

Sonoma County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)
Guidelines for Assignment of Low Incidence Equipment

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Low Incidence Equipment Review Committee (LIERC) Guiding Principles

The Committee uses these guiding principles when reviewing all requests :

1. Specialized equipment is necessary to allow the pupil access to classroom instruction within student's classroom environment
2. An emphasis is placed on providing equipment for the more fully included student who needs to access the regular education curriculum.
3. Requests for duplication of Low Incidence equipment to access classroom instruction will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In the event that another eligible student needs the duplicated equipment, the duplicated equipment will be reassigned to that student.
4. Low incidence equipment is not meant to supplant funding for normally used specialized equipment in Special Day Classes. All program operators will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to set up classrooms with appropriate equipment and assure LIERC surplus equipment was researched.
5. When recommendations for and adaptive technology equipment are made they must be verified by two specialists having expertise with the use of the technology in an educational setting. These must be specialists other than vendors or private or non-public service providers.
6. Students returning to Special Day Classes from inclusion placements will return equipment if equipment is available in the new classroom as judged appropriate by the LIERC.
7. The Committee has the right to seek return of equipment that is inappropriate for the purposes intended, and/or redundant, or misused.

Application of policy to specific types of equipment is further described in the following sections of this document:

- Orthopedic Impairment Equipment Policy
- Visually Impaired Equipment Policy
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equipment Policy

Committee Membership

Committee members are approved annually by SELPA Advisory Committee and are responsible for:

1. Attending the monthly expenditure review meetings
2. Representing the concerns of selected low incidence groups
3. Providing training and consultation support in completing requests and supporting staff in understanding criteria and requests

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Criteria for Purchases

The LIERC retains the right to modify or add criteria as the need arises to monitor expenses and better define guidelines for appropriate purchases.

A list of equipment that is appropriate for purchase with low incidence funds will be maintained and added to as necessary. Exceptions will be made when requests and information determine that a special circumstance exists. The current list of unallowable equipment for purchase using Low Incidence funds include but is not limited to the following:

1. Ordinary computer hardware, software and monitors
2. Standard classroom necessary toilet devices
3. Data Collection devices used diagnostic and assessment tools for student or teacher
4. Any duplication of existing classroom equipment for student or teacher
5. eNon-specialized recreational equipment
6. Equipment needed for private school not commonly used in a similar program
7. Instructional materials used primarily by teachers instead of student
8. More Than One computer per student

Consent Items

The LIERC receives equipment requests throughout the year which are placed on the "consent agenda". Consent request item(s) meet the following criteria:

1. Equipment or software which are components of previously approved systems.
2. Repairs, customizations or fabrications to previously approved requests.
3. Enhancements needed to make existing equipment ready for new users.

When the consent request item(s) meets the above criteria, the item(s) may be approved by the committee: the consent request item(s) do not require an LEA administrator signature. The lowest cost of equipment that can be presented for purchase of new equipment will be \$200. Exceptions to the \$200 cost base are:

1. Specialized textbooks in appropriate media (i.e., large print or Braille texts).
2. Items Which Constitute A System (there is no limitation on lower cost items necessary to create one piece of equipment as long as it constitutes part of the same new system and the total value exceeds \$200).
3. Repairs/modifications under \$200 for previously purchased equipment costing over \$200. Reimbursement of systems over \$200 can be submitted for review and approval.

Process for Denials to be Reviewed by Committee

It is anticipated that an LIERC representative will be in touch with any program director or specialist whose request is denied to assist in clarifying the reason for denial. In the event additional information is needed to reconsider the request the representative will assist the appropriate district staff. If the requesting district is not satisfied with the final results a letter of rebuttal may be submitted to the committee for review and response. No personal appearances to appeal directly to the committee will be allowed unless authorized by the SELPA Director.

Shared use of equipment to benefit other students is allowable under the following conditions:

1. Low incidence students to whom the equipment is loaned always has first use priority
2. When equipment is not being used it remains in the same setting as the low incidence student and continues to be available when needed for that student.

Low Incidence Equipment Responsibilities

Low Incidence maintains a database of equipment and endeavors to maintain current information on its use (and subsequent re-use) by qualified students. In order to make best use of these resources equipment is assigned with the following understanding:

1. Signoff by the LEA administrator and designation of a "Responsible Person" (on the request form) indicates acceptance of responsibility for the requested equipment. In the event equipment must be replaced due to loss as a result of theft or burglary, the LEA will be responsible for the full replacement cost not otherwise covered by insurance.
2. The equipment will be returned to the Adaptive Technology Center or other approved county location when the period of usage has been completed. It will be stored temporarily before being assigned to a new student.
3. When the cumulative cost of repairs to a computer or other Low Incidence piece of equipment exceeds 80% of the original cost, and these repairs are not covered by the warranty, subsequent repair costs will be charged to the program collecting ADA for that student.

Warranty period repairs are monitored by the Low Incidence Eligibility Review Committee. When the committee considers the student a high risk user (i.e., equipment requires significant or multiple repairs during the warranty period), the committee may

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purchase an extended warranty for the equipment. Cost of the extended warranty will be added to the cumulative repair total and included in the 80% of original cost limit.

The LEA assumes liability in the event of equipment theft, loss or damage.

Procedures to improve inventory maintenance and increase re-use include:

1. A list will be available annually to districts indicating what student equipment is being used and at what location. This Equipment can be renewed by returning this notice. Lack of response will allow LIERC to withhold future equipment requests until returned.
2. Periodic spot checks by committee members to check that equipment is being used appropriately and as originally requested may occur. LIERC will have power of removal in the event equipment is being misused. (A new request for that equipment would then be required).

Unassigned Equipment

An inventory will be kept by the SELPA office of all specialized equipment, materials and supplies purchased with low incidence funds. This record will be updated annually. To have requests processed and to receive equipment, materials, and books, is contingent upon the LEAs to:

1. Immediately notify the SELPA in the event a "low incidence" child moves from the SELPA and the equipment is available for use by other children
2. Immediately forward the appropriate documentation (invoices, etc.) when the equipment is received by the LEA (payments can be made only with this documentation)
3. Assist The SELPA in tracking the use and disposition of equipment, materials and supplies purchased with these funds.

Policy Regarding Specialized Equipment Not in Use:

1. Sonoma County SELPA shall attempt to reassign "unused" equipment within our SELPA.
2. If equipment is not needed, Sonoma County SELPA may assign equipment regionally, with neighboring SELPAs, as approved by the LIERC on a case-by-case basis.
3. Equipment which may be highly individualized may be sent with students who move to other SELPAs within California, as approved by the LIERC.

For additional information on the purpose, use or disposition of specialized equipment, materials and/or supplies under this statute, please refer to Appendix I: "State Department of Education Low Incidence Funding Update."

Guidelines for Requesting Communication Devices and Computers

The Low Incidence Equipment Review Committee has adopted guidelines that will assist in determining the meaningful, educational benefit of equipment purchased and then loaned to individual students. Exceptions to these criteria are made only in extreme circumstances. These guidelines have been developed by district, SELPA, and SCOE staff, and approved by the Steering Committee and Superintendents' Council.

General Guidelines for Computers:

1. Multiple Devices: Low Incidence funds may not be used to purchase more than one computer per eligible student, nor to purchase additional hardware or peripherals to upgrade a second computer owned by the district or program.
2. The only exception to this rule is when a student requires a transition period (i.e. one to four weeks) while transferring from one computer to another.
3. Shared use of equipment to benefit other students is allowable under the following conditions:
 - a. The student to whom the computer is assigned is always given priority for use.
 - b. When the equipment is not being used, it remains in the same setting as the student to whom it is assigned and continues to be available to that student when needed.
4. Classroom setting: The student is in a setting in which a computer is not ordinarily available. (LI Equipment is not meant to supplant funding for equipment that is ordinarily used in the SDC setting. Computers are considered ordinary equipment in an SDC class) and demonstrates the following:

Guidelines for Hi-Tech Communication Devices (AAC):

1. Eligibility Criteria: The student meets Low Incidence eligibility criteria in one of the following categories: hard of hearing; visually impaired; orthopedically impaired; or, deaf-blind
2. Appropriate, Cost Effective Technology: The committee guards against loaning more technology than a student can use.
3. Curriculum Software: Special needs software and adaptive computer devices are available for high tech communication devices. LI funds, according to state

law, may not be used to purchase curriculum software (such as math or reading programs).

Computer Guidelines for Students with Orthopedic Impairment

The student has been assessed and meets the definition of Orthopedic Impairment under IDEA.

Access:

- Student has a physical or visual impairment that requires access modification (e.g. eye gaze, joy stick, switch scanning) or special needs software not required by classroom peers.

Writing

- Paper/pencil tasks are so non-functional that the student cannot keep pace with classroom demands placed on peers.
- The student receives daily assignments requiring note taking or writing.
- The student has an IEP goal revolving around the independent production of written work for which alternate keyboards or alternate writing apps may be appropriate.

Computer Guidelines for Students with Visual Impairment

The student has been assessed and meets the definition of visual impairment under IDEA. The use of technology for visually impaired students is a means toward achieving independence and facilitating active participation for educational benefit. The use of specialized technology for the visually impaired student is key for the development of lifelong learners.

The student requires the use of a computer/tablet for the development/use of the following skills:

- Downloading digital textbooks
- Increasing Print Size
- Transcribing braille to print/print to braille
- Digital workflow skills
- Accessing school email accounts
- Typing skills
- Fine tuning color contrast for screen accessibility
- Scanning documents

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- Using the computer or tablet to listen to textbooks/chapters within books/class assignments
- Dictating skills for visually impaired students unable to type
- Screen reading voice over programs for computers
- Screen enlarging program for computers
- Interfacing specialized braille technology devices with laptops
- Interfacing low vision technology that allows student to read whiteboard information in classroom
- Mirroring class content from teachers computer
- Test taking- online standardized testing
- Online research
- OCR Ocular Character Recognition/Optical Character Reader
- Manipulating digital curriculum for use on personal devices
- Accessible personal screens due to visual field loss
- Increased spacing
- Positioning needs for optimum viewing
- Distance viewing
- Specialized lighting

Students with a diagnosis of Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) require the use of tablets/computers for the development of the following skills:

- Fixate and focus skills
- Tracking skills
- Cause and effect skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Access to electronic content/books specifically designed for students with cortical visual impairment

Laptop Computers

1. Portability is required because the student moves among three or more environments in the academic setting and these environments require communication, note taking and/or writing
2. The committee requires a written, signed plan that specifies who security and battery management issues will be addressed.
3. Equipment abuse, neglect, or use of purposes not authorized under low incidence guidelines will result in recall of the equipment.
4. Laptop computers require daily monitoring in order to manage battery life, transportation, and appropriate use in the academic setting. The student's team must identify an adult at the school site who will assume daily responsibility for

the laptop and its use. No laptop will be released for trial teaching or long term assignment until this person is identified.

Orthopedic Equipment Policy

Procedure for Acquiring Equipment from Low Incidence Inventory;

1. The teacher and therapist (CCS or school based) assess the student's needs and determine size, manufacturer and catalog number of the equipment. If possible, they indicate any needs for special straps, support blocks, etc.
Example: 42" Rifton stander, GE 67 with abductor.
2. The teacher or therapist calls or email the OT Consultant at the ATC and leaves information and their phone numbers. The OT consultant will respond within one week.
3. If the equipment is in inventory the requestor(s) will be called to indicate it is here. The equipment is moved into the holding area and marked with the date, student's name, Low Incidence identification number, teacher, and therapist.
4. A trial teaching form must be filled out and signed before equipment will be loaned. The requester will then be called to arrange for pickup. Equipment may be picked up at the ATC or, if it is small enough, it may be sent via the LRS courier. The OT Consultant will be available by request for equipment pick-up on Tuesdays or equipment may be picked up at other times by special arrangement.
5. After trial teaching the requester then submit a completed 'LowIncidenceEquipment Request'. On The form it should be marked that the equipment is being supplied from inventory (for our records).
For items under \$200.00 or for parts, the written paperwork may not be required.
6. When the Low Incidence Request is received by the ATC, the Low Incidence ID number from the equipment is written onto the form and the equipment is officially transferred to the new student by logging it into the Low Incidence computer database.

Policy regarding Specialized Program Equipment

Low incidence equipment is not meant to supplant funding for normally used specialized equipment in Special Day Classes. All program operators will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to set up or expand classrooms with appropriate equipment and assure LIERC surplus equipment was researched.

Example: Low Incidence equipment funds cannot be used to set up MOVE program designated classes.

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Once a MOVE program class has been set up, and on a case-by-case basis, a CCS therapist may designate a needed piece of orthopedic equipment for a student who otherwise needs this equipment for his/her unique needs.

Procedure for Processing Equipment at the ATC

All equipment must be returned to the ATC when no longer needed by the student to whom it was assigned. This equipment is processed as follows:

1. Equipment returned with correct identification (Low Incidence ID number, contact person, contact phone number, school and name of student) is deleted from the prior student's and prior contact person's names in the database. It is returned to inventory and is ready for reassignment. The OT consultant checks incoming equipment at least twice each month and enters it on the available inventory list.
2. Equipment received without identification is placed on hold for evaluation. The OT consultant identifies the equipment by size and type and takes one of the following actions: 1) adds it to the available inventory; 2) disposes of it; 3) makes arrangements for it to go to another agency (e.g., CCS, Easter Seals). This equipment may not be removed from the prior student and prior responsible person in the database. Equipment having no identification number will be given new tags when it leaves inventory to be assigned to a new low incidence student.

Visually Impaired Equipment Policy

In order to qualify for Low incidence equipment, pupils must be labeled blind or visually impaired. The MIS form of the IEP must list visual impairment as the primary handicapping condition or, in the case of a student with multiple disabilities, the primary handicapping condition must be designated as visually impaired, hearing impaired or orthopedic impaired.

Visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness. A visual impairment does not include visual perceptual or visual motor dysfunction resulting solely from a learning disability. A pupil may be considered eligible for Low Incidence equipment if:

1. The pupil has been diagnosed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist showing visual impairment, and
2. VI Department specialist has determined that, because of visual impairment:

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- a. The student does not have equal access to classroom instruction or materials, and
 - b. The student needs specialized equipment in order to do the work that other students are doing, and
 - c. The student needs specialized equipment that addresses compensatory skills that must be learned by the visually impaired.
3. AVID department specialist has determined that the pupil has demonstrated a willingness to use the device.
4. The VI student's cognitive strengths allow him/her to benefit from the use of specialized equipment.
5. Need for specialized equipment is reflected in the student's IEP with the appropriate goals and objectives.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equipment Policy

In order to qualify for Low Incidence funds these pupils must be labeled deaf or hard of hearing in the primary disability category of the IEP. A pupil may be considered eligible for Low Incidence funds if:

1. The pupil has been diagnosed by a qualified audiologist as having a unilateral or bilateral hearing loss that affects the student's ability to receive instruction given orally in a classroom.
2. A DHH Department specialist has determined that:
 - a. The student is not receiving equal access to the oral instruction given in the classroom; or
 - b. The background noise or poor acoustics in a classroom makes it difficult for the student to access oral instruction in his/her class.
3. A DHH Department specialist has determined that the pupil has demonstrated a willingness to use/wear the device.
4. The student's cognitive strengths allow him/her to benefit from the use of specialized equipment.
5. Specialized equipment that is used by a student needs to be documented in the student's IEP with appropriate goals and objectives.