



Date: March 23, 2020
To: Local and Intermediate School District Directors of Special Education
Public School Academy Directors of Special Education
From: Jeff Diedrich, Director
Subject: Assistive Technology

During this unprecedented time of mandated school closures across Michigan, Alt+Shift understands the well-being of your students is on the forefront of your minds. As you contend with many unanticipated challenges, we at Alt+Shift would like you to know we will support you in any way we can. Family-school partnerships have never been so critical.

This memo provides guidance regarding student access to assistive technology in the home he/she utilizes in the school setting.

Assistive technology allows students to accomplish tasks and activities (academic and otherwise) they would not otherwise be able to achieve. Students may have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that prevents the assistive technology they use in the school setting from being used elsewhere, including home. In these situations, lower-technology options are often provided for home use as applicable (i.e. a dynamic display augmentative & alternative communication device at school and a core vocabulary board at home). Please consider the following:

- **Review IEPs to ensure access to assistive technology when the home setting becomes the school setting**
 - Lower-tech solutions may or may not be adequate for the extended time students will be out of school. Please review IEPs to ensure students have appropriate access to the assistive technology required to successfully interact with their environment. This may require training resources and support to families.
- **If lessons and therapies are offered remotely, assist staff in getting assistive technology to students as soon as possible**
 - As staff create lessons and therapeutic plans, they understand what assistive technology each student utilizes to supports their goals. Even in the absence of a modified IEP, if staff are able to connect students to that technology, particularly low or medium tech items that require minimal or no special training to use, they should be provided a way to do so.
- **Consider the accessibility of digital platforms including compatibility with assistive technology**
 - As you contemplate alternative options to deliver instruction and support to students in your district, please consider the accessibility of the platform(s) and instructional content to ensure compatibility with assistive technology.

Thank you and stay healthy.