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October 15, 2004

MEMORANDUM #04-63

TO: Exceptional Student Education Directors

FROM: Bambi J. Lockman

SUBJECT: Competencies for Technology Specialists

Florida Law requires that individuals who provide special education and related services be certified, endorsed, or licensed in their area of expertise. In addition to this fundamental requirement, the Department of Education (DOE) is recommending competencies for Local Assistive Technology Specialists (LATS), Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Technology Specialists, and other assistive technology specialists assessing students for assistive technology or providing training in assistive technology assessment. Competencies for technology specialists serving exceptional student education (ESE) pupils are necessary to assure that these special educators and related service providers are equipped with the information and skills to make accurate assessment and evaluation decisions regarding the assistive and instructional technology needed by the ESE students. These competencies can become part of the district's ESE professional development plan, and technology centers located throughout the state can provide instruction on the skills needed. ESE technology assessment yields information used by the individual educational plan (IEP) team to determine whether ESE technology devices are required and, if so, the nature and extent of those devices and services. Given the breadth of technology available and the complexity of issues related to educational achievement, the importance of an effective ESE technology assessment led by highly qualified personnel cannot be understated.

The competencies listed below will provide for the delivery of high quality assistive technology services as defined by state and federal regulations. They require specific knowledge,

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understanding, and skills related to the provision of assistive technology devices and services from early childhood through twelfth grade.

DOE recommends that practitioners conducting assistive technology assessments in the state of Florida demonstrate the following competencies:

- be knowledgeable about, and implement the school district's assistive technology assessment procedures
- understand federal and state regulations and policies related to the consideration and implementation of assistive technology in Florida schools
- select and use appropriate measurement tools, strategies, and activities to assess a student's assistive technology needs
- consider a continuum of assistive technology devices, services, and resources that may be used to address student needs
- provide leadership and support to professionals, students, and family members/caregivers of the team conducting assistive technology assessment activities
- lead the assessment teams in understanding what the student needs relative to his/her abilities, educational goals, and environmental factors that relate to the selection and delivery of assistive technology devices and services
- interpret and present the results of assistive technology assessments to the IEP teams in a way that supports effective decision-making based on the student, the educational program, and data gathered during the assessment process
- explain the strengths and challenges of specific assistive technology devices and services and the factors that may affect their use
- collaborate with those in charge of implementing the IEP to formulate and initiate a plan using assistive technology to support the educational achievement of the student.

The Assistive Technology Educational Network (ATEN) regional lab managers will coordinate the training to meet these competencies and provide the criteria for successful completion.

While these competencies **are not currently required** by statute, it is recommended that LATS, FDLRS technology specialists, and regional technology coordinators providing services to ESE students be able to document that they have the competencies needed to provide assessment and services as part of the IEP team.

For additional information or questions, contact Dr. Karen Morris by e-mail at Karen.Morris@fldoe.org or by telephone at (850) 245-0478.

BL/kmm

cc: FDLRS Managers
ATEN Regional Technology Coordinators
State Advisory Committee for the Education of Exceptional Students