



Oyster Bay-East Norwich Central School District

The Oyster Bay-East Norwich Central School District

Department of Special Services

Parent's Guide to Assistive Technology within OB-EN

Debra Kienke
Director of
Special Services

Johanna Canonica
Assistive Director of
Special Services

Introduction to Assistive Technology within the OB-EN School District

The Oyster Bay-East Norwich Central School District provides a myriad of assistive technology devices and software for special and general education students. This assistive technology helps all students to display their abilities by augmenting their strengths and weaknesses. Included in this booklet are some of the assistive technology devices and software that are currently being used by many students within the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Central School District. If you would like more information or have any questions about information in this booklet, please feel free to contact Kevin McCarthy at:
(516) 624-6592.



Speech to Text Software

At the James H. Vernon and Oyster Bay High School, students are currently using **Dragon Naturally Speaking**: *"speech to text software."* After "training" the computer to recognize their voice, this software allows students to speak into the computer and have their words appear on the screen. Students with fine motor difficulties, writing disabilities as well as organizational issues can utilize this software to produce written material that is more closely indicative of their cognitive ability. Students using graphic organizers like outlines, webs, and note cards, can dictate their ideas and thoughts directly into the computer. For some students the results are amazing! This "speech to text" software can truly be a liberating experience for these types of students. For students that don't experience writing difficulties, being able to dictate their writing pieces into the computer is a huge timesaver, and it is fun too!



Text-to-Speech Software

Within our school district, we have the capability to scan documents into computers and have the text read by "*text to speech software.*" Students with reading difficulties can use the Kurzweil 3000 and Read and Write Gold 10 software to independently read textbook and teacher produced materials. Teachers can scan in worksheets, text pages, articles, and tests into the software. Students can then access these documents, as well as web-pages, using the "text to speech software." Students can regulate the speed of the read-back as well as choose the style of voice they like the best. The computer models correct reading, highlighting words as it reads, thereby increasing student comprehension and fluency. Specialized tools within the software program allows students to instantly use a dictionary function helping them understand unfamiliar words. A note-taking function allows students to take notes on the text they are reading. These notes can later printed for study guides.

Bookshare.org

Bookshare.org is a not-for-profit organization that makes digital text available to students with disabilities. This

California, web based organization is utilized by many students and teachers in the Oyster Bay-East Norwich School District. With a library of literally thousands of titles, including many textbooks, Bookshare.org is a tremendous resource for students with reading, visual and print disabilities.

By participating in this organization, qualifying students and teachers can download novels, textbooks, magazines and daily newspapers in school or at home for free! Bookshare.org also

provides "text to speech" software so that the documents that a student downloads can be read to them. Students that are blind or visually impaired can have print material available for them in Braille format. Students can download books at home that are needed for school. Bookshare.org makes obtaining and learning information accessible, easy and fun!

Qualifying students that are enrolled in Bookshare.org through school districts like Oyster Bay can utilize this resource throughout their college years.



Kindles

Kindles are wireless, reading devices that are currently being used by students that have reading difficulties and/or visual impairments. Required grade level novels are available to students at Oyster Bay High School and the James H. Vernon School on the Kindle. Aside from being a motivating device for the reluctant reader, Kindles also have the capability to read back text as well as have the font size increased for the visually impaired. Kindles also have a built in dictionary and note-taking function that allows students to comprehend and delve deeper into their reading. As with many of the other assistive technology devices available in the Oyster Bay East Norwich Central School District, Kindles are available through the librarians in each building.





Word Prediction Software

For struggling writers it is often difficult to come up with the appropriate word or phrase that should come next. Word prediction software is used for many students that encounter this difficulty. As they type, a bank of words appears on the screen alongside their writing. Students can then either choose the appropriate word or phrase, click on it, and continue their writing. This function is available through these devices/software:

Kurzweil 3000

Read and Write Gold Web Apps Software

Co-Writer

Alphasmarts/Writers



Apple iPods

Apple iPods are currently being used by many students and teachers in Oyster Bay. Students can checkout an iPod just as they would a library book from the school librarian. The iPod can be loaded with the audio-book of their choice. A hard copy of the text is issued to the student to follow along as they listen. Often, audio-books are dictated by the authors themselves, which allows students a deeper view of the author as well as an opportunity to hear excellent reading modeled for them.

In the English and Language Arts classrooms, teachers use the motivational iPods to play audio-books to large and small groups of children during their "read aloud's." The iPod can also be used for some students as "audio agendas" as well as dictation devices so students may verbally record their assignments onto the iPods. In some cases, iPods are even used by teachers as daily communication devices for parents. The creative uses of iPods in the classroom are many! Teachers are finding new uses daily to meet the needs of our students.

Apple iTouch, Go Talk Apple iPads

Apples' iTouch and iPads have been introduced in the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Central School District Special Education Department. One way that the iTouch and iPad are being used are as augmentative communication devices. Students with limited or no speech can use the device to help them communicate. An application, Proloquo2go, has been downloaded onto the iTouch or iPad that allows students, with a push of a button, to have words, and simple commands to express their needs. These cutting-edge and personalized devices have allowed students to interact more effectively with their teachers, peers, and families.

The GO Talk is another hand-held communication device. Similar to the iTouch, this easy to use device can be programmed with fewer and simpler commands for younger students.

Apples' iPad is now changing the classroom! The iPad inspires creativity and hands-on learning with features you won't find in any other educational tool. The iPad is a device that students are motivated to use! Powerful built-in applications from the App Store let students engage in interactive learning with educational content. They can also find information in an instant, and access entire libraries of novels and textbooks wherever they go. The iPad takes learning to a whole new level here at Oyster Bay!

