



May 7, 2019

Lewis Golinker, Esq.
Advocacy Director, USSAAC
401 East State Street, Suite 300
Ithaca, New York 14850

Dear Mr. Golinker:

I am the Executive Director of the Association of Assistive Technology Act programs, representing 54 of the 56 state and territory programs under the Federal Assistive Technology Act of 2004 (P.L.108-364). These programs, staffed by knowledgeable assistive technology professionals from a variety of backgrounds including speech-language pathology, provide people with disabilities assistance in accessing and/or acquiring assistive devices through a range of services including device demonstrations, device lending, and device reutilization. The programs are cross-age, cross-disability, and statewide, and assist thousands of individuals each year.

The Assistive Technology Act defines an assistive technology device as “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.” Accordingly, speech generating devices (SGDs) are classified as a category of assistive technology used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional communication capabilities of individuals with disabilities. For individuals with complex communication needs the functional goal is communication achieved through “spoken” output produced by the device. The SGD is used to complement, supplement, or substitute for “natural speech” which is inadequate (or absent) due to disease or condition. It does not address impairment in nonverbal communication or assist nonverbal communication methods or techniques.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions in this regard (Audrey.busch@ataporg.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Audrey Busch".

Audrey Busch
Executive Director
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs