**Recording Meetings Held Pursuant to IDEA & Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

**Background**In March 2019, Columbia SEPTA (Special Ed PTA) asked the Columbia Public School district to allow parents and guardians to openly record IEP and 504 Plan meetings. While MO law allows for one-party consent on recording, current school policy in Columbia and other MO public school districts prohibit the recording of these meetings.

Over a course of many months, CPS, CoMO SEPTA, MoDE, and other interested parties had discussions related to changing the recording policy. In September 2019, CPS School Board created a work group to explore the logistics behind an open recording policy. The board members proposed a list of questions to be answered by this work group.

MoDE is working on statewide recording policy change. The questions proposed by CPS’s board are questions that many school districts will share. MoDE has compiled answers to many of these questions as a starting point for school districts across the state.

**Objectives**The objectives of this document as prompted by the CPS School Board member’s questions:

* Determine costs for the additional recordings not as an accommodation under ADA\*
* Create procedures and determine costs for a recording accommodation as requested by a parent under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
* Investigate and establish a potential procedure for recording of IEP/504 meetings.

**\*The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requires that accommodations be made for individuals with disabilities.** Recording meetings is an accommodation for many with disabilities. Schools already have to permit the recording of meetings in situations when the parents or student attending the meeting have disabilities requiring the accommodation. Recording procedures should already be in place. If school districts desire to have their own recordings, the equipment should also already be in place.

**Equipment and Costs Related to Recording**

It is important to note that the current legislation related to an open recording policy would prohibit school districts from banning parents and guardians from recording IEP/504 plan meetings. It does NOT require schools to have their own recordings. We acknowledge that school districts might want to have their own recordings and are addressing costs related to that.

**Audio Recording Size**
A good quality recording bit depth and sample rate would be 44.1kHZ/16 bit.

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| Bit depth & Sample rate | Bit rate (mono) | File size per second (mono) | File size per minute (mono) | File size per hour (mono) |
| 16 bit, 44.1 KHz | 705.6 Kbps | 88.2 KB | 5.292 MB | 317.52 MB |

The number of students with IEPs & 504 Plans would determine the amount of storage space needed. Districts will have to decide if they want to record every meeting or only meetings where the parent or guardian request to record.
50 students = 47,630 MB (.05TB)
500 students = 476,295 MB (.48TB)
2500 students = 2.38 TB
\*\*Based on an estimate of 3hrs worth of meetings per student with disabilities

At the peak of storing this data for 18 years, the amount of storage would be
50 students = 857,331 MB (.86TB)
500 students = 8.57 TB
2500 = 42.87 TB **Cost to Store Data** The cost to store data depends on how a district decides to store it. All school districts have free access to G Suite for Education. Each teacher has unlimited storage for Google drive, Gmail, and Google Photos. Many districts already store special education documents on Google drive. This would be a practical, accessible, and inexpensive way to store recordings. The core applications in Google’s G Suite for Education have different privacy policies than your personal Gmail and Google Drive account, to help ensure school districts stay compliant with student privacy laws like FERPA.
 Another option would be to purchase terabyte drives each year for 18 years. For most districts, one drive which costs less than $50 would suffice. As technology continues to improve, the cost of storing data will decrease.

**Recording Equipment** Computers with USB microphones are all that would be needed for a recording. Most teachers already have school issued computers that would more than work to record meetings. Some districts might choose to purchase a chromebook or laptop for each building for the purpose of recording. A high-quality USB microphone costs less than $30 and would be needed in each school building. Most schools already have these.

**Procedure Example**

Each district will be different on their specific procedures; however, in general, incorporating recording procedures into IEP/504 meetings will be uncomplicated. As recording is a common ADA accommodation, there should already be procedures in place that can also be used for general recording.

Following is an example of procedures for a recorded IEP/504 plan meeting if the school decides to also record:

1. Parent or guardian is sent the written notice of meeting with an attached form asking if the meeting will be recorded or if accommodations are needed. A checklist is recommended listing common accommodations to assist the parents.

2. The Local Education Agency (LEA) representative, or another role as decided by the school, will be responsible for recording for the school district. The LEA will use a school issued laptop and USB microphone, and begin recording at the start of the meeting. Any audio recording software utilized and supported by the school’s technology department will be sufficient.

3. At the beginning of the meeting, the LEA will announce that the recording will begin. The LEA will state the date, location, and purpose of the meeting. All attendees will go around the table and state name, title/role in the meeting, and how they know or work with the student. This will match the voice to the name on the recording.

*Example: Today is January 5, 2020 at 10:00 am, and we are at XYZ Elementary meeting room. This is an annual IEP review meeting for John Doe. We will go around the room and introduce ourselves. My name is Ms. Jane Smith and I am the LEA for this meeting. I have worked with John on behavior management that requires intervention for two years.*

4. At the conclusion of the meeting, the LEA will ask if there are any questions or concerns that were not addressed. The LEA will then state the end time of the meeting and the length of time of the recording before turning off the device.

5. The LEA will then upload the audio file to the appropriate G Suite/Google Drive folder. A clickable link to the uploaded file on G Suite/Google Drive can be added to the IEP/504 document for ease of future reference.

Note: If an individual teacher saves a file to their G-Suite drive, he can share it with anyone in the organization (such as the process coordinator or department chair) but if he is the "owner" of the file, it will be deleted if he leaves the district. The way to avoid this is for each school to set up a "Shared Drive" which is easy to do and most buildings have several. Each building could have a shared drive, or there could be a district-wide SPED shared drive. Many districts probably already have this. Teachers would save the audio file to the shared drive and if they left the organization the files would remain accessible. Privacy and permission settings can be adjusted appropriately to prevent people from accessing them who aren't directly involved with the student.