

Regional Community, Agency, and School Alliance (RCASA) Minutes- January 15, 2020

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Presentations:

Kim Naus - UB Assistive Technology
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Amherst, NY
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Kim presented today on assistive technology and how this helps students with disabilities become more independent at school and prepare them for adulthood.

Kim discussed different ways technology can assist students in their classroom and promote success and independence.

- Free applications are available to assist students with developing foundation skills.
- Built in assistive tools on computers, Chromebooks, tablets and Microsoft Office 365.
- Mac or Windows help prepare students for the employment world. Windows platform is what is most employers utilize. Kim mentioned that Chromebooks are not fully preparing students for real world of employment.
- Portable tools: IPAD, Chromebook, Window laptop, digital recorder can assist students within or outside the classroom.

Kim discussed digital recorders which listen or convert to text such as a smartpen. Smartpens can capture everything that you can write or what is spoken, and playback notes. There are also portable braille note takers available. These items can help students become more independent in the classroom and decrease anxiety with notetaking for students.

She spoke about different tools and apps to assist students with writing messages and notes. Such as voice typing, memo notes, and speech recognition. Students can benefit from different programs on devices such as: calendars, play and save audio files, talk back calculators, and reminder apps. Kim also mentioned that you can make your own graph paper through Microsoft.

Kim mentioned some apps that can assist in the classroom:

- Read and Write is a literacy support tool. This is free to teachers and professionals.
- Read and Write and Equat10 are great for math. These are free for teachers:
<https://www.texthelp.com/en-us/products/free-for-teachers>
- IPAD- Adobe scan is a free app. This app can take a picture, and transform into PDF.
- Office Lens- This app can take a picture and enhances pictures of whiteboards and documents to make them readable.
- Read 2 Go- Text-to-speech, large font options, text and highlighting color options.

- Voice Dream Reader- Mobile text-to-speech app.
- Seeing AI is free. This app can read people in a room, recognize friends and describe the scene around you, quick text read menu, picture of text, and identify currency. (Be my eyes for Android).
- Proloquo 2 Go – Communication app

Kim mentioned that they have free device loans and serve all individuals at UB Assistive Technology. Staff can spend ½ hour with individuals at no cost for assistive technology demonstrations at their location on Alberta Drive.

Sara Taylor

NIOGA Library System/ B-TOP Express

Librarian/ eMobile Trainer

www.btopexpress.org

Sara spoke about technology safety. She shared general safety considerations such as changing your router password (not Wi-Fi password). She mentioned that it is not too hard to for someone to hack into your home internet. (Directions attached).

Sara also mentioned to be mindful about privacy issues while utilizing google. If your child/student is utilizing google, look into its “Activity Controls” and “Manage Activity” sections. Also check into the settings for password auto-save and auto sign in. Parents can also track YouTube search and watch histories, live chat transcripts, and sync and “Remove the Device” functions.

Sara shared a website to monitor your child’s devices: <http://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-parental-control-apps,review-2258.html>

Sara spoke about trying to wean off from Google. She mentioned trying the Brave browser, DuckDuckGo search engine, BitChute video hosting service, Minds or MeWe social networking and ProtonMail.

Sara also mentioned you can try new apps, programs at your library. She shared that the library is a great resource regarding questions about technology or to obtain help with your devices.

Liz Loughran-Amorese

Transition Specialist

West Regional Partnership Center

Eloughran-amorese@e1b.org

Liz presented on the Snap Type app which assists students to complete their school worksheets on an iPad. The student can take a picture of their worksheet and complete this worksheet on their iPad. This is a great app for students who struggle with handwriting. The Snap Type basic version is free. Liz demonstrated an example of a student's school worksheet with and without utilizing this app. This app works in different platforms. The paid version of this app includes folders, so you are able to save more documents.

Updates:

Parent Network: Tonia Weichmann shared in-services that are coming up through Parent Network.

- How to Protect My Child's Future through Guardianship, Wills and Trusts on 2/12/2020.
- Best Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities (webinar) on Feb. 19, 2020.

For more information, call Parent Network at 716-332-4170. Or website:
parentnetworkwny.org

West Regional Partnership Center- Julia Duerr mentioned Mentoring Day at Niagara Falls Memorial will be on March 26, 2020. Registration will be out soon. For more information, contact Julia at 716-821-7539 or jduerr@e1b.org.

Person Centered Services: Alan Vanesky mentioned May 28th will be DD Day at The Conference and Event Center in Niagara Falls. Registration will be coming soon. For more information contact Alan at: 716.324.5100 Ext. 1917, or avenesky@personcenteredservices.com.

Next meeting: March 18, 2020

Topic: What's Next? Post-Secondary Options. Our presenters will be People Inc to give us an overview in Day Programs available, including their YALT (Young Adult Life Program) and CAPP (Community Active People Program).

Chuck Diemert will be presenting on Orleans Niagara BOCES Adult Education Programs available.