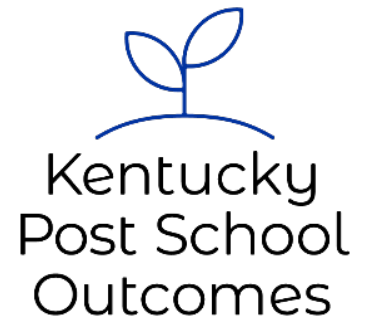


Parent Involvement Report 2023



kypso.org
Prepared for the:
Kentucky Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Table of Contents

Background	1
Methods.....	1
Items	2
Disaggregated Results.....	5
Discussion and Conclusions	11
Key Takeaways and Recommendations.....	13
Appendix A – Sample Letter to Parents	14
Appendix B – Parent Involvement Survey	16
Appendix C – Select Comments from Parents	20

Background

The 2023 Parent Survey was administered from January through June 2023. This was modified from previous years to accommodate the requests of several Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to allow surveys to be given during Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) meetings, to start earlier and to have the survey window completed during a single school year. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) contracted with the Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center (KYPSO) to develop the instrument, assist with distribution, collect and analyze data, and report results both related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Indicator 8 for the Annual Performance Report as well as other items deemed to be in the state's interest. Indicator 8 provides information about parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement to improve services and results for children with disabilities. This report presents analyses of the data collected. Further analysis is available upon request.

Methods

In consultation with the Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center (KYPSO), the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) decided to include all parents of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) during the 2022-23 school year as participants in the study. The KDE Office of Special Education and Early Learning contacted local Directors of Special Education and provided instructions on contacting parents to complete the survey. A sample letter was given to local directors for distribution to parents of students with IEPs by school staff who had such students on their caseload. The letter informed parents of multiple ways to access the survey, including a direct link located on the [KYPSO website](#), a "QR" code that could be scanned by a mobile device, and the opportunity to take the survey in person at the school at any time, including during the annual ARC meeting. The survey was made available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Somali, and Amish, as were the sample letters to parents. See the appendix for copies of the survey and sample parent letter.

The survey could have potentially been distributed to parents of over 109,672 students with IEPs in Kentucky. It was suggested that only one parent complete the survey per child. If parents had multiple children with IEPs, they should fill out one survey for each child. 17,607 responses were completed and collected for a response rate of 16.05%, by far the highest ever for this survey.

First, we present an overview of the data by question to provide a general overview of parents' responses. Next, we disaggregate the data by race and disability to further evaluate any patterns that might need to be addressed in efforts to increase parent involvement as a means to improve special education services and student outcomes.

Items

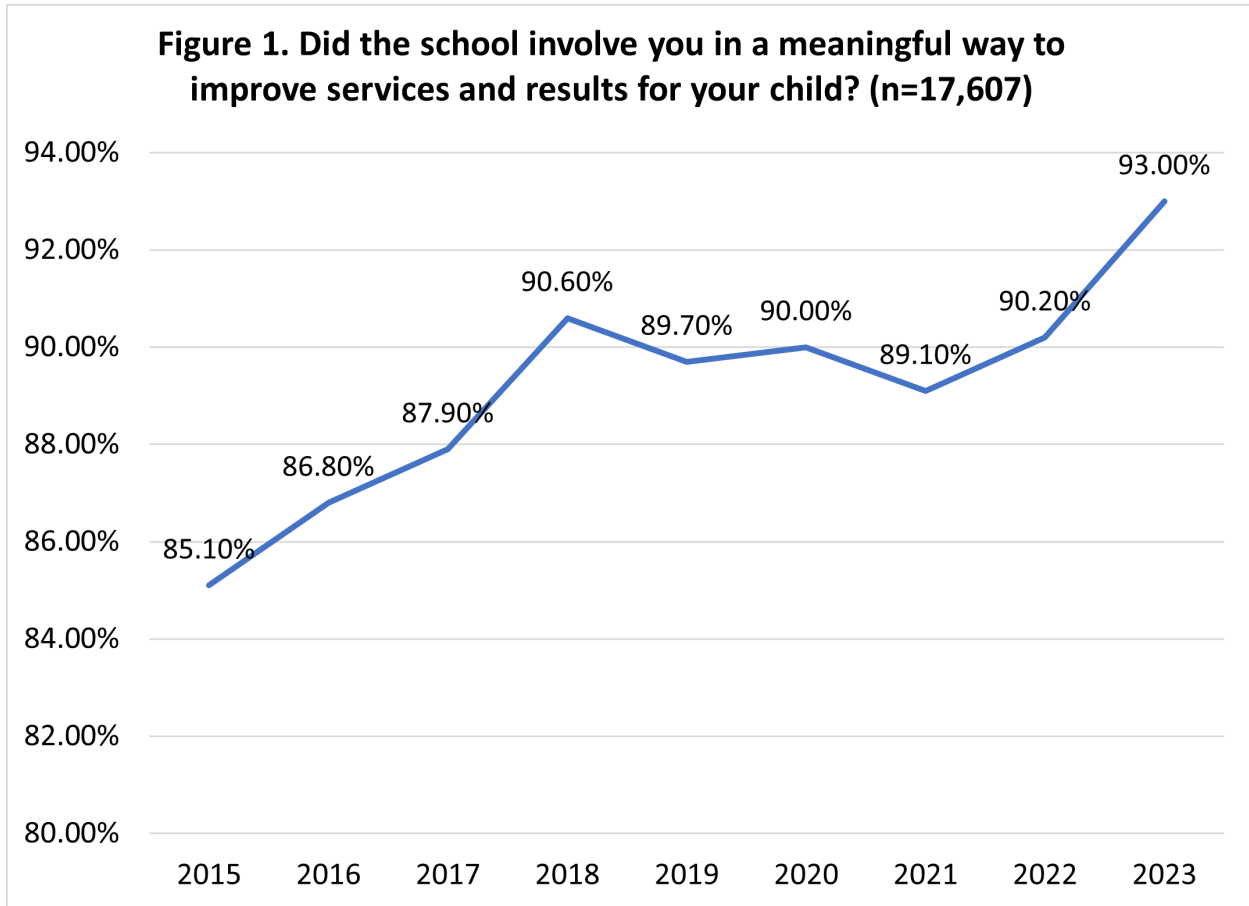
1. Did the school involve you in a meaningful way to improve services and results for your child?

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 "Yes" and "No."

In 2023, **93.0%** of respondents gave an affirmative ("Yes") response. This continues a pattern of high rates, which have remained around 90%. These include 2015 (85.10%), 2016 (86.8%), 2017 (87.9%), 2018 (90.6%), 2019 (89.7%), 2020 (90.0%), 2021 (89.1%) and 2022 (90.2%) (See Figure 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.

Figure 1



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

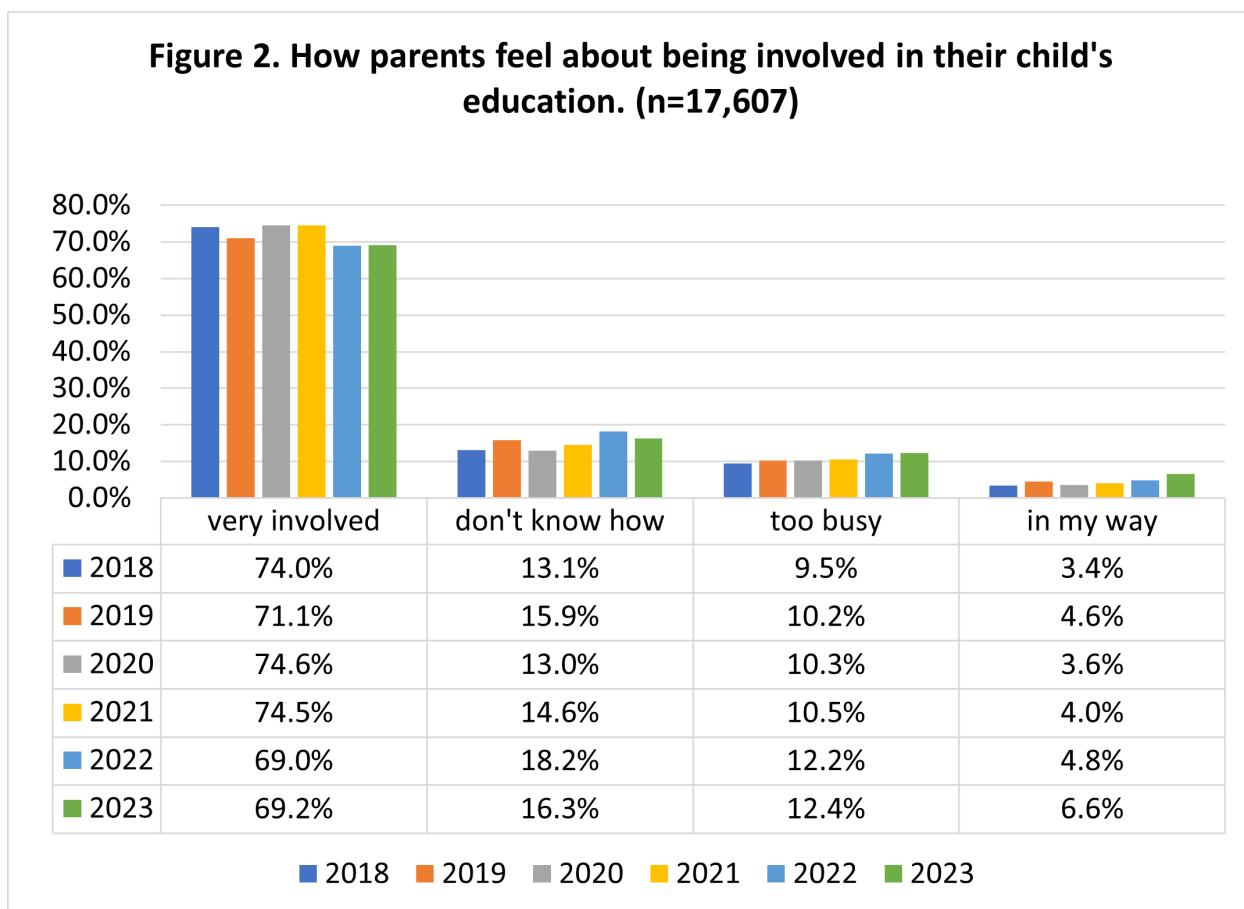
The second question on the survey asked about parents' level of understanding of the IEP process. Specifically, the item was worded, "On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= "I don't understand the IEP process at all" and 5= "I fully understand the IEP process," how well would you say that you understand the IEP process?" The mean response for this item was **4.27** on the five-point scale, indicating that parents who answered the survey believed they were knowledgeable about the IEP process. Over half of the **respondents (52.8%)** scored the item a "5." The percentage of respondents reporting a full understanding of the IEP process remains similar to that of 2019 (54.0%), 2020 (53.6%), 2021 (51.9%) and 2022 (51.1%).

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

A third item asked parents to describe their feelings about involvement in their child's education. This item allowed respondents to check any of the four response options that applied to them. **69.3%** of parents said they were very involved in their child's education (see Figure 2). 16.3% of respondents indicated that they wanted to be more involved but didn't

know how to be, and 12.4% responded that they were too busy to be involved. 6.6% of respondents indicated they preferred being involved in their child's education in their own ways instead of getting help from the school. Note that respondents were able to select more than one answer. This year, there was a slight drop in the percentage of respondents indicating they were very involved and slightly higher figures for the other answer options (see Figure 2).

Figure 2



It is also noteworthy that fewer parents in 2023 indicated they did not know how to be involved in their child's education when compared to 2022. This finding is important because between the 2020 and 2022 school years there was a trend toward an increased number of parents indicating they were unsure how to be involved.

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 welcomed school staff made them feel in participating in their child's education. In 2023, 92.6% of the respondents reported feeling welcomed by school staff, which is higher than 2022 (89.5%)

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

To assess the school's involvement in planning for transition, this item was asked of the parents of students who were 14 years or older (n=3,069) about vocational training services. **90.0%** of respondents indicated that the school had helped prepare their son or daughter for future employment. This represents a slight decline from 2022 (92.3 to 90.0%).

Disaggregated Results

The survey included items related to race/ethnicity, primary disability, and age of the child (Tables 1-6). While several of these categories have too few responses to be included in this report, we include breakdowns by item for the largest groups.

Tables 1-3 reports the item regarding overall meaningful involvement (used for Indicator 8), the level of understanding the IEP (mean ratings), and school staff being welcoming. Data were disaggregated by race, disability, and age in 2023. As shown, all the disaggregated groups of respondents reported high rates in meaningful school involvement (around 90%), in school staff being welcoming (over 82%), and in understanding the IEP (mean > 4.00).

Among all the race groups, parents of White students reported the highest rates in meaningful school involvement (93.4%). Parents of Asian students reported the highest rate of school staff being welcoming (93.5%). Parents of Pacific Islander students scored the highest in understanding the IEP (mean=4.6).

The difference in responses across disability categories continued to be very small in 2023. The overall involvement rate and welcoming staff rate were around 90%, and the mean of understanding the IEP was above 4.0 out of 5. This year, parents of children with speech or language impairments reported the highest involvement rate (95.2%), and parents of students with mild Functional Mental Disabilities felt the most welcomed by school staff (96.4%). Among all the five age groups, over 90% of parents of students in all age groups reported meaningful involvement and welcoming services from the school. In general, parents of younger students responded most favorably, although parents of students over the age of 18 indicated feeling the most welcomed by school staff.

Table 1 reports overall meaningful involvement, the level of understanding of the IEP (mean ratings), and school staff being welcoming by race (n=17,607).

Table 1

Race	School involves parents meaningfully (%)	School staff are welcoming (%)	Understand IEP (mean score out of 5)
White (n=14,355)	93.4%	93.0%	4.28
Black or African American (n=855)	90.7%	90.8%	4.30
Multiple Race (n=934)	91.3%	90.4%	4.26
Hispanic or Latino (n=470)	92.3%	92.0%	4.00
Asian (n=140)	92.9%	93.5%	4.19
Native American (n=28)	89.3%	82.1%	4.15
Pacific Islander (n=11)	90.9%	90.9%	4.55

Table 2 reports overall meaningful involvement, the level of understanding of the IEP (mean ratings), and school staff being welcoming by primary disability.

Table 2

Primary Disability	School involves parents meaningfully (%)	School staff are welcoming (%)	Understand IEP (mean score out of 5)
Speech or Language Impairment (n=3,868)	95.2%	93.9%	4.35
Autism (n=2,670)	91.9%	91.3%	4.33
Developmental Delay (n=1,567)	95.1%	93.8%	4.28
Specific Learning Disability (n=2,744)	92.0%	92.2%	4.28
Other Health Impairment (n=1,313)	93.4%	92.7%	4.30
Mild Mental Disability (n=1,016)	95.5%	96.1%	4.28
Emotional Behavioral Disorder (n=580)	90.5%	89.4%	4.17
Functional Mental Disability (n=225)	95.6%	96.4%	4.39

Table 3 reports overall meaningful involvement, the level of understanding of the IEP (mean ratings), and school staff being welcoming by student age.

Table 3

Age	School involves parents meaningfully (%)	School staff are welcoming (%)	Understand IEP (mean score out of 5)
Age < 5 (n=3,253)	94.0%	93.5%	4.24
Age 5-9 (n=6,801)	94.2%	93.5%	4.28
Age 10-13 (n=4,142)	91.0%	90.3%	4.27
Age 14-18 (n=3,323)	92.2%	92.6%	4.27
Age >=19 (n=88)	89.8%	94.3%	4.33

More details about how parents were involved in the child's education were further examined by students' race, disability, and age (Tables 4-6). 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, almost 70% of respondents reported that they were very involved in their child's education. This is slightly lower than in previous years.

Table 4 reports how parents feel about being involved in the child's education by race.

Table 4

Race	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.
White (n=14,355)	69.8%	6.9%	15.8%	12.0%
Black or African American (n=855)	70.6%	5.0%	18.3%	13.2%
Multiple Race (n=934)	69.3%	4.5%	17.2%	13.8%
Hispanic or Latino (n=470)	54.3%	5.7%	22.6%	20.9%
Asian (n=140)	67.9%	2.1%	25.0%	12.2%
Native American (n=28)	57.1%	10.7%	21.4%	21.4%
Pacific Islander (n=11)	72.7%	0%	18.2%	18.2%

Table 5 reports how parents feel about being involved in the child's education by primary disability.

Table 5

Primary Disability	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.
Speech or Language Impairment (n=3,868)	74.3%	5.6%	14.6%	10.3%
Autism (n=2,670)	69.5%	4.9%	18.9%	12.4%
Developmental Delay (n=1,567)	68.4%	6.3%	16.5%	13.0%
Specific Learning Disability (n=2,744)	68.3%	6.7%	15.7%	13.0%
Other Health Impairment (n=1,313)	74.5%	6.5%	12.9%	11.5%
Mild Mental Disability (n=1,016)	64.1%	12.6%	12.1%	14.9%
Emotional Behavioral Disorder (n=580)	62.9%	7.9%	16.6%	14.5%
Functional Mental Disability (n=225)	71.1%	11.6%	8.9%	11.1%

Table 6 reports how parents feel about being involved in the child's education by age.

Table 6

Age	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.
Age < 5 (n=3,253)	68.7%	5.4%	19.1%	11.5%
Age 5-9 (n=6,801)	70.1%	5.7%	16.3%	12.6%
Age 10-13 (n=4,142)	68.4%	6.5%	16.3%	13.5%
Age 14-18 (n=3,323)	68.9%	9.8%	13.7%	11.6%
Age >=19 (n=88)	76.1%	9.1%	10.2%	8.0%

When disaggregated by race, the range of parents who indicated they were very involved in their child's education was 54.3% - 72.7%. White, African American/Black, Multiple Race, and Asian parents reported higher percentages of being very involved in their child's education than parents from other races. Compared with last year, each of these subgroups had the same proportion or higher rates of parents indicating "very involved." On the other hand, parents of Hispanic and Native American students reported notably lower involvement (54.3% and 57.1%), and this rate decreased from the previous year. These parents also reported the highest rate of being too busy to be involved.

Over 60% of parents among all disability groups with sufficient respondents to report stated they were very involved in their child's education in 2023. The parents of students with Other Health Impairment (OHI) reported the highest rate (74.5%), while those of students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD) scored the lowest (62.5%).

The age group of 19 and above scored the highest in terms of being involved, which is a significant change from 2022, when this group scored the lowest in this category. This year, parents of those ages 10-13 reported the lowest rate. Consistent with previous years, parents of students younger than five showed high rates of "not knowing how to be involved."

Parents Who Did Not Know How to be Involved

The disaggregated racial data showed a range of 15.8%-25.0% of parents who indicated they did not know how to be involved in their child's education. Parents of Asian and Hispanic students reported the highest levels of not knowing how to be involved (25.0% and 22.6%, respectively).

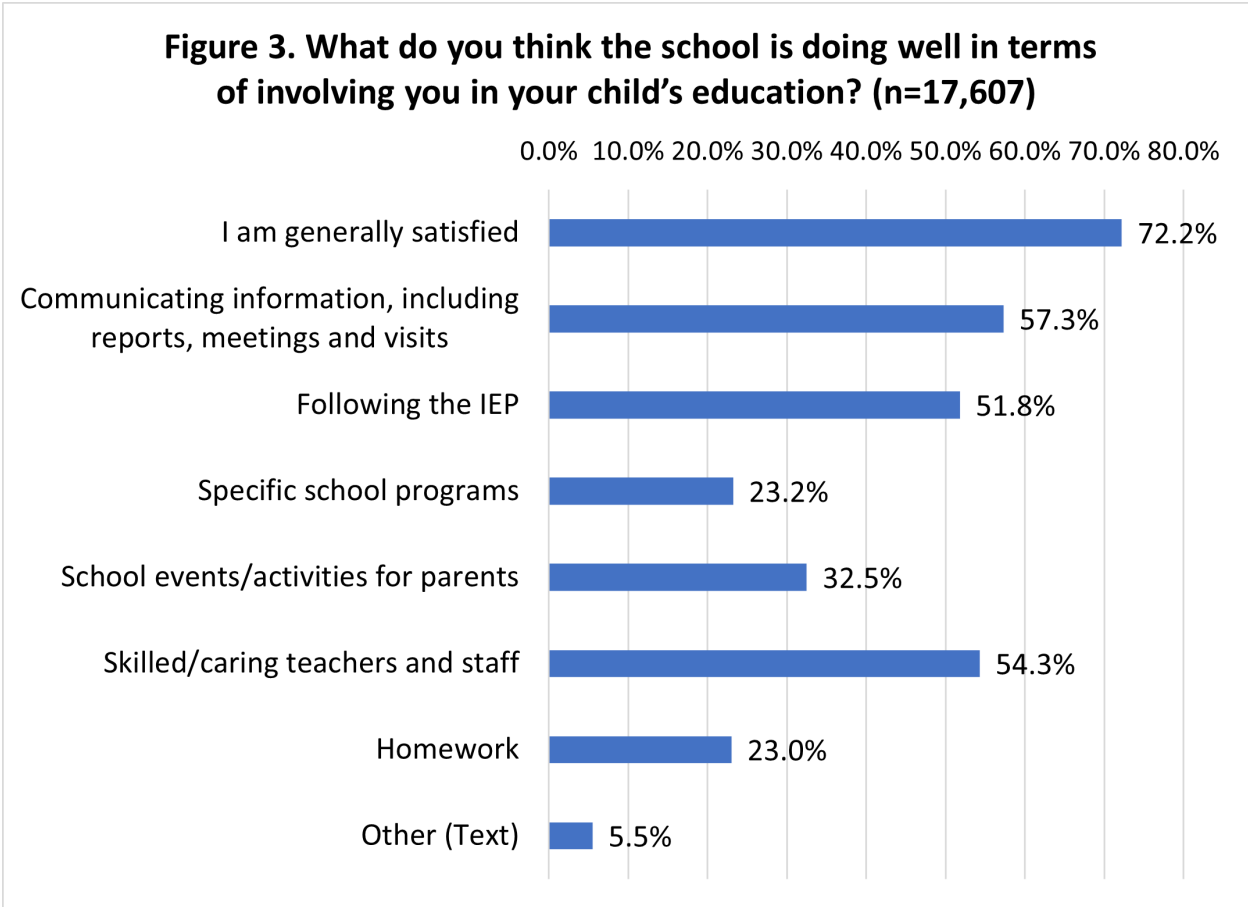
When disaggregated by disability label, parents of students with Functional Mental Disabilities (FMD) scored lowest for not knowing how to be involved (8.9%). The proportion of parents of students with FMD who indicate they do not know how to be involved decreased from last year (14.1%). Parents of students with Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) scored lowest on being too busy to be involved.

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

Two multiple-choice questions with the option for 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? The multiple choices offered categories of responses. "Other" was also an option for both items, with an opportunity to supply a text-based response. These responses will be available in a forthcoming addendum to this report.

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?" is given in Figure 3. Among all the responses, 73% of parents were generally satisfied with the school's involvement, and more than half of parents confirmed that the school did well in communicating information, following the IEP, and having skilled/caring teachers and staff for students. Lower numbers reported that the school was doing well at offering homework (23.0%), hosting events for parents (32.5%), and offering specific school programs (23.2%).

Figure 3

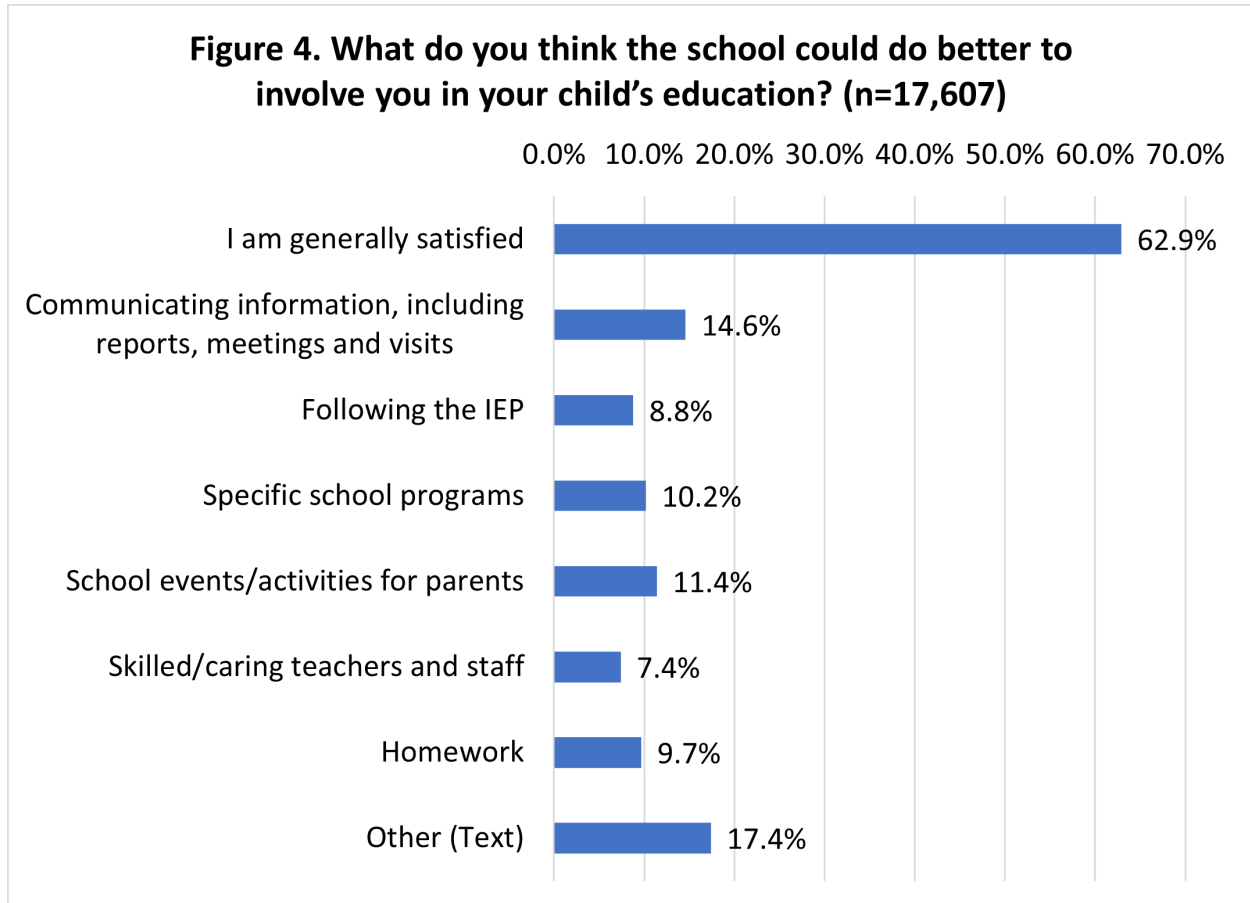


What do you think the school can do better to involve you in your child's education?

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?" 62.9% reported being generally satisfied with the school's efforts (see Figure 4). There were multiple choice options parents identified as suggestions for what schools could to do better involve them. There was also a place where they could indicate "other." Examples of what was indicated in "other" can be found in the appendix. The multiple choice items received fairly low (7.4% – 14.6%) rates. The highest two areas noted were related to communication and events for parents. Communication concerns

were slightly down from the previous year, as were concerns regarding skilled teachers and staff.

Figure 4



Narrative comments for what the school is doing well and could be doing better largely mirrored the same categories that were in the multiple choice options. We include a sample of these comments in Appendix C. Because respondents often made comments without indicating if they were writing about what the school is doing well or what could be done better, the data are grouped together as general comments that are reflective of overall sentiments expressed. A few other general sentiments were expressed, including how a lack of staffing prevents better resources for students and that disabilities are misdiagnosed.

Discussion and Conclusions

The most noteworthy finding of this year's survey administration was the continued increase in response rate, which has essentially doubled over the past two years. This gives us greater confidence in our results, represents a wider sample of the population, and increases

representativeness. It also reflects the value and impact of the state prioritizing the specific area.

Several comments from parents noted that their children were not receiving the support that they needed. This may be due to a lack of teachers. However, the need for teachers to develop problem solving skills on how to engage students with significant support needs, including those who are non-speaking would benefit students, teachers, and parents.

It is remarkable to note that the actual results for Indicator 8 continued to increase even with the greater response rate. Over 90% of respondents indicated that their child's school district made an effort to involve them in their child's education. We recommend that the state continue to make survey response rate a priority for districts and also prioritize the encouragement of districts to improve areas identified as weaknesses. It should be noted that district reports are available upon request, and at the time of this report, many of the districts in the state have requested such reports.

It is also noteworthy that the results for most items have remained fairly consistent over the years. This is a positive in the sense that results are generally favorable. At the same time, there is a need to focus on seeing greater improvement from an already high baseline. Additionally, now that districts have a healthy emphasis on response rates, it seems apropos to identify additional ways to delve deeper into the data in terms of what districts are undertaking to improve *results*.

The inability to link responses to other data collected by KDE is a hindrance to targeting specific areas for improvement, such as Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) data. The anonymity of the survey promotes a greater response rate, but it may be worthwhile to consider making the survey available through Infinite Campus (IC). Doing so could allow the research team to link responses to particular programs and services recorded through IC. It might also add an additional component to parent involvement by examining engagement with the Parent Portal itself.

This year was the first administration of the survey in several additional languages (Swahili, Somali, and Amish). This was done both at the request of districts and guided by data on non-native English speakers. However, these options were rarely, if ever, utilized. We cannot identify a response bias for these groups, but given the small sample size, it may be impossible to detect.

We did see an increase in most parental involvement indicators for both Black and Hispanic students. Both are still below those of White but have improved. Regionally, the greater Louisville region is both under-represented and has lower scores.

In conclusion, this report demonstrates high levels of school efforts to involve parents of students with IEPs in their child's education. State efforts to increase response rates have allowed us to have greater confidence that this is an accurate reflection of parent sentiment. Greater work can be done to increase minority representation and involvement and encourage the use of findings.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

- Districts need to be focused on improving results, not just response rates. They should be encouraged to use their data to improve results.
- Parents noted that a lack of resources negatively impacted children with significant support needs. Problem solving skills may help address this.
- Incorporating a way to take the survey through Infinite Campus will enable the ability to see how parent involvement relates to different programs and practices.
- Continuing to work with racial and ethnic minorities to understand the value of their feedback (via the survey) and to listen to their needs regarding how to be more involved in their child's education.
- Continue to provide timely updates regarding response rates to districts.

Appendix A – Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parents and Guardians,

[INSERT NAME OF DISTRICT] and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) value your input and want to hear about your experience as a parent or guardian of a child with an Individual Education Program (IEP). The information you offer will give the KDE and [INSERT NAME OF DISTRICT] valuable data on how to improve parent and family engagement.

To collect your input, we ask that you complete a brief survey about how the school supported parent or guardian engagement to improve services and results for your child during the **current** school year. Specifically, we want to hear about how your child’s school involves you in the special education process. The survey is available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Somali, Swahili and Amish. All responses are anonymous and cannot be traced back to you or your child.

The online survey can be completed in three ways:

1. Go to www.kypso.org and select “*Click here to access the 2023 Parent Survey.*”
2. Scan the code below into your smartphone or mobile device. Some smartphones will open the survey link automatically when you open your camera, others may need a QR code scanner app. If you do not have access to a computer or smartphone, you may contact your child’s school to request a printed copy and a confidential envelope.



3. If using a printed copy, the sealed envelope can be returned to your child’s special education case manager, and they will ensure it is sent to the appropriate location. You may also mail the completed survey to the address below:

*Human Development Institute
c/o Tony LoBianco
1525 Bull Lea Rd. Suite 160
Lexington, KY 40511*

Only one parent or guardian per student should complete this survey. However, if you have more than one child with an IEP, please complete the survey for each of your children.

Survey results will be carefully studied by the KDE and the Human Development Institute (HDI) at the University of Kentucky (UK) and reported to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The results will help us further understand what supports parents and districts may need to ensure meaningful parent and family engagement in special education.

The deadline for completing this important survey is **June 30, 2023**. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact [INSERT NAME/NUMBER/EMAIL].

Thank you for your help.

[Insert Your name and position]

Appendix B – Parent Involvement Survey



Parent Survey 2023

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 2022-23 school year.

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 more 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? (Select one)

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

9. What is your child's primary disability? (Select one)

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD)
- Functional Mental Disability (FMD)
- Hearing Impairment
- Mild Mental Disability (MMD)
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment including Blindness
- I don't know

10. What is your child's gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other / Prefer not to answer

11. What was your child's age on June 30, 2022?

12. If your child was at least 14 years old, 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
- N/A

Appendix C – Select Comments from Parents

- Students with learning difficulties need specific learning objectives for livelihood, not being presented with standards and then just passing the students on.
- More teachers are needed. My son doesn't get the help he needs in the classroom or in the school in general. He comes home with the same pull-up he wore in the morning, 6+ hours, and he doesn't get changed. He comes back with his lunch untouched because no one really helps him in the cafeteria. The noise in the cafeteria bothers him. So, it's like I send him to school to be uncomfortable and hungry. His classroom teacher is exhausted. She stated she doesn't get to him until she teaches the rest of the class first, then whatever little time is left she spends with him, and it's not helping his educational growth. I could go on and on, but I doubt anyone looks at these.
- Communicating earlier when my child is behind, or behaviors are building and not waiting until the last minute or when something . . . explodes, more preemptive, preventive.
- The educators should be trained in a research-based instructional model. Districts should have clear expectations for educators implementing strategies. If there isn't a clear target of instruction, teachers don't have the ability to hit the target. Best practices work for all students, and the key predictor to student success is instruction, not curriculum.
- Involve doctors and or a psychiatrist before establishing labels. Children are labeled and suffer the consequences from unprofessional staff and teachers.
- More programs geared towards life skills & independent living skills. More agriculture, gardening, cooking, and animal programs that would/could reach S/ED students and the regular education ones as well.
- The only thing I have a problem with is that when my child reached his IEP goal and graduated from the program, the school kept pushing to get my child diagnosed with something he does not have.
- They are amazing at providing (student) with all his needs. They have gone above and beyond to learn how to care for (student).
- They never put meaningful goals into his IEP.
- We love (teachers) ... (they are such a good team). She has helped my child improve so much! She just gets his needs perfectly. I could not imagine preschool going better for him than when they were put together after Christmas break! [heart drawn in].