



**Special Education Electronic
Individualized Education Program (IEP) System**

Fiscal Year 2015

Report

To the

Legislature

As required by

Minnesota Statutes,

section 125A.085

COMMISSIONER:

Brenda Cassellius, Ed. D.

**Special Education Electronic
Individualized Education Program (IEP)
System**

March 2015

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Cost of Report Preparation

The total cost for the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to prepare this report was approximately \$120. Most of these costs involved staff time in analyzing data from surveys and preparing the written report. Incidental costs include paper, copying and other office supplies.

Estimated costs are provided in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2011, section 3.197, which requires that at the beginning of a report to the Legislature, the cost of preparing the report must be provided.

Special Education Electronic Individualized Education Program System

Overview:

The purpose of this report is to comply with the requirements under Minn. Stat. §125A.085. This new law requires the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) commissioner to annually, by February 1, submit to the Legislature a report on the status, recent changes and sustainability of the online system for students identified as needing special education services. Due to the complexity of the process required to develop and publish a Request for Proposal (RFP), the 2015 report was delayed until the RFP process was completed and a vendor selected. MDE has concluded that it cannot enter into a contract with the vendor until a source of funding is identified to maintain ongoing operation of the system.

Status and Changes:

In accordance with the statute, the commissioner established a workgroup which included the representatives from the groups identified in the legislation. This workgroup met a total of four times. Information from the following tasks was instrumental in developing the RFP:

- Review of Individual Education Plan (IEP) forms used in four states (North Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and the U.S. Office of Special Education);

- Demonstration from the Colorado and Maryland Departments of Education on their statewide electronic system;

- Conference calls with the Oklahoma and North Carolina Departments of Education, both of these agencies were in the process of making major changes to their existing statewide electronic systems and were developing a new RFP;

- Feedback from the workgroup on the forms and various systems that were reviewed and presented;

- Identification by the workgroup of the top ten forms that needed to be included in a statewide system for Minnesota if the system was to meet the intent of the law;

- A vision for a comprehensive system for Minnesota that would simplify the process for teachers, be user friendly, easily accessible, effective and efficiently transmit the records of all transferring children with disabilities, including highly mobile and homeless children with disabilities among others and avoid fragmented services delivery.

Based on the recommendations of the workgroup, MDE and MN.IT staff developed an RFP. The process of publishing the RFP, receiving, reviewing and selecting a vendor from the responders has been completed. A vendor, Excent, has been chosen that meets all the requirements included in the legislation and the recommendations made by the workgroup. MDE and MN.IT staff are currently negotiating with the vendor for the contract.

Sustainability of the Online System:

We have been informed by the vendor that the ongoing cost of maintain the statewide system as a free resource for districts is approximately \$1.5M per year. The initial funding from 2013 will cover start-up and launch of the system and perhaps some of the funding needed for FY2016

license fees, but it will not cover the ongoing costs to maintain operation of the system beyond that time. At this juncture, MDE feels that it would not be fiscally responsible to enter into a contractual agreement with the vendor until a source of ongoing funding for system has been identified.

Minn. Stat. §125A.085 requires the system be made available to districts beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. Without an ongoing source of funding, it will not be possible to meet this requirement. If no further funding is made available this session, MDE recommends amending §125A.085 to delay implementation in order to give the legislature and MDE time to explore sources of ongoing funding to sustain the system.