

Parent Involvement Report 2020

Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center

www.kypso.org

Prepared for the
Kentucky Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Early Learning

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Background

The 2020 Parent Survey was administered from February through July 2020. This was extended from previous years at the request of several LEA's as well as KDE. The Kentucky Department of Education contracted with the Kentucky Post School 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 Post School Outcomes Center, the Kentucky Department of Education decided to include all parents of students with IEP's during the 2019-20 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.

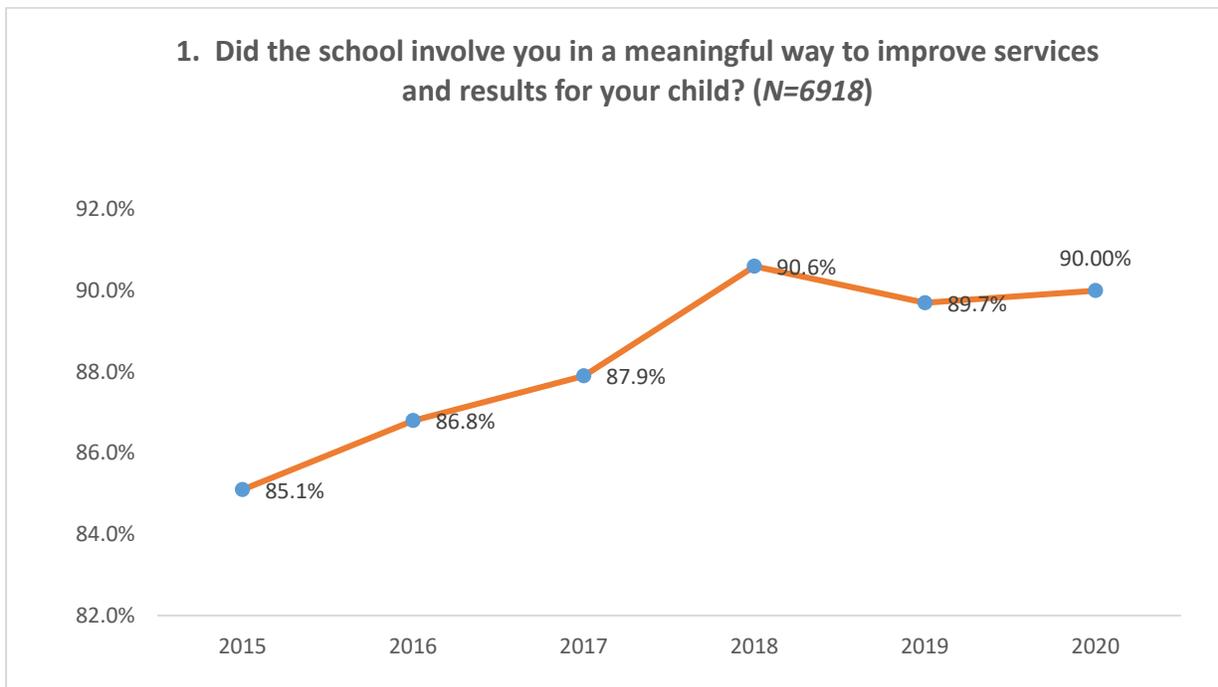
Potentially, the survey could have been distributed to parents of over 90,000 students with IEP's in the state of Kentucky. It is suggested that only one parent filled out the survey per child. If parents had multiple children with IEP's they should fill out one survey for each child. 6,918 responses were completed and collected, the highest ever for this survey.

Results should be read with the understanding that nearly all responses were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. This altered instruction dramatically, and likely even contributed to the increased number of responses.

Items

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

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." In 2020, **90.0%** of respondents gave an affirmative ("Yes") response. It continues a pattern of high rates around 90% in 2015 (85.10%), 2016 (86.8%), 2017 (87.9%), 2018 (90.6%), and 2019 (89.7%) (See Figure1). 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.



2. How well would you say that you understand the IEP process?

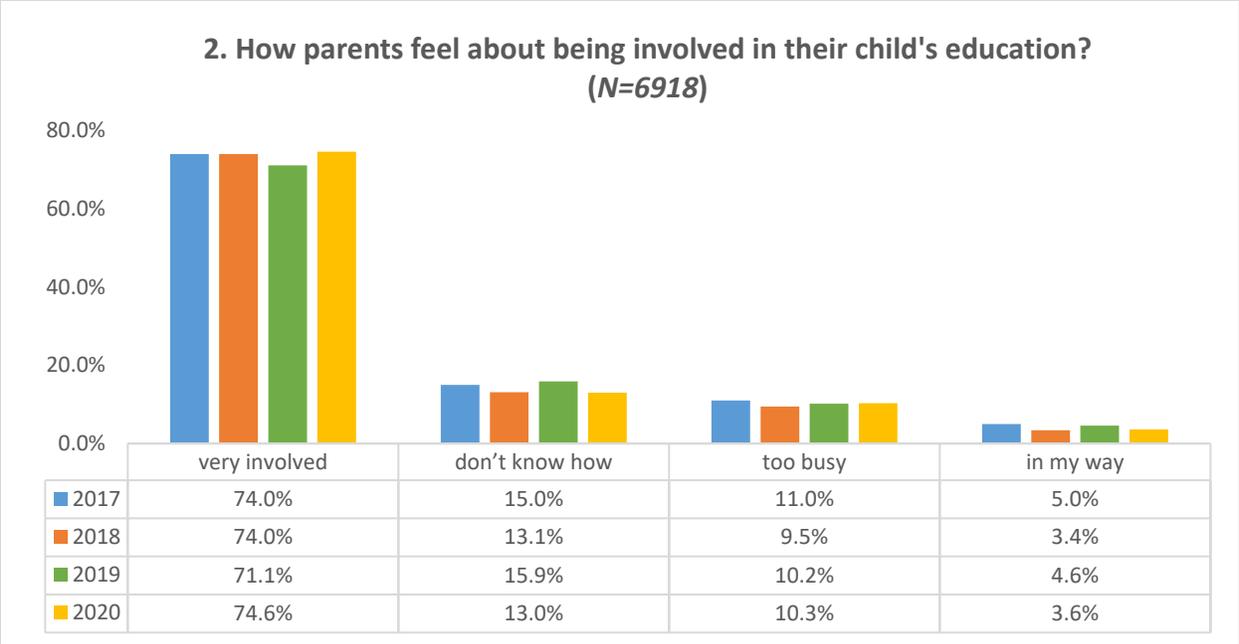
The second question on the survey asked about the parents' level of understanding of the IEP process. Specifically, the item was worded, "On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= "I don't understand the IEP process at all" and 5= "I fully understand the IEP process," how well would you say that you understand the IEP process?" The mean response for this item was **4.20** on the five-point scale, indicating that parents who answered the survey believe they were knowledgeable about the IEP process. Over half of the **respondents (53.6%)** scored the item a "5." The percentage of respondents reporting full understanding of the IEP process remains similar to that of 2019 (54.0%).

3. How do you feel about being involved in your child's education?

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 any of four response options that applied to them. **74.6%** of parents said that they were very involved in their child's education (Figure 2). 13.0% of respondents indicated that they wanted to be more involved but didn't know how to be and 10.3% were too busy to be involved. 3.6% of respondents indicated that they preferred educating their child in their own ways instead of getting help from the school. Note that respondents were able to select more than one answer. There is very little change from 2018 to 2020.

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

The survey then asked a question about how welcome school staff made them feel in participating in their child's education. In 2020, **89.8%** of the respondents reported feeling welcomed by school staff, which is slightly more favorable, yet similar, to 2019 (89.2%).



5. Has your school helped to prepare your son or daughter for future employment through vocational training (e.g., exploring jobs, paid work experiences)?

This year a new item was added which sought to assess the school’s involvement in planning for transition. This item was asked only of students 14 years or older. 59% responded yes to this yes/no item, indicating that this could be an area of concern.

Table1				
<i>Overall meaningful involvement, the level of understanding IEP (mean ratings) and school staff welcoming by race, disability, and age (N=6918).</i>				
		School Involve parents meaningfully (%)	School Staff are Welcoming (%)	Understand IEP (Mean in 5)
Race	White (n = 5441)	93.4%	93.0%	4.23
	Black or African American (n = 425)	89.2%	89.9%	4.30
	Hispanic or Latino (n = 177)	88.1%	92.2%	4.10
	Multiple Race (n = 414)	90.8%	88.5%	4.30
	Native American (n = 19)	78.9%	94.7%	3.84
	Pacific Islander (n = 4)	50.0%	50.0%	4.25
	Asian (n = 75)	92.0%	96.0%	4.33
Disability	Autism (n = 1042)	90.7%	90.4%	4.38
	Developmental Delay (n = 856)	95.2%	94.0%	4.37
	Functional Mental Disability (FMD) (n = 92)	90.2%	94.6%	4.49
	Mild Mental Disability (MMD) (n = 275)	91.6%	94.2%	4.48
	Specific Learning Disability (n = 885)	91.8%	92.0%	4.33
	Speech or Language Impairment (n =1750)	95.1%	95.1%	4.32
Age	Age<5 (n = 825)	94.5%	94.3%	4.30
	Age5-9 (n = 2830)	94.8%	93.9%	4.30
	Age10-13 (n = 1645)	90.8%	90.5%	4.30
	Age14-18 (n = 1146)	88.9%	90.3%	4.37
	Age>=19 (n = 31)	100.0%	100.0%	4.74

Disaggregated Results

The survey included items related to the race/ethnicity of the child as well as their primary disability and age (Table1 and Table2). While several of these categories have too few responses to be included in this report, we include breakdowns by item for the largest groups.

Table 1 reports the item regarding overall meaningful involvement (used for Indicator 8), the level of understanding IEP (mean ratings) and school staff being

welcoming. Data are disaggregated by race, disability, and age in 2020. Among all the race groups, parents of White students reported the highest rates in meaningful school involvement (93.4%), in welcoming school staff (93.0%), and in understanding IEP (*mean* = 4.23).

The difference of responses by disability category was also very small in 2020. The overall involvement rate and welcoming staff rate were all above 90% and the mean of understanding IEP were all above 4.30 out of 5. Similar to 2019, parents of children with speech/language impairment reported the highest involvement rate (95.1%) and welcoming staff rate (95.1%); while parents of students with autism felt somewhat less involved by their school (90.7%) and less welcomed by school staff (90.4%) than others. While these rates are still high, they might indicate a need for more attention from school administrators and policy makers to families of students with autism. Responses were divided into five age groups in Table 1.

88.9% of parents of students in all age groups reported meaningful involvement and welcoming services from the school. There is no significant difference among the age groups.

More details about how parents were involved in the child's education was further examined by students' race, disability, and age (Table2). There were four responses to this question: I am very involved with my child's education; I want to be involved in my child's education in my own ways and do not need the school's help; I want to be more involved, but I'm too busy with other commitments; and I want to be more involved, but I don't know how to be. In general, over **70%** of respondents reported that they were very involved in their child's education.

Among all race categories, African American/Black respondents reported the highest percentage of being very involved in their child's education (80.2%), while parents of Hispanic and Pacific Islander students showed the lowest rate (57.2% and 50.0%). Hispanic families reported a higher percentage of not knowing how to be involved (23.9%) and the highest percentage of being too busy to be involved in their child's education (19.4%). Similarly, parents of Pacific Islander students showed the highest rate of "don't know how to be involved with the school about

their child’s education” (50.0%). This may indicate that parents of Hispanic and Pacific Islander students may need more flexible schedules for school events and meetings as well as more access to become more involved in their child’s education, though the sample size of both groups is relatively small.

Among six main disability groups, over **78.0%** of parents of students with **Speech/Language Impairment, MMD, and Autism** reported that they were very involved in the child’s education in 2020. Among all the disability groups, the percentage of not knowing how to be involved in the child’s education was surprisingly lower in **FMD group (7.5%)**.

Table2
How parents feel about being involved in the child’s education by race, disability, and age (N=6918).

		I am very Involved.	I don’t need school involvement.	I don’t know how to be involved.	I am too busy to be involved.
Race	White (n = 5460)	77.0%	3.8%	12.6%	10.0%
	Black or African American (n = 430)	80.2%	2.8%	11.9%	10.5%
	Hispanic or Latino (n = 180)	57.2%	1.7%	23.9%	19.4%
	Multiple Race (n = 417)	74.8%	3.4%	16.3%	12.5%
	Native American (n = 19)	78.9%	5.3%	5.3%	15.8%
	Pacific Islander (n = 4)	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%
	Asian (n = 75)	70.7%	1.3%	14.7%	14.7%
Disability	Autism (n = 1050)	78.0%	3.0%	13.8%	10.0%
	Developmental Delay (n = 858)	76.6%	2.7%	14.9%	9.6%
	Functional Mental Disability (FMD) (n = 93)	75.3%	5.4%	7.5%	14.0%
	Mild Mental Disability (MMD) (n = 277)	78.7%	4.7%	12.3%	8.7%
	Specific Learning Disability (n =889)	73.5%	3.4%	15.5%	11.5%
	Speech or Language Impairment (n = 1754)	78.3%	3.8%	10.9%	10.5%
Age	Age<5 (n = 826)	77.1%	3.9%	13.7%	10.4%
	Age5-9 (n = 2835)	78.3%	3.4%	12.4%	10.2%
	Age10-13 (n =1658)	75.2%	3.4%	13.6%	10.8%
	Age14-18 (n = 1159)	73.7%	4.1%	13.9%	10.7%
	Age>=19 (n = 31)	87.1%	3.2%	9.7%	6.5%

Open Ended Items

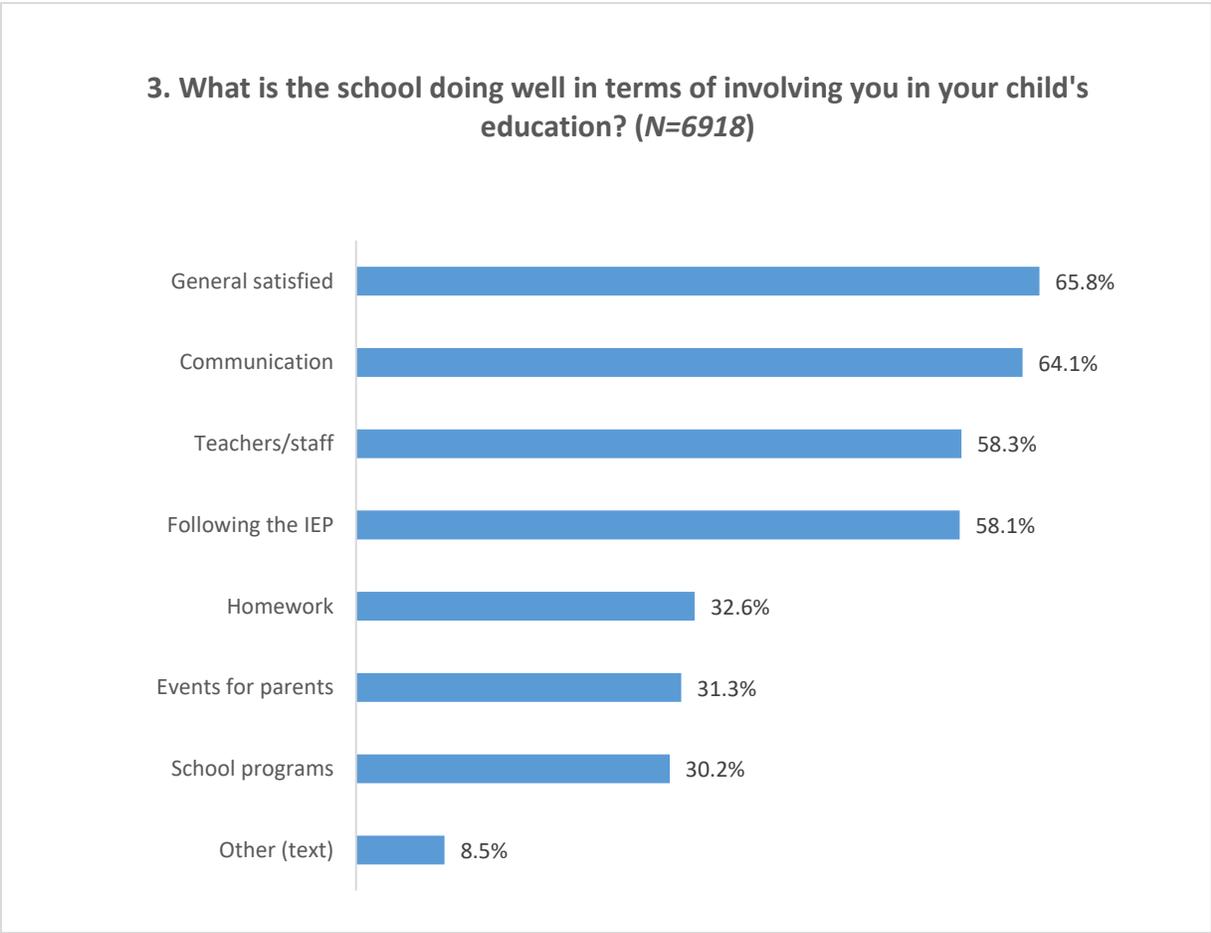
What do you think the school is doing well in terms of involving you in your child's education?

Two multiple-choice questions with text responses were asked to get detailed information about parents' perceptions of how the school involved them in their children's education: 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? To improve the interpretation of the responses to these two questions, the researchers transformed the only-text question into the mixed format. The multiple choices offered categories of responses and the text table allowed additional feedback from parents.

The multiple-choice results of the question "what do you think the school is doing well in terms of involving you in your child's education" was given in Figure 3. Among all the responses, about 65.8% parents were generally satisfied with the school involvement, and over 50% of parents confirmed that the school communicated with them well (64.1%), having caring teachers and staff (58.3%), and following the IEP (58.1%). Schools also involved parents in the child's education by offering homework and related resources to students and parents (32.6%), hosting events for parents (31.3%), and giving specific school programs (30.2%).

In addition to the multiple choices, 580 parents also reported detailed comments in the text format (Figure 4). Among them, over 40% parents appreciated the teachers and staff's efforts in involving parents. Other text responses were categorized into communication, specific support and individualized services for students in need, collaboration between the school and the parents, parents' events, and homework support. It was noteworthy that about 31.4% parents gave negative comments on the school-parent involvement in this question. Most of the parents in this category expressed their concern about the communication and

requested more information about their child’s progress and failures at school through direct contact and/or regular report.

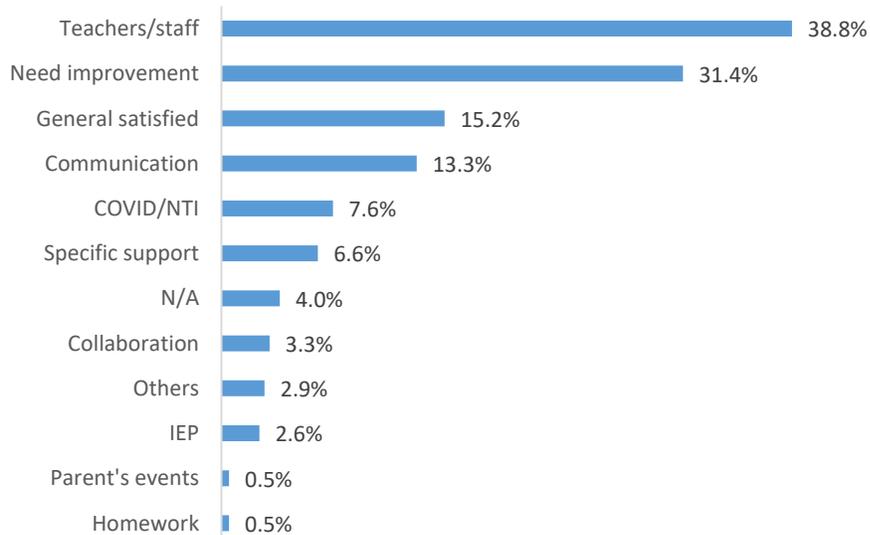


What do you think the school can do better to involve you in your child’s education?

Among all the responses to the multiple-choice question “What do you think the school can do better to involve you in your child’s education?” 62.0% of parents were satisfied with being involved by the school in their child’s education. The top three concerns about the involvement was the quality of communication between parents and the school (14.0%), events for parents (10.3%), and school programs (10.0%). Parents would also like to see improvement in homework, following the IEP, teacher and staff performances, and other (text responses).

The researcher analyzed 624 text responses under the category “other”. Among those responses, 13.0% were generally satisfied and 1.1% were generally unsatisfied, without detailed explanation. The top suggestion from parents was about communication. About 25.3% of parents emphasized the importance of communication between parents and the school. Parents would like to receive more reports about the child’s progress and daily performance, and to be involved more in meetings. About 23.7% of parents were expecting the school’s extra support to their child based on the specific disability. Those wishes included but were not limited to one-on-one service, age and disability-target courses, life skill and socialization programs, consistent accommodation, and outdoor activities. Another important concern was how the school followed the IEP (12.8%). Parents encouraged the school to educate the teachers and the students on the knowledge of the IEP, to make sure that everyone in the program understands and follows the IEP. About 10.4% parents recommended the school recruit and train teachers and staff with more professional experience in special education. Among this group, some parents expressed concerns regarding how inexperienced teachers and staff treated their child, and some expressed their concern about the turnover of good teachers. Other suggestions to improve the school-parent involvement included giving appropriate amount of the homework to students with detailed directions, hosting events for parents, and stopping bullying.

4. What is the school doing well in terms of involving you in your child's education?--Other(text) (N=580)



Impact of COVID-19

It was noteworthy that COVID-19 created an inevitable impact on the result of Parent Survey 2020. In response to the question “what do you think the school is doing well in terms of involving you in your child’s education”, 44 parents mentioned the COVID-19 or NTI program in their response, among which 17 parents were satisfied with the extra support in home education from the school, 26 parents noted a lack of involvement with the school, and 1 parent did not give a detailed response. In response to the question “what do you think the school can do better in terms of involving you in your child’s education”, 9.3% percent of parents had concerns about COVID-19 and/or NTI. There was some overlap with responses regarding the IEP. Most of the parents in this group mentioned that NTI did not fit the goals of IEP where most of activities were given in person. Some parents also said they were not professional enough to give special education and therapy at home, even with the guideline of teachers and therapists delivered online. Another concern in the group is that families received less learning materials and services from the school during the pandemic than ever.

Example of COVID19/NTI Responses
"Edited for Clarity"

- In the case of speech therapy during NTI days the teacher wanted me to do speech with my child and that was not really possible. I am not a trained therapist to be able to correct the manner in which he speaks so it was frustrating, and I quit doing speech altogether with him.
- Due to COVID-19 NTI took over. We have no internet and both parents work M-F during the day. Private in-home tutors need to be an option for kids with IEPs and many needs. NTI did not work.
- I understand that this was a sudden and unexpected thing but going forward I think the NTI days should be structured to his IEP and not just general NTI work like everyone else.
- The NTI model is SUPER difficult to carry out for a mentally disabled child. Need an alternative to NTI.
- Well, since NTI began, the IEP hasn't really been followed.
- Get back in school. COVID-19 is not an issue for students or teachers.
- I have been a little disappointed that my child's school has not offered virtual speech services during the COVID-19 closure. They are calling me weekly to discuss progress, but I feel like he would benefit from a virtual session where the speech teacher could interact and model speech patterns. Not only would my child benefit from this, I would also be able to learn strategies by watching the teacher interaction.
- NTI is really difficult for parents and students.
- I simply think that the NTI makes things hard to involve a special needs 3yr old in the planned curriculum that is provided daily. Although successful in a school environment, it is a challenge in the home with four additional children. The NTI has created a set of challenges that are unlike any others. Although the material and communication are provided by the teachers, the ability to engage my child into each proposed activity is not always possible.

Discussion and Conclusions

Results remain generally favorable, with parents overall reporting high levels of encouragement from the school to be involved in their child's education. This could mean several things, however. At one level, it is consistent with previous years' findings so may just be a continuation of those efforts. In another context, the need for increased parental involvement during NTI may be more out of necessity than intentional efforts at improvement by districts. It may also be an indicator that parents recognized the difficulty that schools were facing and appreciated the schools' help during this time.

We continue to see lower levels of involvement for Hispanic families. Whether this is due to communication barriers, family dynamics or other factors we cannot determine. Schools and districts should be aware that this is an ongoing trend.

It is noteworthy that "communication" is referenced frequently in both positive and negative terms. Nearly two-thirds of comments about what the school is doing well refer to good communication from their child's school. Still, another 25% refer to communication as an area that could be improved upon. Specific areas that schools may wish to focus on include: more reports on child's progress; daily performance reports; and more involvement in meetings.

The impact of the pandemic may have been felt most acutely in the area of transition. Although in previous years we asked a different question about transition, the 59% positive response is the lowest of any item. Strategies for providing transition services during NTI may be difficult, and on-site work experience may have been impossible during this period. Still, districts should have contingency plans for emergency situations.

Appendix A – Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

The (insert name of district) School District and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) are seeking feedback from parents regarding how your child’s school is involving you in the special education services provided to your child.

Please complete a brief, online survey to share your experience with your child’s special education services during the current school year (2019-2020). Please go to www.kypso.org, and [complete the eleven-question survey telling us about your current experiences.](#)

You may also access the survey by scanning the following code into your smartphone or mobile device (if you open your camera and point it at the code it should automatically generate a link that you can access):



When school buildings are open again, if you would like to visit the school to complete the survey, you are more than welcome to use one of our computers. Only one parent per student should complete this survey. However, if you have more than one child with an Individual Education Program (IEP), please complete a survey for each of your children.

All responses are anonymous and cannot be traced back to you or your child. Results will be analyzed by the Human Development Institute (HDI) at the University of Kentucky (UK) and used for a report to the U.S. Department of Education. Analysis of the final report will be utilized to improve parent involvement in special education programs.

The deadline for completing this very important survey is **June 30, 2020**.

Thank you for your help.

[Your name and position]

Appendix B - Parent Involvement Survey



English ▾

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 (2019-20).

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? (Check all that apply)

- I am generally satisfied
- Communicating information, including reports, meetings and visits
- Following the IEP
- Specific school programs
- School events / activities for parents
- Skilled / caring teachers and staff
- Homework
- Other (please specify)

6. What do you think the school could do better to involve you in your child's education? (Check all that apply)

- I am generally satisfied and there is no need of improvement so far.
- Communicating information, including reports, meetings and visits

- Following the IEP
- Specific school programs
- School events / activities for parents
- Skilled / caring teachers and staff
- Homework
- Other (please specify)

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?

What is your child's gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other / Prefer not to answer

10. What was your child's age on June 30, 2019?

11. Has your school helped to prepare your son or daughter for future employment through vocational training (e.g., exploring jobs, paid work experiences)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

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