



JOY ZABALA, EDITOR

DECEMBER 2008

President's Message

Tara Jeffs, President

Wow! It is hard to believe that my year of serving as President of TAM is almost over! In fact, as I look back at the last six years when I started in the TAM organization as secretary; I am continually amazed at the collaboration and hard work of dedicated volunteers in our field that makes TAM a success! I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many brilliant people in the past years. I hold them in the highest regard for sparking my curiosity in looking at, approaching, and trying new ideas.


In 2008, TAM has moved forward by becoming more efficient in making information and professional products available online through our website portal located at <http://tamcec.org>. With this said, we need to make sure that your electronic contact information is up-to-date so that you will not miss out! Are you receiving the TAMCEC announcements? Are you viewing your TAM Connector and JSET issues online? If not contact me Tara Jeffs jeffst@ecu.edu or Sue Mistrett—Webmaster—mistrett@buffalo.edu to update your information.

As I pause and reflect on this past year, I would like to thank TAM's Past President, Dr. Brenda Heiman for her steadiness and patience in guiding the TAM board through procedures, bylaws, and constitution that serves as a roadmap to future endeavors. As I move forward to the office of Past President, I do so with confidence knowing that Dr. Betty Nelson with her clarity of vision and unparalleled networking skills will bring new energy and creativity to the TAM during her Presidency.

On a final note, I challenge all TAM members to gain maximum benefit from your membership. Gain more and more from your organization by sharing more and more of your expertise and experience with others. Get involved! It is only through you that the vision continues! As always, we appreciate

suggestions about how to make TAM even better. Please let us know if you have any suggestions or concerns! Feel free to contact us with any topics you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter!

Here is an exciting opportunity. In honor of TAM's thirtieth birthday this year, we are closing out the year with a special offer. The thirtieth TAM member who emails me that he or she has read this message will receive a free set of TAM products. This includes all three TAM Technology Fans, a set of TAM monographs, a set of Assistive Technology Readings, a TAM Technology Quick Wheel, and an Assistive Technology Planner. There also is something for everyone who contacts me. Even if you are not the thirtieth respondent, we will send you a coupon for thirty percent off toward your next TAM products purchase. All it takes is a quick email to me! Looking forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to all of you for the opportunity to serve TAM as your president and for all the memories that enriched my life! 

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Some Things Bear Repeating! TAM Products Go Electronic

Two TAM products - The Connector and the Technology in Action series—are entering the 21st century by moving 100% electronic delivery! You will be alerted by an email to the TAM List when a new *TAM Connector* newsletter or *Technology in Action* is available in the Publications area of the TAM website at <http://www.tamcec.org/>. Using your CEC number and last name to log in, you can retrieve current edition. With this new delivery system, everything is in one convenient place; available to anytime you need it.

Policy

Awaiting President Obama's Education Agenda

Joel Mittler, Ed. D., TAM CAN Coordinator

Now that the election is over and we await the beginning of the Obama presidency, questions arise as to his agenda for all of education with particular interest in the education of the children that we care about. With so many other pressing issues on his plate, it is not a surprise that we are not sure what his initial initiatives will be.

Based on campaign literature and website, we can at least see those areas that he chose to mention. In Special Education, President-Elect Obama said that he would fully fund IDEA, support early intervention for children with disabilities, including funding of \$10 billion, the expansion of Early Head Start, and encouraging states to expand their Pt. C programs. He also voiced support for universal screening of children. At the upper grade levels and beyond, he spoke of support for vocational rehabilitation, improved college opportunities for students with Disabilities, and he said he would authorize a study of transition to work and higher education. Given the fiscal crisis we face, which of these he will actually work towards achieving and when is unclear.

President-elect Barack Obama has nominated Arne Duncan, the superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, as the next U.S. Secretary of Education. Duncan has run the third largest school district for the past seven years and has focused on improving struggling schools while closing those that fail. Duncan has been an advisor for President-elect Obama's education platform for his new administration which focuses on reforming No Child Left Behind, a major Federal investment in early childhood education, addressing the dropout crisis, recruitment and retention of teachers, as well as fully funding IDEA..

When Congress convenes, it will have to address the Fiscal Year 2009 budget

for education. You may recall that even though the Fiscal Year began on October 1, 2008, Congress chose to continue funding at last year's levels rather than confront President Bush. Given that they also have so many other items to address in this new Congress, they may choose to leave funding at those FY2008 levels for the entire Fiscal Year. Recall that President Obama will deliver his FY2010 request as early as February.

On December 1, 2008 the U.S. Department of Education published final regulations on a few selected provisions of IDEA. These final regulations were first issued last spring and CEC issued a detailed response supporting some

and disagreeing with others. These final regulations accepted some of CEC's positions but rejected others. If you are interested in more detail, either contact me or visit the CEC website.

Finally, CEC has published their Public Policy Agenda for the 111th Congress that runs from January, 2009 through January 2011. It was developed with input from the CAN Coordinators as well as with CEC staff. It is also available at the CEC website.

If you have any questions for me or want to receive regular updates from CEC on public policy, contact me at jmittler@liu.edu.



TAM Election Results

Congratulations to Brenda Heiman and Kevin Ayres, TAM's newly elected officers!

Brenda Heiman has been elected to a four-year term during which she will serve as Vice-President in 2008, President-Elect in 2009, President in 2010, and Past President in 2011. Brenda has served in a variety of special education positions, including teacher, speech pathologist, assistive technology specialist, teacher trainer, university faculty, student advisor and researcher. She is currently a Professor of Speech-Language Pathology at Louisiana Tech University. Brenda has been active and visible in the special education community, particularly in the area of special education technology. She has been a member of TAM for 20 years, serving as CAN Representative, Governor, Treasurer and President. Through her work in TAM, she has assisted in bringing the value of technology in special education to the forefront of issues concerning her profession as well as working toward making TAM the premier professional organization in the field of technology and disability.

Kevin Ayres has been elected to a two-year term as the member-at-large who serves as chairperson of the membership committee. Kevin is a former classroom teacher of middle school students with autism and severe disabilities. Since 2005 he has been an Assistant Professor of Special Education at The University of Georgia where he is actively engaged in research related to video and technology applications for students with intellectual disabilities and autism. Ayres is committed to helping teachers adopt research-based technologies to enhance learning. He works to integrate instructional and assistive technology into all courses that he teaches.

On-line Learning Opportunities in AT

Web-based Instruction from the Oregon Technology Access Program

In 1998, in response to a request from school administrators in Oregon, the Oregon Technology Access Program began to offer a series of three web-based classes in collaboration with Portland State University. Each two-credit class lasts for ten weeks and offers students an opportunity to explore a particular topic related to the provision of assistive technology services. Gayl Bowser, former OTAP coordinator, is the instructor for each class. Enrollment is open to anyone who has access to a computer with internet capabilities. Weekly assignments and discussions take place on an interactive web site. Online classes do not have a scheduled time so students can complete weekly assignments at their convenience. Copies of print materials are mailed to all students and are included in the class fee.

A description of classes currently offered follows:

Models of Assistive Technology Assessment: Starting with the IEP/IFSP Team.

No matter what approach a program takes to assistive technology assessment, a number of basic principles can be applied. This class covers concepts such as:

1. Principles of effective team work
2. Education Tech Points
3. Framing the question
4. Using the SETT Framework
5. Determining needed AT Features
6. Considering the need for assistive technology

Students participate in small group activities to discuss the needs of a real student and complete a simulated assistive technology assessment. Print materials, including portions of *Education Tech Points: A Framework for Assistive Tech-*

nology Planning and Assistive Technology Pointers for Parents are included in the cost of the class.

After the Assessment: Assistive Technology Implementation

After an IEP team completes an assistive technology assessment and chooses assistive technology tools for a child with disabilities, the work has only begun. Implementation planning, inclusion strategies and evaluation of the effectiveness of the assistive technology program are essential if AT is to become a useful tool for an assistive technology user. This course introduces the following ideas:

1. Re-SETTING after the assessment is complete
2. Aspects of assistive technology competence
3. Creating an environment for AT success
4. Evaluating effectiveness of the plan

Students participate in small group activities to discuss the needs of a real student and complete a simulated assistive technology implementation plan. Print materials, including portions of *Education Tech Points: A Framework for Assistive Technology Planning and How Do You know it? How can you show it?* are included in the cost of the class.

Assistive Technology Basics for Administrators

Administrators have many special skills that can support the successful provision of assistive technology devices and services. In addition to providing overall leadership, school administrators supervise staff, manage program resources and processes, and lead program improvement efforts. School

administrators who view assistive technology from each of these administrative perspectives, can have an enormous impact on the quality of the AT services school programs provide. This class will provide a format which school administrators and assistive technology leaders can use to support and improve assistive technology programs. Class materials will include specific assessment tools and suggestions for action for each of the four aspects of an administrator's role. Using real-life examples from the experiences of the participants, administrators will develop a personal plan for developing and improving assistive technology services within the programs they supervise. Print materials, including *A School Administrator's Desktop Guide To Assistive Technology* are included in the cost of the class.

In the works is a new class that will take advantage of new internet video and webcast resources. The class, entitled *An Introduction to Assistive Technology*, will cover legal requirements for AT in IDEA, an overview of assistive technology devices and offer students an opportunity to explore, in depth, a range of assistive technology devices.

For further information about existing classes, costs and enrollment opportunities, contact Gayl Bowser at gaylbowser@aol.com.

TAM CONNECTOR

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