

FY 2007 QUESTION NUMBER: 42

QUESTION:

What is the rationale for purchasing a new IEP system? Is a new system available from the state at no cost?

BUDGET PAGE REFERENCE: 4-14

ANSWER:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has mandated that all districts provide special education student data in a standard format and has contracted with a vendor to create a simple Individualized Education Plan (IEP) online tool to meet this need. This IEP online tool is able to create IEP documents however; it does not have the ability to communicate with other local district information systems or databases. Therefore, MSDE has given local education agencies (LEAs) the option to use this simple IEP online tool or explore other options that would better meet the LEA's needs.

The new web-based integrated system purchased by MCPS, Encore, will not only create IEP documents that comply with state requirements, but also the ability to communicate with other MCPS databases, such as the OASIS student information system, the Student Referral/Early Intervention database, the Collaborative Action Process (CAP) database, Section 504 services database, transportation services database, and Medical Assistance tracking system. Several internal special education databases also will be transferred to the Encore suite.

This level of information integration means improved efficiency for MCPS staff and improved services to students through timely access to student intervention information from a "single source." Future plans include providing secure read-only access of selected Encore modules to parents of students receiving services to enhance school-parent communication. The state's online IEP tool does not provide any of these significant functions.