Via Electronic mail to

RE: SEA-STARS data

Dear Ms. I

I understand you have requested a letter regarding the functionality of Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) Special Education Administrative System for Targeting and Reporting Success (SEA-STARS) program, specifically SEA-STARS' ability to capture and maintain logs of specific data such as login information, record access and changes to student data and FCPS retention of such log records over time.

More than 28,000 students in FCPS receive special education services, and more than 7,000 students are eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Activity in the SEA-STARS application accurately processes millions of system interactions over a year.

SEA-STARS is a secure Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) product that was acquired as a result of a competitive process from Edupoint Educational Systems, Inc. (Edupoint) and utilizes the Synergy Special Education System (SES) platform developed and owned by Edupoint. A multi-disciplinary team of FCPS staff members from the Department of Information Technology and the Department of Special Services, the system sponsor and data steward, have worked collaboratively with Edupoint to customize and refine the SES product, branded SEA-STARS, since 2004. The individualized education program (IEP) functionality in SEA-STARS was launched by FCPS in October 2006, and the system has grown over the years to include all aspects of the special education and Section 504 processes.

The Synergy SES product does include the ability to track login information, record access, and changes to student data in a very detailed way. FCPS tested this functionality more than ten years ago and found that due to the volume of transactions and the associated overhead generated on the SEA-STARS servers, this functionality would seriously degrade the operational performance of the system, largely making the system unusable for authorized users. In addition, this functionality is not required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The decision was made that logging would not be enabled in the FCPS SEA-STARS system. There has been no change to this decision over the years, and logging has never been enabled in the FCPS SEA-STARS production environment.

Please let me know if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

James M. Foland
Coordinator, Student Systems
Enterprise Information Services and Assessment
Information Technology

CC: Sandy Kretzer, director, Enterprise Information Services and Assessment
Jane Strong, director, Office of Special Education Procedural Support
Dawn Schaefer, coordinator, Due Process and Eligibility
Jim Bochert, coordinator, DSS Data Management