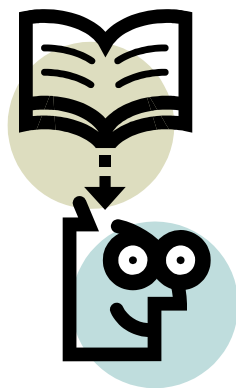


# Encore/State IEP



December 2006  
Updates and  
Frequently Asked  
Questions



## **IEP Meeting Questions**

### **What equipment should be used for IEP meetings?**

The Department of Special Education Services and Operations provided each school and most Special Education offices with a laptop and LCD projector for IEP Team meetings. By projecting the IEP on a wall or screen so all team members can see the form and the questions under discussion; the meeting can proceed quickly with better understanding.

### **Must schools use the laptop and LCD projector?**

The Department of Special Education Services and Operations strongly suggests that teams use the equipment to enhance the understanding of the entire process. If the parent requests the LCD projector not be used however, that request should be honored.

### **Why did schools only receive one laptop computer and one LCD projector?**

The availability of funds dictated how much equipment was purchased. This one set was purchased primarily for use in conference rooms or meeting rooms of schools, where the school would typically not have computer equipment. A laptop (which is more expensive than a desktop) was purchased to provide portability.

### **Does this mean only one IEP meeting can be held at one time?**

No. Many schools currently hold multiple meetings at the same time. In the same way IEP teams plan for room use, they now can plan for projection set up. For example, if one IEP Team meeting is in the conference room (with no other computer), the Encore laptop and LCD projector would be best there. If another IEP Team meeting is in the Special Education team room, there is probably a school desktop computer there, so borrowing an LCD from the Media Center and connecting to that desktop computer would provide projection to that meeting. Using an LCD projector may be new for some staff, but with practice, this will become an important and easy to use part of the meetings.

### **How should the confidential IEPs be secured?**

Federal and State law require that student's file be secure. School staff must take reasonable steps to insure student's record remain secure. While posting the blank IEPs and other support documentation on the public T-Shared folder on the school server is acceptable, keeping completed student IEPs in the public T-Shared folder is not a good idea. Keep draft or completed IEPs in an individual teacher's folder, or ask your school's technology support person to create a 'Special Education' folder and grant access only to those staff that need to see the forms. If teachers work on IEPs at home, the same concerns apply; take reasonable steps to keep that information secure.

### **During the transition from MCPS IEPs to MSDE IEPs, what happens if a meeting gets postponed over the transition?**

January 1, 2007 is the designated day for staff to transition to the MSDE IEP. All IEPs that are developed after that date should be written on the new IEP. That being said, there will be unusual situations in which an IEP was written on the MCPS form, but the meeting was postponed until after the transition. In that situation, there is no need to transfer all the information to a new IEP. For any IEP written after January 1, 2007 the MSDE forms must be used.

### **At a meeting held in the Fall of 2006, suppose the ESY decision was deferred until the Spring of 2007. What IEP form does the team use at the Spring meeting?**

In this case, the IEP Team should continue with the IEP form that was used at the Fall meeting, and enter the Spring decisions on ESY on that same form. There is no need to duplicate the information on the MCPS form to the MSDE form. The IEP Team will need to save a complete copy of the MCPS form, since that will not be available online after January 1, 2007.

### **How are signatures recorded on the new IEP?**

On page 1, the names of the meeting participants are to be entered on the form by typing their names, indicating their attendance. If an individual does not attend the meeting, his/her name cannot be entered. The participation of the legally-mandated members of an IEP team is of the utmost importance to MCPS, MSDE and the Federal Government, so this section will be monitored closely to be sure MCPS is complying with all regulations.

On page 21, there are two lines for parent signature. The first signature is in the section for an initial IEP. In this case, follow this procedure:

1. Complete the IEP and print
2. Ask the parent to sign the top section indicating agreement to initiate the IEP
3. Place the signed copy in the confidential file, which must contain the actual signature
4. On the computer IEP form, type the parent's names, indicating the signature is on file.

The second section of page 21 is only for parents of a student receiving medical assistance. If the student is medical assistance eligible, follow this procedure:

1. Complete the IEP and print
2. Ask the parent to sign the medical assistance section and make a copy
3. Send the copy to the DSE office and place the original in the confidential file
4. On the computer IEP form, type the parent's names, indicating the signature is on file.

### **Who will be typing on the computerized IEP at the meetings?**

This process will vary by school. School staff are strongly encouraged to discuss this prior to your first meeting using the new IEP. It is very difficult for the individual who is presenting the bulk of the information at meeting to also be entering information on the computer, so the logical choice is to have one of the IEP team members who are not doing the majority of the presentation do the typing. The four members of the 'typical' IEP Team include: the Special

Educator, the General Educator, an MCPS Representative and the parent. If the Special Educator is doing the majority of the presentation then the MCPS Representative or the General Educator would be logical choices for the person typing the information. Since the information is being projected, any mistakes can be corrected immediately.

**Some of the IEP fields to document discussion are very small. What should IEP Teams do if the information does not fit?**

This is an area of major concern, since the form does not provide enough space to record discussions on some of the pages. As a temporary solution, The Department of Special Education Services and Operations recommends using MCPS form 336-01, *Addendum to MCPS Forms* as the additional space to record discussions. In any one of the fields, the IEP Team could type ‘The reason for this decision is... (see Addendum form)’. This Addendum form is on the MCPS web and will be on the Resource CD.

**Will this new IEP mean IEP Team meetings will be longer?**

There are many factors that will enter into determining meeting length. If staff are familiar with the forms; enter appropriate information before the meeting; share goals with parents; have the equipment set up; are familiar with the equipment, and have the roles established, IEP meetings may be the same length as with the MCPS forms. Providing 60-90 minutes for meetings may be a good starting point, but that time may be adjusted based on actual time of those first meetings.

**If the school loses power during the IEP Team meeting, does the meeting stop?**

Schools should have a blank IEP paper copy available in such a situation, and may wish to use that to complete the meeting. The Encore laptops have batteries, so even if staff cannot use the LCD projector during a power outage, the laptop can still be used for about an hour (with a full charge). There may be, however, IEP Team meetings that have progressed far into the document or are complicated or very detailed, and the team cannot see the same document. In these instances, it might be more prudent to postpone the meeting to another time.

**If the school loses power during a IEP Team meeting, is the information on the IEP lost?**

The Department of Special Education Services and Operations recommends that the document be saved every 10-15 minutes during preparation or the IEP Team meeting, so a limited amount of data is lost if power is lost.

**How will the IEP forms be available to schools?**

Schools can obtain the forms from Outlook or from the Resource CD that will be made available to each school. The forms will be available as one large file that is most appropriate for the case manager to work from. The forms are also available as individual pages for providers such as itinerants.

### **Can teachers work at home on the IEP?**

The Special Education Adobe Acrobat home loan program is still in effect. The process for requesting a loaner Acrobat CD for home installation is described in the Special Education Folder in Outlook. After receiving the registration form, teachers will receive the Acrobat 5.0 install CD and the Acrobat 5.0.5 upgrade CD.

### **What version of Adobe Acrobat do teachers need to work on the new IEP?**

The new State IEP in Adobe Acrobat was created in version 5.0.5, which is the version The Department of Special Education Services and Operations has purchased for teachers. The form should also work reliably in version 6.0 which is installed at some schools. Some recent MCPS forms have been created with newer versions of Adobe Acrobat, which has caused some problems, but the IEP has been created in 5.0.5 to eliminate these problems.

### **How are parents being informed of the new State IEP?**

The Encore team will be holding parent information sessions from November to January and are also available to present to school clusters if requested. Even with these parent sessions, many parents will see the new IEP for the first time when they attend their IEP Team meeting. This fact makes projection of the new State form for all to see very important.

### **When will new teachers be trained on the State IEP?**

The Encore team will be providing regular training for all new staff. More information on this training will be available on the Encore web page.

### **Why is the order of the meeting different than with the MCPS forms?**

Federal and State law mandate the component of a student's IEP, but does not provide clear directions on the order or sequence that IEP teams are to follow. The State IEP sequence is a suggested one for IEP teams to follow, but it is not always required to proceed line by line. For example, the first page has the line to indicate Service School, which should not be decided until the end of the meeting. All required fields should be completed by the end of the IEP team meeting.

### **Is the IEP completed for a student decided not eligible for services?**

MSDE is now requiring all jurisdictions to gather information on those students who are found eligible as well as those students not found eligible. The most efficient tool to collect that information is page 1 and 2 of the State IEP. So all eligibility meetings should complete page 1 and 2, if the student is found not eligible teams may stop at that point.

### **Will the new form be translated into other languages?**

The process of translating all forms into the native languages of parents is an extremely complicated process. MCPS will continue to explore options on how legally mandated translations will be provided.

### **What exactly does ‘documented observation and classroom performance’ mean?**

The IEP has many sections that require information from the teacher about student performance. The information entered here should be the typical information teachers use each day to evaluate student performance. On some occasions, this may be an assessment, graded student work, or even class work. Many times, evidence of student performance is through teacher observation. While there is no lengthy or formal written document required, some record keeping must be in place to document the observation to report on student performance.

### **When is the IEP Team meeting ‘done’?**

An IEP Team meeting is completed when all required decisions are made, and the rationales for those decisions are clearly recorded, and sufficient information has been documented to provide the parents with prior written notice (PWN). To satisfy all the legal requirements of PWN, the IEP Team must ask parents if there were any options requested and considered but not implemented. If so, these must be entered on the PWN document.

### **Why is MCPS moving toward year round or rolling IEPs?**

IDEA requires that a student’s IEP be implemented ‘as soon as possible’ after development. The practice of holding most annual review IEP Team meetings in the spring and implementing them the following fall was necessitated in part by administrative needs involving staffing, facilities, transportation, etc. As school systems throughout the nation, including MCPS, move to more inclusion of Special Education students in their home schools, the need for administrative delays are lessened. Student’s IEPs can be implemented more efficiently, and student’s needs can be addressed in a more timely manner through the year round or rolling IEP process.

### **Year round IEPs make sense, but doesn’t that mean a new meeting every time the student is transitioning, for example from elementary to middle school?**

Identifying and planning for student transitions have always been a challenge for IEP teams. The move to electronic IEPs can provide a better process to implement this. Once an IEP has been developed for a student, the key ‘components’ of what the student needs will not change even though the school building or schedule may change. An electronic IEP offers the ability to adjust the IEP to cover these transitions. The following would be a possible scenario for a mid-year IEP Team meeting for a student who will transition from elementary to middle school:

1. The IEP Team creates an IEP with the key components for the student’s current needs, with the understanding that this IEP will be in effect from January to June.
2. The IEP Team then discussed any changes needed to the IEP as a result of the transition to the new school. This may include minor changes to goals, services or LRE

discussions and may result in additional copies of those pages needed to reflect the changes.

3. If the plan needs further revisions based on unexpected changes from January to June, the IEP team should reconvene.

### **Will the new IEP permit inserting pages?**

For electronic insertion of pages, no. This option was explored, but this form has more places to enter data (fields) than the old MCPS IEP and relies much more on form cohesiveness for completing Prior Written Notice. IEP Team member may continue to use individual pages to enter information, print those and insert them into the final paper IEP.

### **Why is there a new procedure for referring students to Central IEP meetings (CIEP)?**

The Maryland State Department of Education has advised MCPS to change its CIEP referral procedures. When a school is referring a student to CIEP, this means the school believes the current IEP for this student does not meet his or her needs. The school prepares a new IEP for the CIEP team to consider which typically includes services from a separate Special Education school or non-public school. While the CIEP process is taking place, the school cannot continue to serve that student with the current IEP that the school has acknowledged is not meeting the student's needs. Some additional supports must be provided during this process. Typically these additional supports, such as flash passes, weekly or daily check-in with the counselor and so on. These additional supports must be documented on the current IEP, which now becomes a new three month IEP. The term interim IEP is no longer to be used.

### **There are many questions about the new IEP as it relates to students in special programs such as Preschool, Speech and Language and others. How will this information be provided?**

The Department of Preschool Education and Related Services staff identify key issues and periodically inform their program staff of best practices. This process will continue with the introduction of the new State IEP. Each program supervisor or director will work with their staff to develop procedures that work best for their individual programs. Some components of the IEP are required for all staff, but others such as individual goals and objectives, may be very different from program to program.

### **What are the 4 'Data Collection' sheets at the end of the IEP?**

The Department of Special Education Services and Operations has developed these sheets to collect student data from July 2007 to December 2007 when the SEDS mainframe will be turned off. These tools are not available yet but these draft documents will explain the process. They will not be part of the electronic IEP in January 2007.

## **Encore Questions**

### **Will parents have access to their child's IEP in Encore?**

This option is being explored as a possibility. Encore allows for read-only access to all, or specific pages of the IEP.

### **Who will determine access levels to Encore?**

The Encore data team will be responsible for assigning access for every MCPS staff member. For classroom teachers, they will have access to their students in the class. For resource teachers, they will have access to students in their schools. For teachers at multiple locations, they will have access at each of their locations. For cluster based staff, they will have access to their cluster schools. Future plans for Encore include training of administrative and general education staff so they may access the information.

### **When MCPS moves to Encore in January 2008, will the current Acrobat IEP information move to Encore?**

No. Some basic information that is typically reported as SEDS data can be transferred, but the bulk of the IEP will not.

### **Is there more help if staff still have questions about Encore or the State IEP?**

Transitioning to a new form will bring forth many questions. As part of the transition to Encore, Special Education has set up a full time Encore team to assist staff with implementation and ongoing support for the project. The Encore team consists of: Paul Bruening, Encore Project Manager, Karen Kosian, Data Specialist, and Patricia Grundy, Data Operator. Transition to the State IEP and then Encore will be an ongoing process, and to address this, the following supports are planned: after school Q & A meetings for all staff, a new State IEP folder in the Special Education conference on Outlook, training sessions for new staff, and calling the SEDS/Encore office at 301-279-3760 are all ways to get more information on the new process.

## **Page 1 – Student Information**

### **Why are IEP Teams asked to identify only one primary disability?**

The purpose of providing a primary disability meets the federal requirements for identifying a student who needs special education services. A student must have a Federally identified disability and that disability must have an educational impact on the student. If a student demonstrates more than one disability, the IEP team is charged with determining which of those should be designated as the primary disability to meet the Federal requirement. Once that requirement is met, IEP teams then look at the ‘entire’ student to determine what services are appropriate. Once identified as needing Special Education services, any service is available to the student based on the IEP team decision.

### **In the IEP Team participants section, can one name be listed in more than one space?**

The requirement of 4 key participants at every IEP Team meeting is still in effect, and those key participants are:

1. Parent
2. Special educator
3. General educator of the student
4. Principal or designee who can speak to school or staff resources

Once those participants are present, their names can appear in multiple places on Page 1. For example, the Special Educator is likely to also be the IEP Case Manager.

### **Must an IEP Team meeting be held for all changes to the IEP?**

No. For minor changes to an IEP, schools may use MCPS Form 336-50 *Individualized Education Program Amendment*. This form documents the discussion between the case manager and parent concerning a minor change to the IEP. This discussion may be on the telephone or in person. The case manager, parent and administrator sign the form indicating acceptance of the changes and then those may be implemented without a full IEP Team meeting.

### **What if a parent cannot or does not attend an Annual Review IEP team meeting?**

These procedures have not changed, if a parent gives written or oral permission to proceed with an IEP team meeting, record on the IEP Team Participants sections ‘permission given’ and the date of the call or letter. If a parent does not attend even after 3 documented attempts to hold the meeting, place a note on the IEP Team Participants section, such as ‘see page 5’ and document the attempts in the parent information section.

### **Can the IEP Case Manager also be the IEP Chair?**

Yes. Individual schools may determine which staff members fulfill the roles on the IEP Team Participants section. The 4 key participants must be indicated.

**It is very difficult to get a general educator to attend the entire IEP team meeting, can they be excused?**

No. The Department of Special Education Services and Operations is working very hard with other MCPS offices to address this issue, and is very aware of how difficult this is in some schools. The Federal and State law is clear; a general educator of the student must be present at the IEP team meeting. As MCPS moves more toward an inclusive model of providing services to students, the requirement is becoming more important. A suggestion to help in this situation is to be sure that general educators participate fully in the meeting. They should not just repeat the student's grades. There is little incentive for a general educator to stay if they only participate for a few minutes. The general educator's classroom experiences with the student are crucial to what the IEP team should ultimately be deciding. The chairperson should explore all opportunities to invite the general educator's comments during the IEP team meeting.

**Does there need to be a general educator at an IEP meeting for a student at a separate Special Education school?**

Not necessarily. If a student is in a separate Special Education school and there are no plans for inclusion, a general educator of the appropriate grade level would not be needed. When in doubt, check with your program supervisor or principal.

## **Page 2 – Eligibility**

**An IEP Team must hold a meeting to consider reevaluation and complete a reevaluation planning form. Does that meeting require any of the IEP to be completed?**

No, for this planning meeting, the first part of the Reevaluation Planning and Determinations form is all that needs to be completed.

**On the IEP, there are several questions that refer to 'determinant factors' for a student's lack of progress. The Process Guide seems to have different information on this. Which is right?**

The IEP Team must consider the determinant factors for a student's lack of progress. This means if a student's lack of progress is due solely to any of the listed factors, then the student is not eligible for Special Education services. The determinant factors will have to be addressed educationally, but not by means of Special Education. (The wording in the Process Guide leads IEP Teams to believe that there may be other factors to consider, such as the presence of a disability. The Process Guide will be revised by MSDE to match the wording on the IEP).

**Some of the questions on this page of the MSDE IEP are the same as on the current MCPS eligibility and reevaluation forms, are both to be used?**

Yes. Page 2 of the State IEP is primarily a data collection tool. The discussion for both determining initial eligibility and reevaluation is more completely outlined in the MCPS forms,

so IEP teams should continue to use those MCPS forms to guide your discussion, and record the summary of those discussions and decisions on Page 2.

### **Why are there discussion and documentation areas on page 2?**

To receive Special Education service, Federal and State law require two conditions be satisfied:

1. The presence of one of the Federally defined disabilities
2. The IEP team determines that this disability has an educational impact on the student.

Many students have disabilities, but not all have such an educational impact that they require specialized instruction, so they are not eligible for Special Education services.

### **The discussion areas on page 2 seem very similar, how do they differ?**

In the Initial Eligibility section and the Continued Eligibility section, the questions of ‘Identify area(s) impacted...’ and ‘Discussion to support decision’ are asking IEP Teams for the same information, that of how the disability is affecting the student. The Process guide lists the second Discussion field as optional, and MCPS will follow that direction. The ‘Documentation to support decision’ section is the educational impact statement, which is required.

### **Page 3 – Testing**

#### **At what age must IEP teams begin to inform parents of State Graduation Requirements?**

Prior to 2007, the general rule provided by the state was that the discussion about graduation requirements starts at the third grade. This was due to the fact that State Assessments were to be given at grade 3, and that would provide important background information for the IEP team to consider. Some recent discussion has implied that this discussion should actually take place once the student enters Kindergarten. MCPS is waiting for further clarification on this issue.

#### **There are many test scores required on this page, where is this information available?**

At the present time, staff will continue to use data sources such as the Instructional Management System (IMS), school files and Online Administrative Student Information System (OASIS) to find this data. The Department of Special Education Operations will continue to work to link current MCPS data warehouses (such as IMS) to Encore.

### **Page 4 – Present Levels**

#### **Each section of the present levels pages requires an ‘instructional grade level’. Where does that come from?**

To determine these levels, Special Education teachers must rely on a variety of measures, which fall into two main categories:

1. For any area with current standardized, curricular based, or classroom based assessment; those are the most appropriate measures to use to determine instructional grade level. Reading scores are a good example. There are many measures currently in use by MCPS to provide reading grade level information.
2. For any areas without current standardized, curricular based, or classroom based assessment; teachers are to use their best professional judgment to determine grade level. A good example of this is the oral language section. Without a speech evaluation, the grade level for Oral Language would best be documented as ‘above grade level, on grade level, or below grade level’ based on that teacher’s determination of how the student’s oral language impacts their instruction. For many students, this will not be an area of concern, so those students are ‘on grade level’. Some students may not exhibit a speech-language impairment, but have a difficult time expressing their ideas during a question and answer session or oral report. This information may lead to a general oral language goal addressed by the special educator.

### **What if a separate report provides information to determine Present Levels?**

The complete report should be available in the student confidential file, and a note on the Present Levels section should refer to that report as a basis for the summary on the IEP.

### **How are present levels reported for secondary students?**

Present levels of performance in academic areas for secondary students could be determined through current course information and formal or informal measures. A common concern is that a secondary student may not have a reading class: however, identifying the present levels of reading is crucial for success in academic areas such as English, Social Studies or Science that have heavy reading requirements. Information about reading performance can be gathered from curriculum based assessments, work samples and reading inventories.

### **The Health and Physical Present Level terms are confusing, what exactly do they refer to?**

The MSDE Process Guide, distributed in the Encore/IEP handbook, lists the types of issues to which that these sections refer. Please consult the Process Guide for a complete explanation.

### **Has there been a decision about a standard MCPS Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Plan format?**

Yes. In planning for the implementation of Encore, the Department of Special Education Services and Operations has decided to use a packet from the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, *Addressing Student Problem Behavior – An IEPs Teams’ Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans* which contains several FBA and BIP forms and has an excellent training guide to assist schools to implement the process. More on this will be new process will be shared with staff soon.

## **Page 5 – Present Levels – Parent input, other sources**

**The MCPS form 336-39 *Parent Report* sent to parents may contain much more information than will fit in the space on this page. What should be recorded?**

The IEP team should summarize to report the information on the *Parent Report* form that is relevant to IEP development in this section. Most parent report information can be captured this way. If the information cannot fit, then the *Addendum to MCPS Forms* can be used to capture that information.

**What information should go in question 3?**

This question addresses a very important component of the IEP, and should serve as the summary statement for all assessments and how they will help determine services for the student. Information about additional disabilities should be reported here (for the student who was previously coded 09/04), any formal testing information from a school psychologist, or any factor that helps determine appropriate services.

**Questions 3 and 4 seem to be the same – when do teams use these?**

For students entering grades K-12, staff will enter information on the first three questions only. For students in Preschool, staff will enter information in the last question, but not the third.

## **Page 6- 7 – Present Levels – Special Considerations**

**Would Speech and Language be listed in the required Communication section?**

No. This section usually refers to students who have ‘severe’ communication needs that require some type of intense support. The needs of students who are non-verbal and need some type of assistive technology to provide communication (such as a voice output device) would be recorded here.

**How does an IEP team record Assistive Technology?**

Assistive Technology (as well as other similar services) can fall into two main categories – a one time preview or consult OR a recurring or regularly scheduled service.

1. For those previews or consults that are a one time event, this would be recorded on the Supplementary Aids and Services page. These previews or consults would not be recorded in the Special Considerations page, since including it there requires a recurring or regularly scheduled service.
2. For ANY assistive technology service which is a recurring or regularly scheduled service, these would be recorded on the Special Considerations page AND on the Related Services page. Please note that many individuals can be assistive technology providers, and may include Assistive Technology specialists as well as other staff. In the case of

checking on an Alphasmart's batteries every week – that assistive technology service may be provided by the special education teacher or paraeducator.

**Who requires an assistive technology consult to determine if assistive technology is appropriate?**

The IEP team can determine assistive technology devices and services as appropriate. For most assistive technology devices and services, IEP Team members have sufficient background or experience with common AT tools such as pencil grips, slant boards, portable word processors, or computer word processors, to decide if these would be appropriate for a given student. The only time a consult by an AT specialist would be needed is if the IEP team feels they lack the expertise to consider special tools. AT specialists are provided by the InterACT team, the HIAT team, and the Special Education Technology team.

**Are common devices such as calculators or word processors listed here?**

The answer depends on the nature of the use of the device. Assistive technology is defined as devices and services that are required for that student to perform classroom tasks. So if that device was listed as AT, and it was removed, the student would not be able to perform the required classroom tasks. If a device is provided as instructional technology, then that device may provide easier access for the student, but the IEP team has not determined it is required to perform classroom tasks. A good example is the calculator: a student who uses a calculator as an instructional technology tool would help them perform the math problems more quickly, but if the calculator was removed they could still do the task although it may take a longer time. In the same example, if the calculator was an assistive technology device and was removed, the student could not complete the task at all.

**If assessment data, such as data from a functional behavioral assessment (FBA), indicates that a student may require temporary removals from the classroom for a limited period of time to have an opportunity to regain self-control, should the recommended removal be indicated on the student's IEP?**

Yes, such a therapeutic removal should be indicated on page 7 under "Behavioral Intervention" and be included in any behavioral intervention plan (BIP) developed for the student.

**Page 8-10 – Accommodations**

**Some of these terms on this page can be interpreted in different ways, can those terms be clarified?**

The *Maryland Accommodations Manual* provides an excellent explanation of the processes and terms used on the accommodations pages. The manual is on the MCPS Special Education web page as well as the MSDE web page.

### **What's new about these accommodation pages?**

The State IEP and Process Guide emphasize the fact that any accommodations checked here must be used in regular instruction as well as during any testing that takes place. Students should never use an accommodation only on testing day.

### **Would IEP Teams consider accommodations for students taking the Alt-MSA?**

Even though the Alt-MSA is given to students individually, there needs to be documentation of what accommodations the IEP Team is recommending during daily instruction.

### **For extended time, there is only a checkbox. Where is the amount of extended time indicated?**

On page 10 of the accommodation section, the bottom of the page has space for a discussion summary to indicate any additional information about the accommodations checked. If additional room is required, use the *Addendum to MCPS Forms*.

### **In the past, accommodations were entered on both the testing accommodations pages and on the supplementary aids and services pages. Does that continue?**

This question has been posed to MSDE but a definitive answer has not yet been received. In the past, the direction was given that accommodations and supplementary aids and services should match. The new State IEP process guide gives a very different interpretation; any support should be either an accommodation or supplementary aids and services, but not both. This interpretation directly conflicts with the rubric for the AYP Appeals document which is currently used for AYP appeals. More information will be provided as it is received.

### **What do the checkboxes on the right side of the form indicate?**

The following text is from page 5-1 of the 2005-2006 *Maryland Accommodations Manual*:

- (1) *Assessment: Standard Administration - the accommodation described is permitted for assessment and results in a standard administration of the assessment;*
  - (2) *Assessment: Non-Standard Administration - the accommodation described is permitted on state assessments, but will result in a non-standard administration of the assessment; and*
  - (3) *Use in Instruction - the accommodation is applicable to instructional situations.*
- Asterisks (\*) are used to indicate restrictions on the use of the accommodation for particular assessments*

The N/A indicator means that accommodation is not applicable to that assessment. For example, on page 8, the first accommodation listed is Large Print as a Visual Presentation Accommodation. If a student used this accommodation on a state assessment, it would not '*result in a non-standard administration of the assessment*'. Another example is Books on Tape on page 8, that accommodation is permitted in instruction only, and not for any Standard or Non-Standard state assessment.

## **When may the ‘Other’ boxes be used on the accommodations pages?**

The following text is from page 2-2 of the 2005-2006 *Maryland Accommodations Manual*:  
*The LAC must submit to MSDE, for approval, an accommodation beyond those listed in this document. The process typically would involve local special education, Section 504, ELL, and school-based staff, first identifying a potential need for an additional type of accommodation. These staff members would then contact the LAC would work with them and MSDE to obtain approval for the accommodation. The decision to not allow an accommodation for testing does not necessarily imply that the accommodation (or modification, adaptation, or other strategy) cannot be used for instruction. As MSDE determines whether to approve a new type of accommodation for assessment, MSDE considers the impact of the new accommodation on test validity. Addressing the issue of validity of an accommodation in an assessment situation involves an examination of the purpose of the test and the specific skills to be measured.*

## **Where did accommodations like ‘seating in the front of the room’ and ‘seating next to teacher’ go?**

All of these accommodations are now grouped under the large heading of ‘Reduce Distractions to the Student’.

## **Page 11 – Supplementary Aids and Services**

### **What types of supplementary aids and services would go on this page?**

The list below is taken directly from the draft MSDE Process Guide and should provide some guidance for IEP teams:

- Cross-age tutoring, peer partnerships
- Behavior intervention and support
- Instructional adaptations, such as adaptations in the manner in which information is presented, paced, or sequenced
- Curricular accommodations that change how a student accesses information and demonstrates learning
- Methods to measure performance such as a calculator or word processor
- Curricular modifications such as redesigning the size, breadth, or focus of the assignment
- Individualized supports such as rephrasing questions and instruction, allowance for additional time to respond
- Additional time for movement between classes
- Special seating arrangements
- Curricular aids
- Provide time frame for assignments with interim dates for deliverables
- Allow re-test
- Computer assisted writing technology/software
- Electronic books
- Voice recognition software

- Pre-written class notes, summaries, study guides, main idea summaries
- Organizational aids

**Isn't some of this information the same as what is listed on the Accommodations pages?**

Yes. The primary difference would be if a support is to be used in an actual testing situation, then it would belong on the accommodations pages and not on the supplemental aids and services page.

**Is this the page where enhanced staffing would be entered?**

Yes, but any consideration of the use of enhanced staffing must be discussed with the Special Education Cluster Supervisor well in advance of the meeting.

**On the Supplementary Aids and Services page, the team must record the location of the services – isn't that connected to the LRE decision?**

Yes, this page may be completed except the boxes that indicate location. Those locations should not be decided until the LRE page has been completed.

**Must each supplementary aid and service be recorded in a separate box?**

Due to a recent change in interpretation, more than one service may be entered in each service nature box as long as the other checkboxes apply to all those services. So if three supplementary aids and services are all provided in the general education environment and all on a daily basis, those three services may all be entered in the same service nature box.

**Page 13-15 – Transition**

**Who does the student interview on the Transition page?**

In most cases, this interview is conducted by the Transition Support Teacher assigned to the high school. If the student is in middle school, this interview may be conducted by the Special Education teacher. If the student attends the IEP team meeting, he or she may share this information or add to what was originally documented.

**What are post secondary goals?**

Post secondary goals are broad planning goals to assist students and families plan for the future. Post secondary goals are not annual goals. A common post secondary goal in the Education area could be 'continue education to apply to college', or for the Training area it could be 'to attend computer repair school'. One of these two areas is required.

### **Why is the Employment post secondary goal required?**

Transition planners strongly recommend that some long term goal be identified to help students and families work effectively toward that goal. While most students may change this goal yearly, there is still benefit in asking the student what they wish to do once they are done with all schooling. Some responses here may be: business, police, armed services, or even teaching.

### **Will the Encore program interface with the required Maryland Exit Document?**

Not at this time, but this is under active consideration.

## **Page 16 – Goals**

### **What is different about Goals in the State IEP?**

The biggest change with IEP goals is that progress is now measured toward the Annual goal, not the individual objectives. Staff will continue to monitor student progress in the same manner as before, but that progress is held to the measure of the Annual Goal. The State has also indicated that Annual Goals should be aligned with the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) whenever possible. Even though the VSC does not cover all students, it establishes guidelines for how goals should be written. Annual Goals are very broad goals that span several instructional grades. So for a math concern, it is very possible to have the same Annual Goal for more than one year, but have the appropriate objectives that relate to that student's progress on the Annual Goal.

### **Do teachers have to use the Voluntary State Curriculum?**

For students in grades PreK-8, it is strongly recommended that staff use the VSC for academic goals. For students in the FLS curriculum, or high school courses, or who have behavioral issues, staff can continue to create their own goals appropriate for that student. For high school students, goals may be developed from the MCPS curriculum for that course or area. It is important to note that the VSC can help guide staff in writing these goals – Annual Goals should be broad, and objectives should lead to measuring the Annual Goal.

### **What is the significance of the wording in the progress code section?**

The two codes for Goal Achieved and Goal not yet introduced are self-explanatory. 'Making sufficient progress to meet goal' indicates the teacher, in his/her professional judgment, believes that the student will complete the objectives listed that support work toward the annual goal. If goals are written properly and instruction is proceeding as planned, most students should fall in this category. The most important code on this page is 'Not making sufficient program to meet the goal' which indicates in spite of the best planning and instruction, the student is too far behind to meet the expectations for the annual goal set for them. In these instances, the IEP Team must meet to recommend appropriate measures. This section should not be seen as an equivalent to a 'grade' where achieved is passing and not making progress is failing. All students should be making progress on their individual goals, regardless of any grades they receive.

### **How often must goal progress be reported to parents?**

IEP progress must be reported as least as often as general education students receive progress updates. For the majority of students, that means quarterly updates. If parents may request additional goal updates, journals or phone calls would be appropriate to address those requests.

### **What do I do if I need more goals pages?**

The IEP will contain 8 pages for goals. Additional goals may be entered on the single goal page and inserted into the paper copy of the IEP.

### **Page 17-19, 19a, 19b – Services**

#### **What's the new way to enter services?**

After much internal discussion about the page 17, 18 and 19 services pages, it was decided that these pages will only serve as a guide to IEP teams. The actual services will be entered on new Service Summary pages, page 19a for school year services and page 19b for ESY services. The current bubble form would require too many pages and would be difficult to refer to later. Nothing can be entered on pages 17-19, but they need to remain as part of the IEP document as a reference for IEP teams on the choices they may consider.

#### **Does a student still need a 'primary' Special Education service before a 'related' Special Education service can be provided?**

Yes.

#### **How are sessions for Classroom Instruction identified?**

You don't. MCPS has adopted the wording under the Service Nature section on page 17. For Classroom Instruction only, IEP teams do not need to identify the number of sessions. An example may be, student is receiving services outside general education for 25 hours per week.

#### **There are many service providers listed on the Services pages – how should teams decide what providers can be entered?**

This procedure is unchanged, if the IEP team thinks that any service may be considered during an IEP meeting, it is best practice to consult with those individuals PRIOR to the meeting.

#### **Must the number of sessions be indicated for ALL services?**

All services should indicate the number of sessions with the hours of service and frequency except for classroom instruction. If the special education service of classroom instruction is entered do not enter number of sessions.

### **How should IEP Teams account for block schedules?**

Block scheduling is implemented in different ways at various schools. The two most important considerations for the IEP Team concerning block schedules is: a) the IEP Team and parent have a clear understanding of when any service is to be delivered, and b) the IEP Team calculate the weekly average of service, since this is the way MSDE requires services be reported. So if a student in block schedules receives 8 hours of service in week one and 6 hours of serves in week two, then the IEP Team should record an average of 7 hours per week on the services page.

### **How do I report hours of services for students in an inclusion setting?**

Inclusion, by definition, is providing Special Education services in a general education setting. Page 17 captures the amount of time that student is receiving those Special Education services. If those services are provided for 1 hour a day, enter 1 hour. If those services are provided for 6 hours a day, enter 6 hours.

### **How do I report provider of services for students in an inclusion setting?**

A certified Special Education teacher must be the key resource in planning the delivery of Special Education services. These services can be delivered by different staff, in consultation with the Special Education teacher who planned the service delivery. So any staff member can actually be the service provider, but the Special Education teacher is ultimately responsible for planning for, and reporting on service delivery.

### **Why is a separate service box needed for the same service if it is provided in general education and out of general education?**

The issue of LRE is of paramount importance now, both at a State and Federal level. Even though MCPS understands the need for flexibility in providing appropriate service and support for students, the legal mandate to MCPS is to ask teachers is to clearly state exactly where services are delivered.

### **What's the difference between the 'Only Once' and 'Recheck Periodically' choices?**

While these terms are still listed in the State system, MCPS staff should not use either of these. A one-time service belongs under Supplementary Aids and Services. Recheck periodically services must be spelled out on a yearly basis, for example, 4 times for 15 minutes per year.

### **When is the provider of 'IEP Team' used?**

Never. This term is also listed on the State system; MCPS staff should not use this.

**The services page only lists services, but not classes where these are provided. Where is that information recorded?**

On the bottom of the new Service Summary page, there is a discussion box to record any details about service delivery.

**There is a new item on the services page – direct or indirect service – when are they used?**

Each service is now to be identified as either direct, which means direct instruction to the student, or indirect, which is consult service to staff. With the introduction of indirect services as a choice, the option of ‘Recheck periodically’ is not to be used.

**There is a new choice on the goals page – ‘not yet introduced’. When should this be used?**

This choice was added to address the specific need to document that IEP goals may span school years or school semesters. This choice clarifies when those situations may occur, such as a high school course that starts in the second semester, and those goals apply to that semester only.

## **Page 21 – Authorization**

**Do parents sign the IEP each year?**

No. The only time that parents are required to sign any IEP is the initial IEP. After that initial meeting, there are no signatures needed on the form. This includes parents and chairperson. Once the meeting has concluded, the IEP goes into effect, and parents retain their procedural safeguard rights.

**What is that new line about the parent’s right to revoke their consent?**

This rather unclear line is taken from the Federal law. MCPS and MSDE have requested clarification on the meaning of this statement.

**Why does the IEP Team have to ask parents if their child is eligible for medical assistance?**

New MA procedures now require school staff to directly ask the question of parents.

**Isn’t asking for the student’s MA number a breach of confidentiality?**

According to MSDE, no. While this is confidential information, so is the student’s IEP, so recording it here on the IEP would not violate any legal confidentiality mandate and would let MCPS request reimbursement from the Federal Government for providing some services to MA eligible students. In discussions with other Maryland counties, this process of asking for the MA number has not caused any concerns and most parents are willing to provide it. If the parent refuses to provide any of this information, then no further mention of this is needed.

### **What if the parent doesn't know if their student is MA eligible?**

Based on information from MSDE, most parents will know this information and probably have the MA number memorized since it also applies to other benefits.

### **Why are there two boxes for MA Service Coordinator Name?**

A name of the MA Service Coordinator or potential MA Service Coordinator must be provided here. A 'position' such as resource teacher may not be used. This may be changed later to reflect the current coordinator if the need arises. This is the only place on the IEP where the parents may request a change of MA Service Coordinator for any reason.

## **Page 22-23 – Prior Written Notice**

### **What is the new Prior Written Notice document?**

The legal requirements of providing prior written notice are very complicated. PWN is the notice that MCPS provides to the parents that service is about to be provided. It is not the same as the 10 days advance notice to a meeting. PWN asks the IEP Team to document all decisions made in the IEP and the rationales for those decisions. The IEP Team also documents any options requested by the parent and considered by the IEP Team but not implemented. In an effort to make PWN easier to document, the IEP form has a PWN chart at the end of the IEP. This chart will automatically capture any important discussion or decisions from the IEP document and transfer them to the two-page PWN chart. For this reason it is very important to precisely and concisely record the discussion and rationales throughout the IEP document. The PWN chart contains two extra spaces for other decisions not included in the chart and any options requested and considered but not implemented.

### **Do IEP teams record when the *Procedural Safeguards and Parental Rights* brochure was given to the parents?**

IDEA 2004 now requires that, with a few exceptions, the *Procedural Safeguards and Parental Rights* is only provided once a year. This information to access this document is provided in the directions of the Prior Written Notice page. Most schools provide this document at the IEP team meeting.

## INFORMATION NEEDED FOR COMPLETING SUMMARY OF IEP DECISIONS

### PERCENTAGE OF TIME THE STUDENT WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Hours/Week	% Per Week	Hours/Week	% Per Week	Hours/Week	% Per Week	Hours/Week	% Per Week	Hours/Week	% Per Week	Hours/Week	% Per Week	Hours/Week	% Per Week	Hours/Week	% Per Week
0.5	2 (1.67)	4.5	15	8.5	28	12.5	42	16.5	55	20.5	68	24.5	82	28.5	95
1.0	3	5.0	17	9.0	30	13.0	43	17.0	57	21.0	70	25.0	83	29.0	97
1.5	5	5.5	18	9.5	32	13.5	45	17.5	58	21.5	72	25.5	85	29.5	99
2.0	7	6.0	20	10.0	33	14.0	47	18.0	60	22.0	73	26.0	87	30.0	100
2.5	8	6.5	22	10.5	35	14.5	48	18.5	62	22.5	75	26.5	89		
3.0	10	7.0	23	11.0	37	15.0	50	19.0	63	23.0	77	27.0	90		
3.5	12	7.5	25	11.5	38	15.5	52	19.5	65	23.5	78	27.5	92		
4.0	13	8.0	27	12.0	40	16.0	53	20.0	67	24.0	80	28.0	94		
<b>Percent of Time for Seven-Period Day:</b>				1 = 14% 2 = 28% 3 = 42% 4 = 57% 5 = 71% 6 = 85% 7 = 100%											
<b>Percent of Time for Eight-Period Day:</b>				1 = 12.5% 2 = 25% 3 = 37.5% 4 = 50% 5 = 62.5% 6 = 75% 7 = 87.5% 8 = 100%											