

California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS)

Source: California Department of Education

The California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) is a computer-based information reporting and retrieval system developed by the California Department of Education (CDE).

The purpose of the CASEMIS system is to develop the capacity of both the CDE and local education agencies (LEAs) to collect and share accurate and reliable student level data in a timely manner. The system provides LEAs with a statewide standard for maintaining a common core of special education data at the local level. Furthermore, the CDE has identified the following ways in which the quality data collected by CASEMIS can be used to meet statewide needs:

1. To continually monitor special education programs in California and identify any unusual changes in the program
2. To seek answers to various program questions by analyzing student level data for better planning, policymaking and administration of special education programs
3. To identify and research various program issues using the demographic and program variables
4. To evaluate special education programs against statewide regular education goals in general and special education goals in particular
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of special education programs in California with respect to individual student progress, movement to the least restrictive environment and transition to independent living
6. To meet statutory and programmatic needs for data in special education
7. To project future needs of students with disabilities in California and help develop strategies to address them
8. To develop the capability to share special education information between CDE and other state and local education agencies using the latest technologies
9. To develop special education data standards in California and collect a set of common core data in special education to aid in addressing issues of statewide and local interest
10. To disseminate district-level, SELPA-level and state-level information in special education programs

More detailed information is available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ds/> , including the CASEMIS Technical Assistance Guide; CASEMIS Dec. 2008 Reporting Software; and CASEMIS Step by Step guide.

Components of IEPs: Computerized IEP

The best IEPs are a product of teamwork between parents and staff built on solid relationships of trust and confidence; however, federal and state regulations can make the paperwork for IEP development burdensome and complex. Key elements of the IEP process include adherence to strict timelines, goals and objectives geared toward state standards; progress monitoring; compliance with implementation; procedural safeguards; and parent involvement.

Like districts across the nation, California districts are searching for ways to manage the burden of paperwork inherent in the IEP process. Many districts have moved from handwritten IEPs to computerized IEP systems that can assist with the standardization of student progress reporting and efficiency in meeting compliance timelines, goals and objectives that align with state standards while ensuring that parents are aware of the procedural safeguards. The need for accurate and timely data submission to the CDE is also essential and prompts districts to use systems that facilitate speed and accuracy.

Although not a requirement, the most efficient applications for computerized IEP systems are Web-based. This type of application can ensure that student files are stored centrally on a secure Web server that allows for multiple user access, integrates with the CASEMIS reporting system requirements, and produces numerous management reports that facilitate efficient program operation.

There are several factors to consider to help ensure the successful implementation of a computerized IEP system in a district. Interface with district technology systems is essential. Depending on the district's infrastructure, the system can involve substantial financial investment in computers, servers and software. Training and ongoing support systems must also be in place to provide all users with the technology skills needed to use the system consistently. Districts must also ensure that all special education teachers and staff have computers and printers. Finally, district expectations for use of the IEP system must be clearly communicated and accountability established.

There are several options for computerized IEP systems, such as: Special Education Information System (SEIS) (<http://www.seis.org>); Spectrum Solutions (ENCORE) (<http://www.sepectrumk12.org>); and IEPWriter (<http://iepwriter.com>).

State Performance Standards

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), (20 U.S.C. 1416(b) (2) (C) (ii) and 34 CFR 300.602 requires states to develop and implement state performance plans (SPP) for the 2005-2010 school years. The purpose of these plans is to monitor and improve the provision of services for students with disabilities in each state. California has implemented a State Performance Plan that has been approved by the federal government. Each school district in California will be measured using specific outcome data from the SPP on the annual performance reports. All school districts should be aware of the contents of the State Performance Plan and the measure outlined in the annual performance reports. The CDE Web site has information about both the State Performance Plan and the annual performance reports. Contact the SELPA director in your area for more information.

One-to-One Instructional Aides

One of the fastest growing staffing areas in special education is the use of one-to-one instructional aides. This can create a significant increase in expenditures in the special education budget. Each district should develop a written policy and procedures that contain the criteria for evaluating the need for and assignment of one-to-one aides and a plan to determine when the use of a one-to-one professional may be reduced or eliminated.

The procedures for implementing the use of one-to-one instructional aides should include the following components:

1. Criteria to determine the need for one-to-one assistance
2. Professional development programs for district staff on the use of aides
3. Professional training for one-to-one aides in curriculum, behavior, medical needs, tutoring, disability awareness
4. Procedures to be followed when a one-to-one aide is absent
5. An appropriate fading plan that outlines how independence will be reached and the need for one-to-one assistance reduced or eliminated
6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the one-to-one aide program such as: fiscal impact, number of students transitioning out of the program, student improvement and other factors.

Samples of one-to-one policies are available through the Riverside SELPA at <http://www.valverde.edu/selpa/contactus.htm> and the North Inland SELPA at <http://www.sdcoe.et/ssp/speced>