NIMAS and Mathematical Markup Language (MathML) Structure Guidelines

On June 22, 2012, the Office of Special Education Programs and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) at the US Department of Education issued a "Dear Colleague" letter encouraging state and local educational agencies to ask publishers to use new MathML 3 Structure Guidelines when requesting NIMAS files.

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 students with print disabilities in elementary and secondary schools.

In publicizing the new MathML 3 Structure Guidelines, the Department notes that 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." With this announcement in hand, States and local districts that are actively adopting textbooks or otherwise updating their accessible textbook policies in compliance with NIMAS can confidently add MathML 3 to their requirements, thus making the complex equations in their math texts accessible when read by students using their assistive technology.