# Report of the Educational Products Advisory Committee

# to the Trustees of the

# American Printing House for the Blind

#  Fiscal Year 2022

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Educational Products Advisory Committee (EPAC) is:

* To advise the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in establishing priorities, standards, and policies regarding products.
* To review research and development priorities, suggest additional areas of interest, and advise APH staff on the prioritization of needs and projects.
* To review products under development and to consider approval of finished products for purchase with Federal Quota funds.
* To recommend parents, caregivers, students, clients, and professionals in the field serve as subjects for research or field-test purposes, as project consultants, and/or as committee members.

## INTRODUCTION

In March 2022, the EPAC met in Louisville, KY, at APH, for the twenty-first year as a formal advisory committee to address the 2021 EPAC report and to develop commendations and recommendations for the current fiscal year. To assist with this endeavor, presentations were made by APH’s product development staff, including progress updates on the 2021 recommendations, operations, and information on new initiatives.

## COMMENDATIONS

The EPAC commends APH for the following:

1. Our input is driving discussion, action, and positive changes at APH as evidenced by follow-through of recommendations from EPAC in 2021.
2. Development of the Road Maps and use of a gap analysis in that process is resulting in the thoughtful creation and updating of critical products.
3. We appreciate the intentional focus on inclusive products that are universally designed so that students are more willing and excited to use them as are their peers.
4. Many of the new products are being designed with end goals in mind such as improved employment outcomes.
5. Technology products are being designed to fill identified needs based on feedback from the field.
6. Providing training to support professionals in the effective use of APH products.

**Consistent with the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind (1879), the Educational Products Advisory Committee (EPAC) recommends that APH:**

1. Streamline access to training videos, product content information, user reviews, Access Academy and the Hive that are connected to specific products.
2. Continue improving the website. Some improvements that should be considered for the website are:
	1. Certain products could benefit from having more than a short description. Inclusion of an activity, lesson or the table of contents could provide users with a more comprehensive understanding of the product.
	2. For discontinued and/or active products, consider providing information on alternative products that perform similar functions. This similar product section could replace the current “Other Products” section.
	3. Create a mechanism that generates suggestions for related products when ordering items such as textbooks (example: a health textbook is ordered, “Have you considered ordering the Health Education Tactile Graphics book?”).
3. For students transitioning from print to braille reading, the EPAC committee recommends prioritizing the creation of braille curricular materials to support their literacy needs. This was identified in the gap analysis by APH as the product in-between Building on Patterns and the Illinois Braille Series.
4. In an effort to increase the number of requests for braille materials:
	1. Consider broadening the criteria for new transcription of materials based on each state’s needs.
	2. Decrease the length of time of braille textbook production.
5. Explore reducing the price of the digital large print book files. Even though the APH files are of higher quality than free files from other agencies, most schools will download the free digital files.
6. Encourage collaboration between EPAC and ESAC commendations and recommendations through scheduled meetings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Educational Products Advisory Committee 2022

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