UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

June 22, 2012

Dear Colleague:

The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) details the minimum standard that State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) must meet in order to comply with the requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to provide instructional materials to blind persons or other persons with print disabilities (see IDEA sections 612(a)(23)(A), 613(a)(6), and 674(e)(4)). Specifically, as a standard for digital source files that can be used to accurately and reliably produce instructional materials in a variety of alternate formats using the same source file, the NIMAS helps to increase the availability and timely delivery of print instructional materials in accessible formats to blind or other persons with print disabilities in elementary and secondary schools.

The purpose of this letter is to address the use of the most recent version of the Mathematical Markup Language (MathML) Structure Guidelines. The most recent version of the MathML guidelines is MathML3. These guidelines reflect the most effective method of providing accessible print instructional materials involving mathematical and scientific content to students who are blind or who have print disabilities, and do not conflict with the minimum requirements in the NIMAS.

The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard Center (Center), funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Department), recommends that the most recent version of MathML be used to improve the accessibility of mathematical and scientific content in core instructional materials.[1] The Center has concluded that use of MathML3 will improve the format and presentation of mathematical and scientific content and assist SEAs and LEAs in providing accessible core instructional materials. As stated by the Center in its letter transmitting the MathML3 Structure Guidelines to the Department:

> The MathML3 Structure Guidelines will provide the community of stakeholders responsible for the production of NIMAS filesets with essential guidance in best practice markup of mathematics and science content…

In order to assist the publishing and conversion houses to create a well-formed and valid MathML markup, the Center created an addendum to the existing DAISY/NIMAS Structure Guidelines. Updated Guidelines are available online at http://www.daisy.org/z3986/structure/

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[1] The NIMAS, which is codified in Appendix C of the IDEA regulations in 34 CFR Part 300, does not address the markup of mathematical and scientific content, and MathML3 does not contain any recommendations that conflict with the NIMAS.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

SG-DAISY3/index.html. The MathML3 version has been approved by the DAISY Consortium.[2] The addendum to the DAISY/NIMAS Structure Guidelines will be updated again in the next few months, and will provide those responsible for the production of NIMAS filesets with essential guidance in best practice markup of mathematical and scientific content.

In conclusion, the NIMAS, as codified in Appendix C of the IDEA regulations, continues to meet IDEA requirements. We encourage SEAs and LEAs, however, to ask publishers to use the MathML3 Structure Guidelines recommended by the Center when requesting NIMAS files. We look forward to continuing our work together to ensure equal access to education opportunities and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

/s/	/s/
Melody Musgrove, Ed.D.	Alexa Posny, Ph.D.
Director	Assistant Secretary
Office of Special Education Programs	Office of Special Education
	and Rehabilitative Services

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[2] The DAISY consortium develops, maintains, and promotes open international DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) standards.