7. Assistive Technology Assessment (see Appendix B, Section I)

7.1 Purpose
The principal reason for providing assistive technology is to enable students to meet the instructional and non-academic goals set forth for them.

IDEA 2004 requires IEP teams to consider whether a student with a disability needs assistive technology devices and services in developing the IEP. 20 USC 1414(d)(3)(B)(v);34 CFR 300.324(a)(5).

Under the IDEA, assistive technology is defined as:

“…any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.” 20 U.S.C. 1401(1);34 CFR 300.5.

Many school districts have written procedures that outline specific steps to follow to evaluate and obtain assistive technology for a student with disabilities. Generally, when an assistive technology assessment is deemed necessary, the procedure is to:

- assess the student’s abilities and needs in all areas of functioning
- determine goals
- identify assistive technology devices
- obtain loaned equipment
- document the effectiveness of the trial use

There are many factors that need to be examined when assistive technology devices and services are being considered for a student, including educational goals, personal preferences, social needs, environmental realities, and practical concerns.

As a result of this assessment, assistive technology may be recommended for the student with visual impairment.

The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)

Guidelines: For the Specialized Assessment of Students with Visual Impairments
The IDEA 2004 requires school districts to provide instructional materials to students with visual impairments including blindness, and other print disabilities, such as dyslexia, in a timely manner. This means that districts must take all reasonable steps to provide print instructional materials in accessible formats to children with disabilities at the same time as other children receive those materials.

The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) is a technical standard that curriculum publishers began using in 2006 to help increase the availability and timely delivery of print instructional materials in accessible formats for students with print disabilities in elementary and secondary schools. The NIMAS is designed to make it easier and faster to obtain accessible instructional materials. The NIMAS files can be used to produce alternate formats, including Braille, large print, digital text, and audio books for students with disabilities.

**7.2 Completing the Assessment**

An assistive technology assessment should be conducted as an extension of the Learning Media Assessment (LMA). Basic reading and writing functioning (print and/or Braille) found in the LMA is needed to determine and evaluate appropriate assistive technology requirements. If conducted separately, a qualified individual knowledgeable of assistive technology should conduct an Assistive Technology Assessment as a recommended assessment under the “Assessment of All Areas Related to Suspected Disability(ies)” section of the Evaluation Consent Form (N1A).