

Assistive Technology



**ACTION GROUP 2009-10
NH LEADERSHIP**

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Our Task Issue



- **Issue: Assistive Technology in Schools---** What's Out There?
 - we know that school districts are very interested in having inventories developed
 - there is an existing model program in Pembroke schools
 - the state AT program has a web based inventory system available
- **Question:**
 - How can we take schools' willingness and existing resources and take the next steps?
- **Resources given with action item:**
 - **Crissy Shaffer**, *Leadership grad who worked on stage 1 of this issue*
 - Sonke Dörnblut
 - Association of Assistive Technology Programs
 - ATinNH- New Hampshire's AT Program
 - RESNA
 - ATECH services
 - ALLTech

What a group...



Our first meeting together



October 15, 2009

- **Our initial questions:**
 - What do schools currently have for AT?
 - Who is in charge of AT resources in schools?
 - What is Pembroke's model and why has it worked? Get our hands on their survey.
 - Are other schools able to follow Pembroke's model?

- **Discussion of who brings what to the group**
 - Experience and roles

- **Identify primary step**
 - Contact Crissy – resource listed

- **How can we stay in touch ?**
 - Email
 - Meeting before each Leadership session

- **Assign "homework"**
 - Reading and brainstorming
 - Review past action group's work
 - ✦ The survey that the previous group sent
 - ✦ Last year's presentation

Email sent to our resources Oct 09



Email sent to Crissy - 10-24-09

- To introduce ourselves to previous group leader
- Asked questions that we brainstormed at first meeting

Nov 1st response from Crissy



Crissy replied with answers to our original questions:

Where would we like this group to go...

Told us their vision:

“the next step would be to try to facilitate some kind of inventory program with a school district “

Results from last years survey

Shared results so we knew where the interest was

What do schools have for AT?

Unknown.... Question really is what type (if any) inventory of AT does school have?

Who is in charge of AT resources in the school?

All seem to be Special Ed. Directors

What is Pembroke's model and why does it work?

Couldn't really answer- which lead us to contact Pembroke ourselves.

Are other schools able to follow the Pembroke model?

Yes with time and money.

Meeting #2- Next Steps



11-21-09

Plan & Assignments:

1. Read the AT lending library information (*Misty will send to all of us*)
2. Reply with comments - what was missing from this model? (*everyone*)
3. Contact Pembroke to learn about their system and its implementation (*Jaclyn*)
4. Email Crissy to get the specific survey results for Governor-Wentworth and Newmarket and share with the group (*Misty*)
5. Discuss and decide on a school district/school(s) (*everyone*)
6. Draft a letter to the SpEd Dir, Principal, and Librarian (*Loretta*), revise (+ *Stacie*), and finalize (*all*)

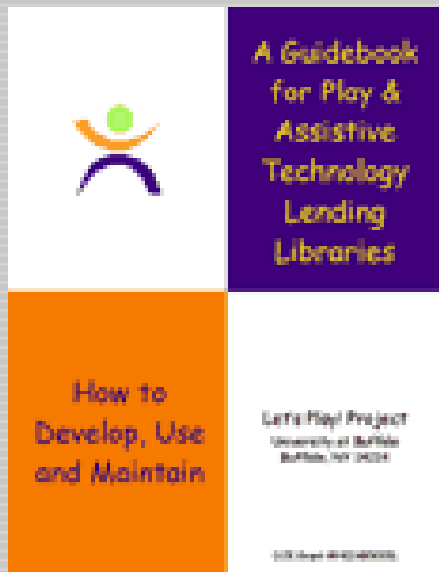
GOALS – *By January we will have:*

1. Chosen a school district/school(s)
2. Sent the letter to the SpEd Dir, Principal & librarian
3. Received confirmation from the school
4. Contact the PTO to recruit volunteers

We found an additional resource



- **November Homework:** review this guidebook
 - provided a background on what a lending library is
 - use this as evidence we can share with school(s) for why & how to set up a lending library



A Guide for Developing, Maintaining and Using Play & Assistive Technology Lending Libraries

LET'S PLAY! PROJECT

University at Buffalo Buffalo, NY 14214

<http://letsplay.buffalo.edu/products/LibLoan.doc>

Email to Crissy 11-22-09



- **Determined that we will develop an inventory program for a school district.**
- **Find out their interest and current “system” (if any)**
- **Sent email to Crissy that we would like the survey results for the following:**
 - as a #1 pick---would be Governor Wentworth School District one of our action group members has a daughter in this school district so it would be great to have a connection there.
 - as a #2 pick-- would be Newmarket Elementary, middle and senior high school- many of our group members go to UNH and are LEND students so that would be our 2nd choice.

11-25-09 Response from Crissy



- Recd results from Gov. Wentworth response to survey
- Provided contact for Pembroke
- Were told that Cheryl (another past group member) would like to assist us

AT Survey Results for Governor Wentworth Regional School



1. Does your school(s) have a current inventory of their Assistive Technology equipment/devices?

Yes

2. If you answered YES to Question #1, what is the format of your inventory system?

Paper

3. If you answered NO to Question #1, would your school(s) be interested in getting an inventory of their Assistive Technology equipment/devices?

No Response

4. If an Assistive Technology Share/Loan Program was available would you be interested in participating?

Yes

5. What might you be expecting/looking for in an Assistive Technology Loan/Share program?

Time limited loans both for trial and for lengthier specified times.

6. What would make you hesitate to use an Assistive Technology Loan/Share Program if it was available?

None

11-29-09 email to Vicki



Sent the following questions to Pembroke:

How you went about recruiting volunteers to set up the system/catalog the equipment?

Who were the volunteers?

How many were there?

How was the project organized?

Who were your point people?

What were the different responsibilities required of volunteers?

How much time did the project take start to finish?

When did most of the work to set it up occur; during school hours, after school, weeknight vs. weekend?

How did you go about the electronic set-up?

Was there already a database system in place?

What was/is the name of the database you used?

Is it user-friendly to set-up?

Jan 6th Loretta drafted letter



January 6, 2010

School

Attn: Principal, Special Ed Director, Librarian

Abc street

Anytown nh 00000

Dear Ms. ,

We are a group of individuals involved with the Institute of Disability's Leadership Program. Our goal is to help and coordinate adaptive medical equipment in schools in New Hampshire. Our research has told us that this is a very much needed program because of the variety of needs that NH's special education children have.

We would like to offer our assistance and coordinate with you to create and maintain a list of any adaptive medical you may have in your school system. Federal legislation defines assistive technology as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system . . . that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capacities of individuals with disabilities" This may include but is not restricted to: FM Recorders, talk and scan calculators, switch-adapted voice recorders, etc. We understand your school system is widespread so we feel an updated list of the district owned equipment would be quite beneficial to you I am sure you have encountered, as the children grow older, as new children come into the school system, the adaptive equipment needs change. We also feel that a list of equipment will keep everyone up to date as to what equipment your school system already owns.

We would love the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we may help make this work for your school system.

Response from Vicki Therrien 1-8-10



- **Pembroke's response- Key Points**
 - 1 main point person & volunteers & high school students
 - Recruited high school librarian to set up electronic catalog
 - 2 year process- after school hours and ongoing
 - Initiated step by step process for each device as added to inventory

Jan 16th Meeting- Our 3rd time together



Decisions made:

- Governor Wentworth chosen as target district
- Letter was revised

Plan and Assignments:

- Jaclyn will contact Pembroke's Learning Circle to see if they are willing to be a contact/advisor to G-W.
- Stacie will deliver the letter to G-W and attend the next PTO meeting to recruit support/volunteers if it occurs before our next Leadership day (Feb 13).
- Liz will email Cheryl Paquette to bring her up-to-date on our action group's progress and to learn if she has any suggestions for us.
- Misty will begin putting powerpoint slides together documenting our action group's progress thus far in preparation for our 30 minute presentation in April.
- We discussed how we might ensure that everyone is involved in our presentation -- perhaps a skit?

January 18th Stacie dropped off letter to Gov Wentworth



Gov. Wentworth Regional School District
Attn: Cathy C.E.
P.O. Box
Wolfeboro, NH

Dear Ms. C.E.:

We are a group of individuals involved with the University of New Hampshire Institute of Disability's Leadership Program. Our goal is to facilitate the coordination and electronic catalog of devices in order for students and educators to have a better sense of and easier access to the devices owned by their district.

With the use of assistive technology/adaptive equipment, children can have more control over their environment, participate more actively in a wide array of daily activities both independently and with peers, and are able to demonstrate what they like. Assistive technology/adaptive equipment takes many forms for children with disabilities. Adapted devices assist children in accessing a wider variety of educational activities in ways that build on what they like and what they can do; positioning supports help children interact with developmentally appropriate materials; communication aids enhance social interactions of family members-making play and learning more fun for everyone. Federal legislation defines assistive technology as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capacities of individuals with disabilities. This may include but is not restricted to: FM recorders, talk and scan calculators, switch-adapted voice recorders, etc". It is common that many school districts have a wide variety of these devices and yet they do not have a system in place to organize and track the inventory and distribution.

Our research shows us that this could be an efficient and cost effective method of providing these critical devices and/or equipment particularly when families are encouraged to donate used adaptive materials. In addition to providing items in a timely fashion, loan systems address other issues. A loan system may help families discover what type of assistive technology/adaptive equipment solutions adequately address their needs. Additionally, an opportunity to try out adaptive devices before purchasing them may help them understand what their child likes and how it can be successful.

We understand your school system is widespread so we feel that an updated inventory of the district owned adaptive devices would be beneficial to you. In addition to the aforementioned benefits, a lending library will allow your school district to remain up to date as to what equipment is available. Our long term hope is that with this lending library in place your school system could begin to share assistive technology/adaptive equipment within your district and other districts in New Hampshire. Attached is the e-mail correspondence from SAU 54, Pembroke who has set up such a lending library loan system. Also, please find the University of Buffalo's start up Guide for Developing, Maintaining and Using Play and Assistive Technology Lending Libraries.

In advance, we thank you for taking the opportunity to read our letter and hope to be able to work with your district in the start of your lending library.

Sincerely,

NH Leadership - Action Group Assistive Technology 2010

Elizabeth Barbin, Julie Benjamin, Elsa Horne, Stacie Verrill, Jaclyn McMahon, Loretta McGrail, Misty Martinez-Bohannon

CC: OCS - Principal, Beth Hertzfelt
OCS - Librarian, Ann Rowe
EES - Principal, Lisa Clegg

- Introduced ourselves
- Brief description of what AT is and why it is necessary.
- Information about what an electronic inventory is and what it's benefits are
- Ask for the chance to assist and support them in the implementation of an inventory in their district.

Jan 19th response from Cheryl





Suggestions from Cheryl- another resource

- chronicle how it goes and what works, did not work, etc
- try and have the media involved
- have it 'run' through the library

February 13, 2010 Action Group Meeting



- **The Waiting game....**
 - Letter being passed amongst Gov. Wentworth principals
 Special Ed Director  Special Ed Dept.
 - Waiting for response from Pembroke
 - ✦ Re: mentoring Gov. Wentworth in set-up process
- **Plan:**
 - Revise Powerpoint to begin simplifying to bullet form
 - Make Decisions on how we will present our research
 - ✦ Intro Skit
 - ✦ Assign certain slides to individuals in group

A mentor relationship will begin



Recd email back from Vicki 2-16-10 that stated:

- Pembroke will help as mentor as long as our group and Gov. Wentworth understand that they are still working on this and it is a work in progress.

Recd another email from Vicki 3-17-10:

- Shared a power point that overviewed the process of set-up

Final Outcomes



- Stacie spoke with the Special Ed Director who brought it to the Administration and they all agreed to start the process.
- She then will bring it to the DPTs (diagnostic-prescriptive teachers) and if they recommend it they will begin to start taking inventory of their equipment.

The Future



Suggestions for the next group:

- 1. Review our work and contact Stacie Verrill**
- 2. Contact Gov. Wentworth for status report and follow up**
- 3. Contact Pembroke to initiate mentor relationship**
- 4. Sign on volunteers and begin inventory**