



To: Special Education Director Addressed

From: Kirk Behnke, Senior Education Specialist and
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Date: April 29, 2008

Re: PEIMS Data Standard for Assistive Technology

In Texas, student information is collected by the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). The PEIMS indicator for Assistive Technology (AT) is being significantly under-reported. In 2006-2007 data reported by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas had approximately 4,600,000 students in public schools. Approximately 487,000 were identified as special education students, which is approximately 10.6% of the total. In 2006-2007, only 46,078 students were coded in PEIMS as receiving AT devices and/or services. This number is nine percent of the special education population but only one percent of the total number of students.

Why is the AT indicator being under-reported? There are several factors which may contribute to the problem. First, districts may not recognize all of the items and services that fall under the definition of AT devices and services and may not be "taking credit" for them. Second, accurate information may not be given to the PEIMS clerks for coding into the software system that is used. And, third, some of the software programs used by districts to collect data for PEIMS imply that the AT indicator should only be coded positively if it is delivered as a related service, which is not correct.

For PEIMS data collection, a 163 Student Data – Special Education record must be reported for each student receiving special education or related services. The record may be accessed at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/weds/index.html?r163>.

The data element EO997 Assistive Technology is reported on the 163 record and is defined in the PEIMS Data Standards. The PEIMS definition of AT devices and services is the same as in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). The data element may be accessed at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/weds/index.html?e0997>.

Code table CO88 is the participation code used for the AT indicator. The AT indicator should be coded “0” if the student is not receiving AT devices and /or services. The AT indicator should be coded “1” if the student is receiving devices and/or services. The data element may be accessed at

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/weds/index.html?c088>.

The AT indicator should be coded “1” if the student is receiving or is scheduled to receive an AT device or service when the snapshot data is collected. Based on the definition of AT, items range from low to high tech; and, if low tech items are used by a student and are included in the IEP, the AT indicator should be coded “1.” AT devices can also include adaptive equipment provided by related service professionals. Services can include AT evaluations, which if scheduled during the fall semester when snapshot data is collected should also be included. The rule of thumb to remember is that if the ARD Committee determines that a student requires an AT device or service and it is included in the IEP, the AT participation code should be coded “1.”

In order to increase the accuracy of the data being collected, district special education administrators and personnel are asked to evaluate how the data are collected and reported in their districts.

Action items for the districts might include:

1. Increase awareness of district staff of the definition of AT devices and services and when it is to be coded.
2. Determine if the coding sheets used to give data to the PEIMS clerks accurately contains the AT indicator.
3. Determine if the software program used by the district accurately collects the AT data. Some software programs imply that the data would only be coded “1” if AT is provided as a related service which is not correct. If this is the case either work with the software developers to correct the item or devise a work-around such as training staff to code the AT indicator “1” if AT devices and/or services are provided.

For additional information on PEIMS, go to the TEA PEIMS Web page at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/peims/>. For more and specific information regarding AT data collection in PEIMS, and the forms referenced in this document, go to the Texas Assistive Technology Network Web site at <http://www.texasat.net>.

Thank you for your support and assistance in improving AT data collection in Texas to benefit students who use AT devices and services. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at kbehnke@esc4.net.

The answer is 4.