Region AT Representatives

Sponsored by MN Regions 5 & 7

Benton-Stearns—Kelly Peterson
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Elk River—Michelle Farnum
Freshwater—Eric Weber/Bryan Winkels
Little Falls—Jeannie McKee
MAWSECO—Shawna Moe
Mid-State—Cristine Tangen
Group Facilitator & Editor—Barb Lhotka

Paul Bunyan—Morty Aldous/Lois Malepsy
Regional Low Incidence Facilitator—Nan Records
Rum River—Jenny Groess/Zach Close
St Cloud—Kimberly Hess
SCRED—Connie Sim
Sherburne-Northern Wright—Joran Swedzinski
West Central—Cindy Ostrander

In This Issue:

Calendar of Events

2018-2019 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Benton-Stearns Ed District Office, Sartell MN   9:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

September 17
October 17
November 19
December 19
January 16
February 20 (possible project work day)
March 20
April 17
May 15

37th ANNUAL CLOSING THE GAP CONFERENCE

Mystic Lake Center, Prior Lake, MN
September 30-October 1 (Pre-Conference), October 2-4, 2019

CHARTING THE CS CONFERENCE

Arrowwood, Alexandria, MN
April 6 (Family Day), 7 (Pre-Conference), 8 & 9, 2019

AT Information: Listservs

AT Listserv
The AT Listserv is a wonderful resource for educators who work with students who use technology for learning. Members ask questions, share information, and discuss topics that are relevant to our day-to-day work with students ages birth through 21.

How to Join: To subscribe, visit or send a message with the word "subscribe" in it to the request address, mn.at@mailmanlists.us for further instructions.

To Post on the Listserv: Send message to mn.at@mailmanlists.us. Complete the subject line identifying the topic of your post. Type your message and send it. Remember confidentiality when posting!

QIAT Listserv
The Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT—pronounced quiet) listserv is a place to share resources, questions ideas, and problem-solving in an on-going email discussion (there are archives and a website of resources to assist you, too). To sign up, go to the following website http://qiat.org and follow the links to join the listserv.

Augmentative Communication

In the December 2018-January 2019 issue of *Closing the Gap Solutions*, an article by Angela Sheets, Special Education Teacher and Nicole Wingate, M.A., CCC-SLP, talks about what happens after you have completed an AAC evaluation and determined what the most appropriate device or picture system will be for the student. Their thoughts center around the idea that "in all actuality, the new communication system is just a ticket to ride. In order to truly pave the path for communication acquisition, one must get their whole team on board: direct instructors, para professionals, general educators, administration, families, and community supports." They state that there will be "system malfunctions" and sometimes "medical complications" along with changes in team members that will delay or change the course of implementation of the AAC program.

The authors of the article have ideas for each team member category in terms of implementation.

Administrators
The ideas the authors have implemented:
- Meet with the building principal at the beginning of the school year and share program goals for the school year.
- Encourage the building principal to share your "visions of advancement and achievement."
- At the end of the year, meet again and discuss how goals were met and determine any follow-up that needs to take place.
- The authors' goals for the past 4 years:
    - 2015-2016: "Work collaboratively with other special ed team members to learn and implement AAC for specific students."
    - 2016-2017: "Work collaboratively with other special ed team members to learn and implement AAC for specific students and fine tune Core Language Group."
    - 2017-2018: "Work to develop a process for AAC evaluations at BHES."
    - 2018-2019: "Create and implement AAC language lessons beyond Core Vocabulary," and "BREATHE and enjoy the accomplishments."
- Each year take another step toward advancing the implementation of AAC usage.
- Send your administrators ongoing pictures and video updates showing the students using AAC in the classroom.
- Schedule classroom events and invite your administrators. They can see your goals being implemented firsthand. Administrators will understand your classroom much better if they are asked to join in an activity.
- Attend conferences and learn as much as you can about AAC and AT.
- Borrow devices to trial in your classroom.

Classroom Setting
The team needed to learn how to "device instructional practices that were practical and meaningful."

They adopted a process to implement a Core Word of the Week:
- Monday: They "pursue full immersive AAC support" in the classroom having all team members present.

- o They "learn the motor plans to utilize the target word in addition to gaining understanding of how the core word can be demonstrated in multiple settings and situations."
- Tuesday-Friday: Core word is used all week in multiple activities and settings.

Paraprofessionals
- Develop positive relationships and train them with the Core Word of the Week.
- Email lesson plans to paraprofessionals and related service personnel each week.
- Role play use of the AAC and AT devices.
- Take questions from paraprofessionals and develop instruction and/or tip sheets.

General Education Teachers
- Hold some after school AAC staff development sessions (15 minutes).
- Develop video for the Core Word of the Week for the general education teacher.
- "Post the Core Word of the Wek with the picture symbol sequence" outside their classroom door. A QR code is used to link to the video.
- Videos are based on video modeling practice.

Parents
- Include parents in the entire process.
- Schedule training opportunities for parents.
- Make short training videos for parents.
- Keep parents posted on "new developments and accomplishments" with AAC.
- Include siblings in opportunities to work with the AAC.

Community
- Offer training to staff at venues where the student spends non-school hours.