

Procedure Title	Specialized Equipment – Hearing Loss and Central Auditory Processing Deficits		
Date of Issue	November 17, 2021	Related Policy	BP 6802-D
Revision Dates	March 1, 2023	Related Forms	AF 6915, AF6923, AF 6974, AF 3406, AF 6981
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			
AP 6918-D “Specialized Equipment – Security, Safety, Maintenance and Responsibility”; Ministry of Education Specialized Equipment Amount Guidelines			

1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 As defined in the Ministry of Education Specialized Equipment Amount Guidelines, the special equipment amount (SEA) provides funding to school boards to assist with the costs of equipment essential to support students with special education needs. This equipment is to provide students with accommodations that are directly required and essential for one or more of the following: attending school, accessing the Ontario curriculum, supporting, or augmenting a board determined alternative program and/or course.
- 1.2 SEA claims-based funding is used to support the purchase of hearing equipment over \$800 in value based on the recommendation from a regulated therapist.
- 1.3 Purchases under \$800 in value will be funded by the school or the board. Requests for equipment that are not student specific will be purchased by the school. However, if there is an item that is specific to a student and it is valued under \$800, central board funding will be considered. Please contact HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca with questions.

2.0 PROCESS FOR REQUESTING HEARING AND CENTRAL AUDITORY PROCESSING DEFICITS SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

- 2.1 A community audiologist will identify a need and will provide a report to the school.
 - a. *Please follow the same steps if a student with hearing loss registers for school, or parents contact school (without a clinical audiology report) indicating their child has been diagnosed with a hearing loss or central auditory processing deficits (CAP).*
- 2.2 The school, in coordination with the parent/guardian, will complete AF 6915 “Consent for Involvement - Hearing Services”, ensuring that the parent/guardian has listed the name of the student’s community audiologist.
- 2.3 The school will forward consent (and audiology or CAP report if provided to school) to the attention of Hearing Services staff of the Learning Services – Student Support Department, HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca
- 2.4 The school will consult with the board’s teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing on the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and determine appropriate accommodations and additional required supports for the student (e.g., self-advocacy supports, professional development for staff, alternative programming, transition planning etc.).
- 2.5 The school board contracted audiologist will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) and request reports and information from the community audiologist in order to make recommendations, as appropriate.

- 2.6 If further information is required to make a determination, based on the audiogram/audiology report, please see Appendix A 'SEA Considerations for Audiology' in order to determine if a recommendation should be made. The school board contracted audiologist will request that the school complete AF 6981 "Audiology - Central Auditory Processing Referral Information". Return completed forms to the HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca.
- 2.7 If a trial of equipment is appropriate, the school board contracted audiologist will request that the school complete pre-trial forms for the teacher and student. Following a two (2) to three (3) month trial of the equipment, the audiologist will request that the school complete post-trial forms for the teacher and student. These forms will be provided to the school by the school board contracted audiologist. The forms must be returned to HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca.
- 2.8 The school board contracted audiologist will complete a recommendation report listing specifics for sound fields, digital modulation (DM) equipment, and any additional items as appropriate.
- 2.9 Questions regarding the process or quote(s)/ordering can be forwarded to: HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca
- 2.10 School-based staff will complete a claim package and submit to HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca, copied to the school system special education teacher (SSELT) for approval. The claim package consists of:
- completed AF 6923 "Specialized Equipment Amount Submission Form and Implementation Plan - Hearing and Central Auditory Processing Deficits" (signed by principal);
 - audiogram or central auditory processing assessment;
 - quote(s) for equipment provided by the board contracted audiologist;
 - updated IEP (following the consultation with board's teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing) providing evidence of the intended use of the equipment in the student's program, signed by the principal; and
 - completed AF 6974 "Specialized Equipment Claim – Parent/Guardian Information and Consent"
- 2.11 Once the claim is reviewed, specialized equipment staff will notify the school administrator, school staff, and Hearing Services staff of the Learning Services – Student Support Department regarding the decision. Information will be retained centrally in the student's SEA file as well, as ministry auditors may review.
- 2.12 The learning services assistant – specialized equipment will order equipment and notify the Hearing Services staff of the Learning Services – Student Support Department upon arrival. Once the equipment has arrived, the equipment will be added to the student's IEP under 'SEA Equipment - OT/PT and Personal DM or Sound Field Systems'.

3.0 SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT - INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 At times, surplus or loaner equipment may be assigned to a student based on the recommendation of the audiologist instead of the purchase of new equipment.
- 3.2 If equipment is purchased using SEA funding, it will remain assigned to the student until it is no longer needed, and it will move with the student from school to school (within and outside the school board). The board will store equipment for students who have moved out of board for one year to allow for out of board equipment requests before the equipment becomes the property of the board. The equipment becomes the property of the board if the student graduates or retires.
- 3.3 Please contact the Hearing Services staff of the Learning Services – Student Support Department (HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca) for support if:

- a. a student requests that the school stop using their Specialized Equipment;
 - b. a piece of equipment is broken and in need of repair; or
 - c. a piece of equipment is no longer in use.
- 3.4 Written consent is required by parent/guardian prior to the removal of SEA Equipment.
- 3.5 Students do not have to be identified as exceptional pupils through the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process to be eligible for equipment funded through SEA funding. However, students must be receiving special education programs and services and the use of SEA-funded equipment must be demonstrated in the student's IEP.
- 3.6 When equipment purchased, such as a sound field, it can be shared by multiple students. However, the purchase should be made in the name of one student. Names of all students sharing the equipment will be noted. In such case, when the student for whom the SEA claims-based equipment was purchased moves to a new board, the equipment will move with the student, unless it is determined by the receiving board that it is not required.
- 3.7 SEA Hearing equipment can travel between home and school if the student requires the use of the hearing equipment from home, i.e., co-op, remote learning, remote speech/language therapy etc. Please complete AF3406 "Specialized Equipment Loan – Plan for Borrowing and Assumption of Responsibilities" and submit to HearingServicesDepartment@bwdsb.on.ca if the SEA hearing equipment will be traveling between home and school.

Appendix A

Specialized Equipment Amount Funding - Bluewater District School Board Guidelines for Sound Field and Personal DM System Recommendations

Background

DM Sound field systems are often recommended as a general accommodation within the classroom environment in order to assist teacher voices; improve student listening environment for all students; and provide an increased ability to communicate. All students and teachers benefit from DM Sound Fields, but they may be recommended as an additional accommodation to support students with attention difficulties; specific cognitive deficits; and other learning needs. Schools may consider how to provide this type of accommodation within their building. Specialized Equipment Amount funding will only be considered for DM sound fields/personal DMs when there is a diagnosed hearing loss or central auditory processing deficit as outlined below:

Hearing Loss

Specialized equipment amount (SEA) funding can be used to support purchasing DM sound fields or personal DM systems for students where it is deemed essential due to a measurable diagnosed hearing loss. This loss must be determined by the board contracted audiologist to have long-term impact on the student's ability to access curriculum. The choice of personal DM vs. Sound Field will be made by the board contracted audiologist based on what would best suit the student's individual need.

Central Auditory Processing (CAP)

Specialized equipment amount (SEA) funding may be considered to support purchasing DM sound fields for students where it is deemed essential due to a diagnosed central auditory processing deficit. The diagnosis must be based on testing completed by an audiologist. Information from the audiologist must include: a summary of the concerns which led to the assessment of central auditory abilities, any known history of assessments or medical diagnosis that would relate to the issues of concern, and the CAP test results. The board accepts a definition of diagnosis of central auditory dysfunction based on the Canadian Guidelines on Auditory Processing, as follows:

"Diagnosis of abnormal performance on tests of auditory processing must be based on performance below the cut-off scores or performance criteria provided by the test manual (commonly defined as at least two standard deviations below the mean) on at least two tests. . . . where only results of only one test are used to diagnose auditory processing disorder, stricter criteria of performance deficits on one test of at least three standard deviations below the mean and reported significant functional difficulty in auditory behaviours reliant on the process are appropriate."

* For our purposes, when test materials are divided into sub-tests, these sub-tests are considered all part of one test. Therefore, failure on any number of the subtests will constitute failure of one test.

If the test results (and reported auditory behaviours where appropriate) meet the definition of central auditory dysfunction, the board contracted audiologist will request additional school information using AF 6981 "Audiology-Central Auditory Processing Referral Information" form. This school information, along with the assessment data from the community audiologist, will be used to determine if a trial is appropriate. If a trial is initiated, evidence will be collected to determine if DM support is essential and improves access to curriculum.

NOTE: use of personal DM systems for non-hearing loss issues has proven to be ineffective in the long term and has not resulted in increased access to curriculum. Therefore, the standard for CAP will be a sound field unless the board contracted audiologist deems there are mitigating circumstances that should be considered. These mitigating circumstances will be discussed on an individual basis with the Hearing Services staff of the Learning Services – Student Support Department.

School staff will follow AP 6915-D "Specialized Equipment – Hearing Loss and Central Auditory Processing Deficits Disorder" to access board contracted audiology services and to complete SEA funding paperwork.

* Canadian Guidelines on Auditory Processing, CASLPO, 2012