

Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center

2017

Parent Involvement Report

Prepared for

Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Learning Services, Office of Teaching and Learning

The 2017 Parent Survey was administered during March, April and May 2017. The Kentucky Department of Education contracted with the Kentucky Postschool Outcomes Center to develop the instrument, assist with distribution, collect and analyze data, and report results both related to IDEA Indicator 8 for the Annual Performance Report as well as other items deemed to be in the state's interest. This report presents analyses of the data collected. Further analysis is available upon request.

Methods

In consultation with the Kentucky Postschool Outcomes Center, the Kentucky Department of Education decided to include all parents of students with IEP's during the 2016 – 17 school year as participants in the study. The State Director of Special Education contacted local Directors of Special Education and distributed instructions to them regarding how to contact parents to complete the survey. A sample letter was provided to local directors for distribution to parents of students with IEP's by school staff who had such students on their caseload. The letter informed parents of multiple ways for them to access the survey, including a direct link located on the KyPSO website, a "QR" code which could be scanned by a mobile device, and the opportunity to take the survey at the school at any time including during the annual ARC meeting. The survey was made available in both English and Spanish, as were the sample letters to parents. See the appendix for copies of the survey and sample parent letter.

Potentially, the survey could have been distributed to parents of the 89,859 students with IEP's in the state of Kentucky. We instructed parents that only one parent was to fill out the survey per child. If parents had multiple children with IEP's they should fill out one survey for each child. We have no way to track how many parents actually received letters asking them to complete the survey since this was completed at the local level. 3751 responses were collected of which 3555 were completed. Although this is only a response rate of approximately 4% it is still a higher overall number than previous methods which involved paper surveys that were mailed to a sample of parents within a sample of districts. The previous method usually only had response rates of roughly 10%. It is likely that with both methods parents who are more active and involved in their child's education are the more likely parents to respond. Therefore results should be interpreted with the understanding that the sample is likely not representative of all parents, but biased towards those with greater involvement.

Results

The first, and most important item of the survey is what is used for federal reporting purposes under Indicator 8. This item is deliberately worded to try to capture the language of the indicator itself. The actual item is, "Did the school involve you in a meaningful way to improve services and results for your child?" Response options were simply "Yes" and "No." 87.9% of

respondents gave an affirmative ("Yes") response. This represents an increase from 2016 (86.8%) and 2015 (85.1%).

Other items included in the survey were not reported as part of Indicator 8, but were considered valuable to the state for feedback related to parent involvement. The second question on the survey asked about the parents' level of understanding of the IEP process. Specifically, the item was worded, "On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= "I don't understand the IEP process at all" and 5= "I fully understand the IEP process," how well would you say that you understand the IEP process?" The mean response for this item was 4.2 on the five-point scale, indicating that parents who answered the survey believe they are fairly knowledgeable about the IEP process. 2.5% of respondents scored the item a "1" indicating that they do not understand the process and all, and they neither 3.9% scored the item a "2." However, nearly half of respondents (49.9%) scored the item a "5."

A third item asked parents to describe how they feel about being involved in their child's education. This was an item that allowed respondents to check each of the four response options that applied to them. 15% of respondents indicated that they wanted to be more involved but didn't know how to be. 11% indicated that they wanted to be more involved but were too busy with other commitments. 5% indicated that they were involved in their own way and did not need the school's help. 74% said that they were very involved with their child's education.

The survey then asked a question about how welcome school staff made them feel in participating in their child's education. 88% indicated that they felt welcomed by school staff, while 12% responded that they did not.

A separate question was asked regarding transition services only for those parents of students who were 14 years of age or older. The question asked whether their child's school provides information on agencies that can assist their child in the transition from school to a career, technical training or higher education. Of the 710 respondents who are asked this question 78% answered affirmatively while 22% indicated that the school was not providing such information.

Parents were asked two open-ended questions: 1) What do you think the school is doing well in terms of involving you in your child's education; 2) What do you think the school can do better to involve you in your child's education? For the first question, there were 1782 responses. Most of the respondents, 51%, stated that the school communicates well with parents. An additional 8% of respondents said they like receiving progress reports from the school. Parents reported that they like the meetings with teachers and other staff (17%), supports and services the school provides to their child (11%), the staff's responsiveness to feedback (7%), and getting homework that parents can help their child with (5%). Other areas that the school is doing well in terms of involving parents in their child's education included making themselves available to parents, prioritizing the child's education, understanding the child's needs, working well with

the child, welcoming parents and parent volunteers, and having teachers and staff who are skilled, caring, and passionate.

The question regarding what the school could do better to help parents in their child's education had 1614 responses. Most respondents (34%) reported that there was nothing the school can do improve parental involvement. Better or more frequent communication with parents were the most common suggestion (29%). Other improvements suggested by parents included involving parents in the strategic planning process, IEP meetings, and events hosted at the school; having more meetings with parents; following the IEP; sending home more homework that parents and child can work together on; being more responsive to feedback; more support from administrators and teachers; more teachers and administrators who are skilled and culturally competent; and using teaching strategies and materials that matches the child's learning style and needs. A small number of respondents suggested allowing parents or IEP specialists to observe the child in their classrooms; a faster and less complicated IEP process; inclusion and activities with students in general education; helping child with studying and completing assignments.

Disaggregated Results

The survey included items related to the race/ethnicity of the child as well as their primary disability and age. While several of these categories have too few responses to be included in this report, we include breakdowns by item for the largest groups.

	Overall Involvement (% agree)	Understand IEP (mean rating)	Don't know how to be involved (% agree)	Too busy to be involved (% agree)	Don't need schools help (% agree)	Very involved (% agree)	School staff are welcoming (% agree)	Transition information (% agree)
White (N=2946)	88.1	4.2	14.1	10.1	4.6	75.4	88.1	79.1
African-American or Black (N=159)	89.4	4.2	14.5	15.1	4.4	71.7	88.1	86.0
Hispanic (N=206)	87.1	4.3	19.9	8.5	2.5	75.1	85.9	66.7
Speech/Language Impairment (N=839)	91.7	4.2	11.8	8.7	3.2	79.7	91.4	68.4
Autism (N=489)	86.3	4.3	18.6	5.3	3.7	77.1	87.7	79.1
Developmental Delay (N=464)	88.4	4.2	14.4	12.1	4.7	73.9	87.3	70.8
Specific Learning Disability (N=459)	86.3	4.2	14.8	12.0	5.5	72.3	86.2	80.1
Age < 14 (N=3152)	88.5	4.2	15.3	10.7	3.9	74.5	88.0	-
Age >= 14 (N=403)	83.4	4.3	13.9	10.2	9.2	70.2	85.3	82.0

Discussion

Overall, the results of the 2017 Parent Involvement Survey showed reasons to be optimistic. Parents report that the school is facilitated their involvement at high numbers, and this finding holds up across parents of students of different races, disability types and ages. Parents also report an overall high level of understanding of the IEP process, report that they feel very involved in their child's education and very welcomed by school staff. Parents of children aged 14 and older report fairly high levels of information regarding secondary transition.

Still, there are areas which could be improved upon. As previously noted the results from the survey represent a small portion of the overall number of parents of students with IEP's. While we have no way of directly measuring this, it is very likely that these are among the most active and involved parents in the state. Interpretation of these results should always bear this inherent bias in mind.

None of the differences between subgroups that we examined and reached the strict definition of statistical significance. However, that does not mean that there are not some substantive differences between groups which are worthy to note. Parents of Hispanic children were the most likely to indicate that they wanted to be involved more but did not know how to be. This may indicate language barriers or other cultural barriers that schools should be aware of. Parents of students with autism were the second-highest group to report this, which could indicate a potential lack of services available to this group. Parents of African-American students were the most likely to indicate that they were too busy to be more involved in their child's education. Finding creative ways to involve parents, perhaps at different times or through different means may help with this disparity. Conversely, parents of Hispanic children were the least likely to indicate that they were too busy to be involved. This could indicate that they simply need to be asked to participate more. This is reinforced by the finding that parents of Hispanic students were the least likely group to indicate that they felt welcomed by school staff. Parents of older students were less likely to report that the school helped facilitate their involvement than parents of younger students, however parents of older students were more likely to indicate that they were involved in their own way and did not need the school's help. It is encouraging that 82% transition age youth are provided with information on agencies to assist with secondary transition, however anything short of 100% in this area allows room to improve.

The 2018 Parent Survey will be open from March 1 through May 31, 2018. This survey is identical to the 2017 version, so results will be able to be tracked over time once again. Reports will be made available to districts so that they can track their progress.

Appendix: Print Version of 2017 Parent Survey



Default Question Block

This is a survey for parents of students receiving special education services. Your responses will help guide efforts to improve services and results for children and families. In responding to each statement, think about your experience in working with the school. You may skip any item that you feel does not apply to you or your child. All responses are anonymous and cannot be traced back to you or your child. Please answer these questions as they pertain to the current school year (2016-17).

1. Did the school involve you in a meaningful way to improve services and results for your child?

- Yes
 No

2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = "I don't understand the IEP process at all" and 5 = "I fully understand the IEP process," how well would you say that you understand the IEP process?

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5

3. Which of the following statements describe how you feel about being involved in your child's education?

(Check all that apply)

-
- I want to be more involved, but I don't know how to be.
 - I want to be more involved, but I'm too busy with other commitments.
 - I want to be involved in my child's education in my own ways and do not need the school's help
 - I am very involved with my child's education.

4. Do you feel that school staff welcome you to participate in planning for your child's education?

- Yes
- No

5. What do you think the school is doing well in terms of involving you in your child's education?

6. What do you think the school could do better to involve you in your child's education?

Please answer a few questions about yourself and your child so that we may focus our efforts to improve services.

7. What is your school district?

▼

8. What is your child's race / ethnicity?

-
- White
 - Black or African-American
 - Native American
 - Asian
 - Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Multiple Race

9. What is your child's primary disability?

10. What was your child's age on June 30, 2015?

11. Does your child's school provide information on agencies that can assist my child in the transition from school to a career, technical training, or higher education?

- No