Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Department of Education

October 8, 2013

Dear Principal:

Enclosed are your school discs for installing Word Q/Speak Q. If you do not have local personnel to install this, please ensure that they are kept in a secure location until your regional tech person is able to do so. We will not be able to replace misplaced or lost discs. If you require the help of a regional tech person, please consult with him or her to arrange for this to be done.

Previously, the software was provided, upon application, to students with exceptionalities whose program planning teams determined that assistive software was a necessary accommodation in line with their learning profiles. The Department of Education has now purchased a provincial license for this software so that it can be installed on all computers in the K-12 system. This software will be available to all students for occasional use as a learning/instructional tool. Care must be taken to ensure that educators are clear on its usage.

All students are exposed to a variety of learning experiences and teaching strategies in our classrooms. They may listen to a story read aloud by a teacher, or use independent study as an approach to a particular unit of study. Sometimes classes may use a word processor as part of their writing tasks. Similarly, Word Q/Speak Q can be a useful tool for many students. However, it is not meant to replace or derail a student learning to read independently or develop writing skills. As a teaching tool, Word Q may be helpful to many students during introduction to keyboarding when their accuracy is low. Speak Q may allow a student to access a specific text which is particularly challenging for the grade level.

This tool may be used as an ongoing, daily accommodation only if a student has been identified with an exceptionality and the program planning team has recommended Word Q/Speak Q as an accommodation related to that exceptionality. Similarly, using such software in an assessment setting – including provincial assessments - is not a given. Use of this software is still covered by the guidelines around accommodations outlined in the *Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities* and the *Department of Education's Public Examinations Accommodations Policy*.
(www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentsupportservices/publications/accommodationpolicy.pdf)

Providing province-wide access to this resource will mean that those who need it for an accommodation will not have to apply to obtain the software and that all other students may use it occasionally as part of ongoing classroom instruction. Educators must use their professional judgment, with reference to the *Service Delivery Model for Students with Exceptionalities*, in order to determine when occasional usage crosses the line and becomes an accommodation. (See www.cdli.ca/resources/sdm/DocumentSection/SDMChapter4.pdf and accompanying media resources which help clarify this.) Accommodations are reserved for students with exceptionalities when the student's program planning team has determined that the tool is an ongoing requirement for the student's learning as reflected in his or her comprehensive assessment.

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Students who use Word Q/ Speak Q as an accommodation are also permitted to install the software on their home computer. Students may borrow the CDs provided in this package which are designated for student use. However, for homes which have good connectivity, it may be easier to download the free 30-day trial version from www.goqsoftware.com/ and then enter the code(s) supplied below in order to extend its use. Please note that the company has supplied this information in good faith with the understanding that it will not be distributed further than this and that the codes will not be communicated by public means such as an online or web posting.

The same CD may be used to install this program in French and/or English. If French is selected, the appropriate French voices should be chosen as an option during installation. If this is not done at installation, they may be added later by visiting the WQ/SQ site (see address above) and selecting *Additional Voice Packs* at the bottom of the page.

The codes for **student home use** are:

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRINICIPAL OR THE CONSULTANTS BELOW IF YOU REQUIRE THESE CODES. THEY ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE POSTED ON A WEBSITE WITH OPEN ACCESS.

Online resources are available to support this software.

Quick Start Guides (in French and English) for this software are available at http://www.goqsoftware.com/resources/quick-start-guides/

There are also video tutorials available at http://www.goqsoftware.com/en/learning-center/video-tutorials/

Once this software has been installed in schools by the tech staff, schools will no longer be required to apply to the DoE for this software. Its use will be governed by the guidelines provided by the DoE accompanying the software.

Please share this information with your teachers, both IRTs and classroom/subjects as this software will now be available as an instructional tool for all students.

For further information or clarification, please contact the following consultants at the Department of Education:

Sharon Whalen sewhalen@gov.nl.ca 709-729-3592
or
Jackie Fewer-Bennett jackiefewerbennett@gov.nl.ca 709-729-3012.

Sincerely,

Original signed

Bernie Ottenheimer
Director
Student Support Services Division