



# System Overview

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## Overview

The Information Management System (IMS) for Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs) and the Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Children, Family and Community Services is the organization and alignment of software, resources and procedures required to collect, store, manage and distribute special education data for use in decision-making and meeting the federal reporting requirements of IDEA and NCLB. This system's primary function is to provide the AEAs and their constituent districts with data organized around the service delivery system for special education services in Iowa. A by-product of the information gathered, edited and managed by the system is a cadre of reports and data files, which partially fulfill the state and federal informational requirements.

The Web version of the Area Education Agency Information Management System (IMS) was developed using the following web-based languages: Cold Fusion, JavaScript, and HTML. Cold-Fusion utilizes FoxPro relational databases.

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## Definitions

Individual data elements are called fields. A set of related data elements or fields in IMS is stored in records. A file is a set of records that are related. Files are also referred to as tables.

The IMS system utilizes several types of data. One type of data is fixed or static and does not change much, if ever. It exists in the background of the system and is stored in "Look up Tables." Examples of this type of data are: disability codes, zip codes, district and building numbers, state codes.

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## Data Types

Data types allow for:

Storing information in smaller units. For example, the code LD is entered to signify Learning Disability and the code 0261 represents the numerical code for Ankeny Community School District.

Changing short codes into longer values. For example, when printing out a report, the value 0261 is translated to its text value "Ankeny Community School District."

Validating data entry. For example, if an invalid code for Learning Disability is entered, such as LM instead of LD, a prompt indicates that this is not a legitimate value and the data entry person should select a value from the available "Look up Table."

Assignment information which requires periodic maintenance. It is here that assignments of instructional staff or support staff to departments, buildings or to specific services at the building level are made. For example, a staff member may be assigned to a department and then assigned to a Service at a given building or buildings. Once this assignment is completed, the association of the child/youth receiving the service and the staff member providing that service are linked automatically.

Transactional data changes according to services provided by the staff member

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serving the individual. Examples of this type of information are: addition of, or exiting from instructional or support services and evaluations, intervention plans, Medicaid information, disability status, or changes in severity rating. The classes to which teachers or support staff are assigned or the services that they provide are examples of events that change and are recorded historically.

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