Report of the Educational Products Advisory Committee

to the Trustees of the

American Printing House for the Blind

 Fiscal Year 2018

# Purpose

The purpose of the Educational Products Advisory Committee (EPAC) is:

* To advise the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in establishing priorities, standards, and policies regarding products.
* To review research and development priorities, suggest additional areas of interest, and advise APH staff on the prioritization of needs and projects.
* To review products under development and to consider approval of finished products for purchase with Federal Quota funds.
* To recommend parents, caregivers, students, clients, and professionals in the field serve as subjects for research or field-test purposes, as project consultants, and/or as committee members.

# Introduction

In April 2018, the EPAC met for the seventeenth year as a formal advisory committee to APH—meeting with project leaders and other APH staff. The committee appreciated the time dedicated to project discussions and preparation for the EPAC visit. The APH staff clearly demonstrates passion, enthusiasm, and commitment to the vision of the company and the new strategic plan. APH is dedicated to the development of products across the lifespan for children and adults who are blind and visually impaired and their families.

# The 2018 EPAC Commendations

1. The EPAC commends APH for their openness, receptiveness, and progress made based on last year’s recommendations and continued focus on collaborative growth.
2. The EPAC commends APH for quickly implementing Braille Tales marketing materials and making them available to Ex Officio Trustees at Annual Meeting and beyond.
3. The EPAC commends APH for creating the New Product Development Process that provides documentation from ideation to sunset.
4. The EPAC commends APH for production improvements:
5. Use of software to improve production, scheduling and delivery.
6. Purchase of equipment that results in improved efficiencies, quality, and enhanced capabilities.
7. Provision of staff training for accurate implementation.
8. The EPAC commends APH for increasing the number and scope of quality products specific to supporting students with CVI.
9. The EPAC commends APH for partnering with outside expertise for product development, specifically within your commitment to new accessible technology.
10. The EPAC commends APH for providing applications and products available at no or low cost, including the tactile graphics image library, which increases the number and range of individuals accessing products.
11. The EPAC commends APH for improved communication between project leaders and production staff.

# The 2018 EPAC Recommendations

**Consistent with The Act to Promote the Education of the Blind (1879), the Educational Products Advisory Committee (EPAC) recommends that APH:**

1. The EPAC recommends that APH use Universal Design as it relates to accessibility for products and teacher materials:
2. Document at each gate within the New Product Development Process.
3. Determine accessibility through pilot-testing by an end user, both teachers and students who are visually impaired, prior to field-testing.
4. Create accessible manuals to accompany testing materials produced by APH.
5. Examine current catalog items for accessibility, and remediate when possible. (ex. FVLMA)
6. The EPAC recommends APH clearly communicate the process for customer requests and support for BrailleBlaster™.
7. Once a product enters the field testing stage, the EPAC recommends that APH provide transparency in the production process and explanation for any delays made available through the website as a way to keep consumers informed and to promote upcoming products.
8. The EPAC recommends APH survey adult service providers and consumers to determine product needs in the field.
9. The EPAC recommends APH survey professionals in the field of education for unmet needs and underserved populations.
10. The EPAC recommends APH create a virtual advisory panel consisting of direct service providers to create a pool of professionals available for guidance to project leaders, which will increase field testing participants.
11. The EPAC recommends APH consider all options in making the Graphiti™ available on quota funds.
12. The EPAC recommends APH ensure their digital textbooks are easily received and downloaded onto APH devices, including MATT Connect.

Respectfully Submitted,

Educational Products Advisory Committee Members:

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April 16-19, 2018