Report of the Educational Products Advisory Committee

to the Trustees of the

American Printing House for the Blind

Fiscal Year 2019

# 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 2019, the EPAC met in Louisville, KY, at APH for the eighteenth year as a formal advisory committee to address the 2018 EPAC report and to develop commendations and recommendations for the current fiscal year. To assist with this endeavor, presentations were made by APH’s product development staff, including progress updates on the 2018 recommendations, operations and information on new initiatives.

# COMMENDATIONS

1. The EPAC commends APH for the development of Braille Blaster which has revolutionized braille production in the field. It is especially impactful that it is a free program for all to use.
2. The EPAC commends APH for incorporating universal design into product development. We specifically recognize the CVI product line.
3. The EPAC commends APH for being mindful of national trends and influences that affect product design of CVI materials.
4. The EPAC commends APH for their outreach to local and national organizations to assist and promote accessibility for everyone particularly in the development of Nearby Explorer.
5. The EPAC commends APH for their willingness to revise and update products to keep with current trends.
6. The EPAC commends APH for their revision of the Woodcock Johnson IV which makes it much more user friendly to the administrator.
7. The EPAC commends APH for the long-term effort to develop a comprehensive health education resource designed for students with visual impairment.
8. The EPAC commends APH for a swift response in communicating and providing a comparable product when a device became no longer available. (Orbit 20 Reader).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Consider textbook production as one of the highest priorities.
   1. There should be consideration to providing a greater percentage of resources to the core products, so they adequately meet the current needs.
   2. Assessments and educational products should be produced using both Nemeth and UEB technical.
   3. Improve the timelines for production of braille textbooks.
   4. Review the capacity of qualified proofreaders to ensure delivery of quality materials in a timely manner.
   5. As you develop matrices for improvement, consider measuring braille production by number of pages rather braille volumes to maintain a consistent measure.
2. Improve communication between stakeholders and APH. Suggested ideas:
   1. When items are going to be discontinued or catalogue numbers are changed, EOTs should be notified
   2. Notify EOTs when policies and procedures relating to products are revised when the decision is made (ex. if it’s been transcribed in one code such as UEB with Nemeth and the decision is made to produce in UEB technical as well, that should be communicated to all as a policy.)
   3. Survey teachers directly with respect to APH products and services.
   4. If in fact on sale means the product is being phased out, tell us that explicitly and list quantities remaining if possible.
3. When producing the print catalogue, provide pictures of all products because this is essential.
4. When a new product is introduced (example: The Functional Skills Assessment) it would be helpful to create either one or a series of quick videos to unpack what this is and how to use it. Have the video link with the product description and the parts list.
5. Improve the functionality of the Louis database.
   1. Improve ease and consistency of search results.
   2. Display the specific Braille code prominently.
   3. Make a clear distinction between UEB technical and Nemeth
   4. Linking Louis to the shopping site should be a high priority for phase 2 of the new website.
6. Survey the field to determine if there are adequate resources for teachers to learn and teach UEB technical.
7. Develop short practice reading materials (ex. Readers digest) electronically that can be embossed locally to meet student needs, with age appropriate topics for beginning adult braille readers.

Respectfully Submitted,

Educational Products Advisory Committee 2019

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