

NIMAC Impact Summary

June 2020

Who we are

The **National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC)** was created by IDEA 2004. It is the national source file repository for K-12 instructional materials.

The NIMAC receives **National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)** files from educational publishers and makes these files available to states for use in the production of **accessible educational materials (AEM)** for qualifying K-12 students.

Our process

- SEAs and LEAS **require NIMAS** in textbook contracts.
- Publishers **create NIMAS files** and submit them to the NIMAC.
- The NIMAC catalogs and makes the files available in its **online system**.
- NIMAC users **download** the files and **produce accessible formats**.
- Agencies distribute **accessible materials to qualifying students**.

Case Study

In 2019, the NIMAC and the NIMAC's external evaluator, Evergreen Evaluation & Consulting, Inc. (EEC), along with the Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMC-VI), undertook a case study to examine the importance of AEM, with a **focus on the experience of braille readers, and how NIMAS/NIMAC support timely delivery of accessible formats**.

69 parents, 63 Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs), and 312 NIMAC users responded to the surveys.

37 parents, TVIs, and other professionals were interviewed as part of the case study.

Findings

Timely delivery of AEM makes a difference.

When students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI) **have access to AEM at the same time** as their sighted peers they...



- have more equitable access to opportunity.
- can gain literacy and other skills alongside their sighted peers.
- are more likely to engage in active learning and achieve independence.

Parents, who responded, indicated the top 3 things they liked about braille were: **Enables independence (59%), Helps students keep up with their peers (59%), and Enables literacy (51%).**

86% of the parents who responded indicated that the availability of braille materials allows students to learn as fast as their peers.

When students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI) **don't have access to AEM at the same time** as their sighted peers they...



- are significantly less likely to make the same learning gains.
- may become complacent and struggle to become independent learners.
- may experience negative social and emotional outcomes.

93% of TVIs surveyed identified that **one of the most important factors in supporting similar learning gains is students receiving accessible formats at the same time as their peers.**

"Braille makes it so you're on the same playing field as your peers."
–TVI

"Braille makes my child want to read."
–Parent

"Giving [students] access to braille encourages [students] to ask for more and be more in charge of their education."
–TVI

"When [my son] had the braille, his peers saw him as someone who could do the same work that they could do."
–Parent

Case Study and Survey Responses Demonstrate that NIMAC/NIMAS is vital to supporting the Timely Delivery of Materials to Students:

The central repository of NIMAS files...

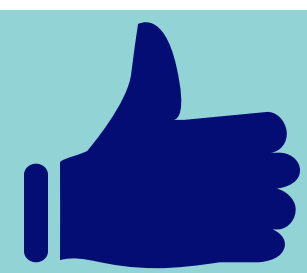
...allows fast, direct access to files, enabling users to start AEM production sooner than if they had to obtain files directly from publishers.

The standard NIMAS file format...

...enables producers to bypass scanning and spend less time formatting.

Efficient production of AEM...

...results in the timely delivery of high-quality AEM to students.



81% of Accessible Media Producers (AMPs) surveyed agreed that the NIMAC/NIMAS increase the ease with which they produce AEM.

“It's much faster to produce braille when you can start with an accurate electronic file rather than having to scan and OCR textbooks, which is labor intensive.” – Authorized User

“Some of these books that I'd never consider putting into braille, because of having to scan them, now, with the NIMAS file, I can do it.” –Authorized User

Participants in the Case Study Also Noted Challenges in Receiving Materials



Only 43% of parents responding to the survey reported that their child always receives materials on time.

TVIs often have to braille teacher-created materials, Open Educational Resources, or other materials that are not received by the NIMAC. Only 13% of TVIs surveyed reported that when digital materials are not accessible, there is a braille version always readily available.

“My vision teachers have been up nights brailleing. That's too much, they should be at home with their kids and family.” –Student