online system to registered [Authorized Users](#) and [Accessible Media Producers](#) for use in the production of accessible formats.

### **Portable Document Format (PDF)**

A file format developed by Adobe that maintains a document's formatting and layout regardless of the software or hardware used to view it, making it easy to share and print. A popular file format, PDFs are frequently non-accessible for students with disabilities. PDFs are [accessible](#) when creators follow common practices for accessible documents.

**Procurement**

The process used by state and local educational agencies ([SEA](#) and [LEAs](#)) to source or purchase educational materials. Procurement is also the process through which SEAs and LEAs require publishers to submit [NIMAS](#) files to the NIMAC.

**Request for Information (RFI)/Request for Proposal (RFP)**

An open request for bids to fulfill a state or local educational agency's need for new educational materials.

**Section 121/Chafee Amendment of the Copyright Act**

Section 121 allows certain organizations (e.g., schools, libraries, and nonprofits that serve people with print disabilities) to make [accessible](#) versions of copyrighted books and other published works without needing permission from the copyright holder. It's also known as the Chafee Amendment in recognition of Senator John H. Chafee, who introduced the amendment to Congress in 1996.

**State Educational Agency (SEA)**

The State board of education or other agency or officer primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary schools and secondary schools, or, if there is no such officer or agency, an officer or agency designated by the Governor or by State law. (Source: IDEA Sec. 300.41)

**Tactile Graphics**

Graphics that convey non-textual information through touch to people who are blind or have low vision. These may include tactile representations of pictures, maps, graphs, diagrams and other images. Students who are blind or visually impaired touch these raised lines and surfaces to access the same information as students who are sighted.

**Text Transcripts of Audio**

A text version of the speech and non-speech audio information needed to understand the content in an audio-only file.

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**

Technical standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to make websites and other digital materials [accessible](#) for individuals with disabilities. The minimum standard required by the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Title II](#) is [WCAG version 2.1](#), Level AA. WCAG defines three levels of conformance: "A" (lowest), "AA" (more comprehensive), and "AAA" (highest and often considered aspirational).