

**20 Questions from Districts regarding the Implementation of the Equity in Distance Learning Act
July 28, 2020**

1. ADM

- a. How was ADM Calculated?
 - i. SY2019-2020 Months 1-9

2. Apple

- a. Will you be creating a separate Express Products List (EPL) that helps with Apple Purchases?
 - i. Yes, Apple products are included in the program.

3. Charging Students

- a. Can each district charge a technology fee to cover the insurance costs?
 - i. The "Equity in Distance Learning Act" is silent on charging student fees for device insurance.

4. Devices Insurance/Protection/Insurance

- a. Several questions were submitted regarding insurance
 - i. The goal of providing devices, software, connectivity, training and support to students and teachers is so that students can receive high-quality instruction throughout the digital learning program. This is intended to be a three-year program. The device insurance provision is to ensure that the device can be repaired or replaced to ensure that students continue to receive high quality instruction throughout the digital learning program with minimal disruption.

5. Filter

- a. If we have our own filtering solution, can we use it?
 - i. The devices will come loaded with filtering software, good for three years. Districts may provide an alternative filter, but districts will be required to submit documentation showing the alternative filter that meets or exceeds the MDE filter specifications (which MDE will share prior to the August 3rd webinar).

6. Google Products

- a. Several questions were asked regarding the use of Google Chromebooks and Google Classroom.
 - i. Google Chromebooks and Google Classroom are part of this program. The fee related to Google Classroom will cover professional development related to the use of Google Chromebooks and Google Classroom.

7. Guidelines/Templates

- a. Can MDE provide a sample Responsible Use policy and Tech Sustainability templates for districts to use as a guide?
 - i. The MDE is working on guidance/templates for the Digital Learning Plan, Tech Sustainability, and Responsible Use Policy. These will be shared during the webinar to be scheduled early the week of August 10th.

8. HB1788

- a. Several questions were asked regarding HB1788 and funding for connectivity.
 - i. The MDE is working on the implementation of HB1788 and will share information regarding HB1788 and connectivity during the webinar to be scheduled early the week of August 3rd.

9. Infrastructure

- a. Are there plans to address infrastructure changes needed for faster WAN speeds and throughput, with the priority for distance learning becoming a major focus?
 - i. The MDE is following discussion in Washington, DC regarding E-Rate and additional funding for infrastructure. We will share information as it becomes available.

10. Inventory Management

- a. Will device tracking software be eligible / included?
 - i. The program will include Mobile Device Management and, in order to be eligible to participate in the program, districts are required to “Compile and maintain an inventory list of all devices purchased and issued to students, teachers and administrators and other staff, as well as any supporting technology or equipment used to support the school's distance learning plan.”

11. Match

- a. Several questions were asked regarding the source of funds for the district’s 20% match.
 - i. According to the law the 20% match can come from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund or any funds made available to a school district or charter school for such purposes from any federal, state, public or private entity. The MDE will reimburse for the state portion of the expenses that meet minimum specifications, with the balance being the responsibility of the district.

12. Needs Assessment Verification

- a. Several questions were asked regarding updating or otherwise changing the data provided in the June needs assessment.
 - i. Districts have this week to update and verify your information from the June Digital Learning Needs Assessment. Districts will find the Digital Learning Needs Assessment Update and Verification Form in the FY21\EDLA folder within both the Superintendent’s and the Business Manager’s SharePoint folders for each district. Please send completed form to survey@mdek12.org by July 31, 2020 at 5:00 PM. The MDE will notify districts of the receipt of this revision form on Monday, August 3rd. If a district does not complete the form, the MDE will use the information provided in June.

13. Order/Delivery Timing

- a. Several questions were asked regarding when can districts begin ordering and when can districts expect to receive devices.
 - i. The final counts and specifications will be outlined in the vendor contracts presented to the State Board of Education on August 6th. The MDE will be able to share the delivery schedule of devices purchased at that time. District eligibility will need to be established before September 1st and before

reimbursement can be authorized. The final date for districts to place an order is September 11th. MDE has established with vendors the delivery deadline of November 20th.

14. Ordering Process

- a. Several questions were asked regarding the ordering procedures and whether districts will need to request bids or conduct reverse auction.
 - i. Once the state contracts are in place, the districts will only need to visit the vendor website and place their orders by providing the vendors with a purchase order number and by verifying delivery information.

15. Other Expenses

- a. Several questions were asked regarding using funds allocated under SB3044 to purchase related devices, software or services not included in the vendor contracts MDE is negotiating.
 - i. The covered expenses are outlined and prioritized in the SB3044. The MDE will provide further guidance under the reimbursement process. Regardless, most of the other expenses districts asked about appear to be qualified for reimbursement using local ESSER Funds.

16. Positive Variance

- a. Can you explain the variance that shows a positive amount of funds and exactly what that means? If we have a positive "variance" will we have access to that money to enrich our distance learning program?
 - i. The funding only can be used on expenses outlined in SB3044's priorities. If devices are already available to all students and teachers and there are still funds available, the district can continue funding additional priorities outlined in SB3044.

17. Specifications, Pricing and Reimbursement

- a. Several questions were asked regarding reimbursement if districts find lower prices.
 - i. The two key issues regarding pricing and reimbursement are whether the expense meets the minimum specifications defined by the MDE and also whether the prices are comparable, meaning that the district purchase includes all of the software, services and support included in the MDE price. If districts find lower prices meeting those specifications, then expenses are reimbursable.

18. Reimbursement Process

- a. Several questions were asked regarding the reimbursement rules and procedures.
 - i. The MDE will brief districts on the reimbursement rules and procedures in subsequent communications and webinars.

19. School Administrators, etc.

- a. Several questions were asked regarding providing devices for staff other than teachers (e.g., school administrators and non-certified staff)
 - i. According to SB3044, the funding provided is intended to support "students, teachers, and administrators and other staff to engage in grade-appropriate

distance learning.” District will need to provide assurances in their applications that the devices purchased will be used by those engaged in distance learning.

20. Waiver

- a. Several questions were asked regarding the need for reverse auction and other procurement rules and procedures.
 - i. In accordance with SB3044, the MDE is submitting an emergency exemption from the procurement laws and bidding procedures for purchases.