



Kentucky
Post School
Outcomes



Parent Involvement Report

2025

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

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Executive Summary

This report provides data and associated discussion for Indicator 8. This federally required data requires gathering statewide data on the percentage of parents who report that schools facilitate parent involvement to improve services and results for students with disabilities. To gather this data, KYPSO administered the 2025 Parent Survey to all parents of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center (KYPSO) includes additional questions to help identify areas in which parents reported strengths and needs related to school engagement. The survey was offered both online and on paper. There were differences in response rates and trends by survey mode, respondents' race/ethnicity, students' primary disability category, age, and geographic location. KYPSO collected 17,119 responses with a state-wide response rate of 14.68%.

Findings

Overall

- Overall, 93% of parents of students with IEPs report that schools involved them in a meaningful way to improve services and results for their child.
- Parents of students greater than age 18 had the highest rates of feeling very involved, while parents of students 14-18 had the lowest rates of feeling involved.
- Parents of children nine years old and younger reported the highest levels of not knowing how to be involved.
- 73.4% of parents were generally satisfied with what school personnel were doing to involve them in their child's education.
- Parents noted schools' strengths were in communicating information (57.8%), following the IEP (52.9%), and having skilled/caring teachers and staff for students (52.4%).
- Parents of White students were proportionally more likely to respond and to have positive ratings than those of Black or Hispanic students. This could indicate an overall inflation of Indicator 8.
- When disaggregated by transition-aged students, parents had lower ratings for involvement. This coincides with lower postschool outcomes from the Youth One Year Out (YOYO) data.

Understanding the IEP Process

- On a five-point scale, 95.38% of parents rated their understanding of the IEP process as three or higher; 55.1% were rated at the highest level.
- Parents who were unsure of their child's primary disability category had the lowest reported rating of understanding the IEP process (3.97).
- Parents from minority groups with the smallest populations (e.g., Pacific Islander) reported the lowest levels of feeling welcomed in planning their child's education and in feeling involved in their child's education.

Parental comments

- Parent responses varied largely between districts or even schools within the same Special Education Regional Technical Assistance Centers (SERTACs).
- Parents expressed concerns for overworked educators and understaffed schools.

Recommendations

- Using culturally and linguistically responsive strategies and supporting Universal Design for Learning in schools could improve relationships with families from minority groups.
- Disability specific support and education groups can improve families' understanding of the IEP process.
- Garnering strategies from over-represented regions (e.g., Southeast South-Central Educational Cooperative - SESC) and sharing their methods with under-represented regions (e.g., Greater Louisville Education Cooperative - GLEC) could improve response rates in under-represented areas.
- Continued efforts are suggested to help district personnel understand and address equitable response rates.
- Additional indicators of parental involvement (e.g., participation in IEP meetings, involvement in transition planning, use of tools such as the Infinite Campus Parent Portal) and targeted focus groups can add to our understanding of parental involvement trends and differences.

Why Indicator 8?

When parents are involved in their child's education, it can greatly increase how well students do in school, whether they are in early grades (e.g., Chu & Jhuo, 2024) or transition-aged (14+) (e.g., Zeng et al., 2024). Because the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the federal government recognize the importance of parent involvement, KDE conducts a Parent Survey each year. This survey measures the degree to which parents see schools as helping them be involved in their child's education. It includes questions about how well the school involved parents in their child's education and the IEP process. It also asks for information about what the school is doing well and what it could be doing better to support parent involvement. Using these questions allows the state and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to improve parent involvement and increase opportunities for student success.

Indicator 8: Parent Involvement

Percentage of parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for students with disabilities.

Methods

KDE contracted with KYPSO to develop the instrument, assist with distribution, collect and analyze data, and report results 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.

The 2025 Parent Survey was administered from January through June 2025 to all parents of students with IEPs. This timeframe was chosen to keep it within a single chronological year and to build on higher response rates than in previous years (prior to 2022) when it was administered at a different time. The State Director of Special Education 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 in the [Parent Involvement section of the KYPSO website](#), a QR code that could be scanned with a mobile device, and the opportunity to use a print version. Parents were given the opportunity to take the survey during their child’s annual Admissions and Release Committee (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.

There are over 114,000 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 were instructed to fill out one survey for each child. KYPSO collected 17,119 responses with a state-wide response rate of 14.68%. The range of response rates varies across SERTACs from 4.44% to 32.06%.

This report presents analyses of the data collected. First, we present an overview of the data by question to provide a high-level picture of parents’ responses. Next, we disaggregate the data by race/ethnicity and primary disability category to further evaluate patterns that may need to be addressed to increase parent involvement and improve special education services and student outcomes. Further analysis is available upon request.

Items

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

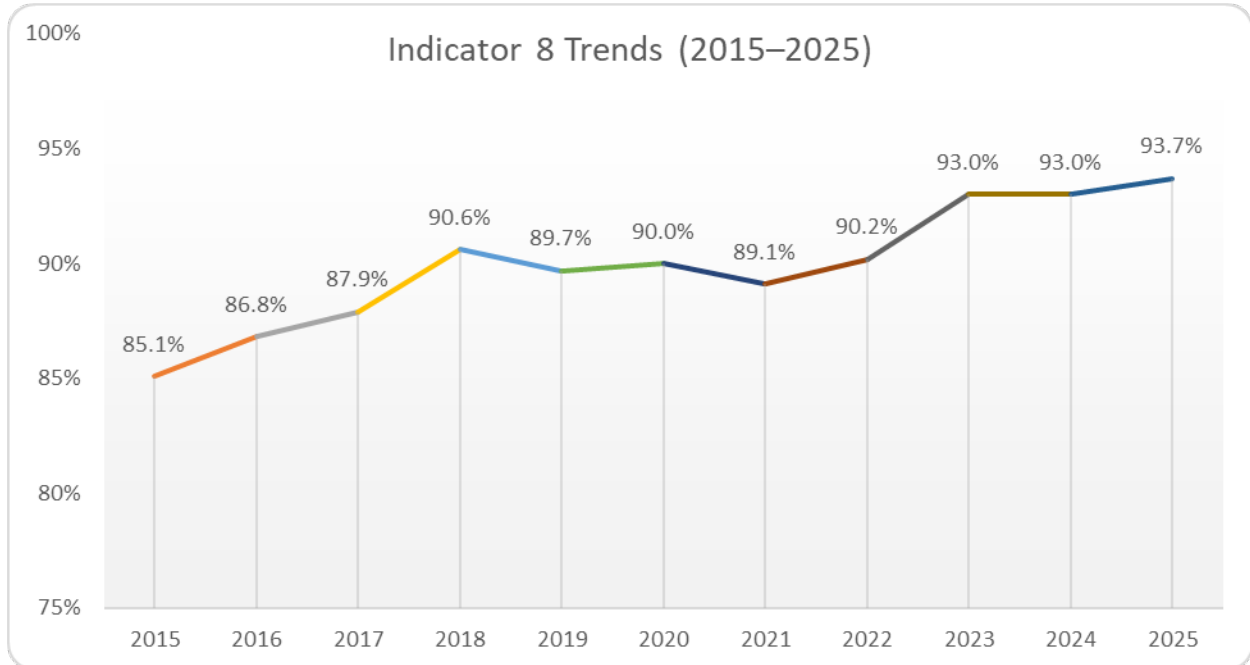
The survey’s first and most important item is what is used for federal reporting purposes under Indicator 8. This item is deliberately worded to try to capture the language of the indicator itself. The actual item is, “Did the school involve you in a meaningful way to improve services and results for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

Parent Comment

“They take all [the] time needed with my child and are always trying and working to help me as a parent as well as my child.”

In 2025, **93.72%** of respondents gave an affirmative (“Yes”) response. This continues a pattern of high rates, which have remained around 90% since 2022. Figure 1 includes the indicator 8 data from 2015 to 2025.

Figure 1: Indicator 8 data by year, 2015–2025.



The upward trend demonstrates that efforts to make families feel welcome continue to improve and are a strength of the Kentucky school system. Other items included in the survey were not reported as part of Indicator 8 but help inform the state about specific areas of strength and need.

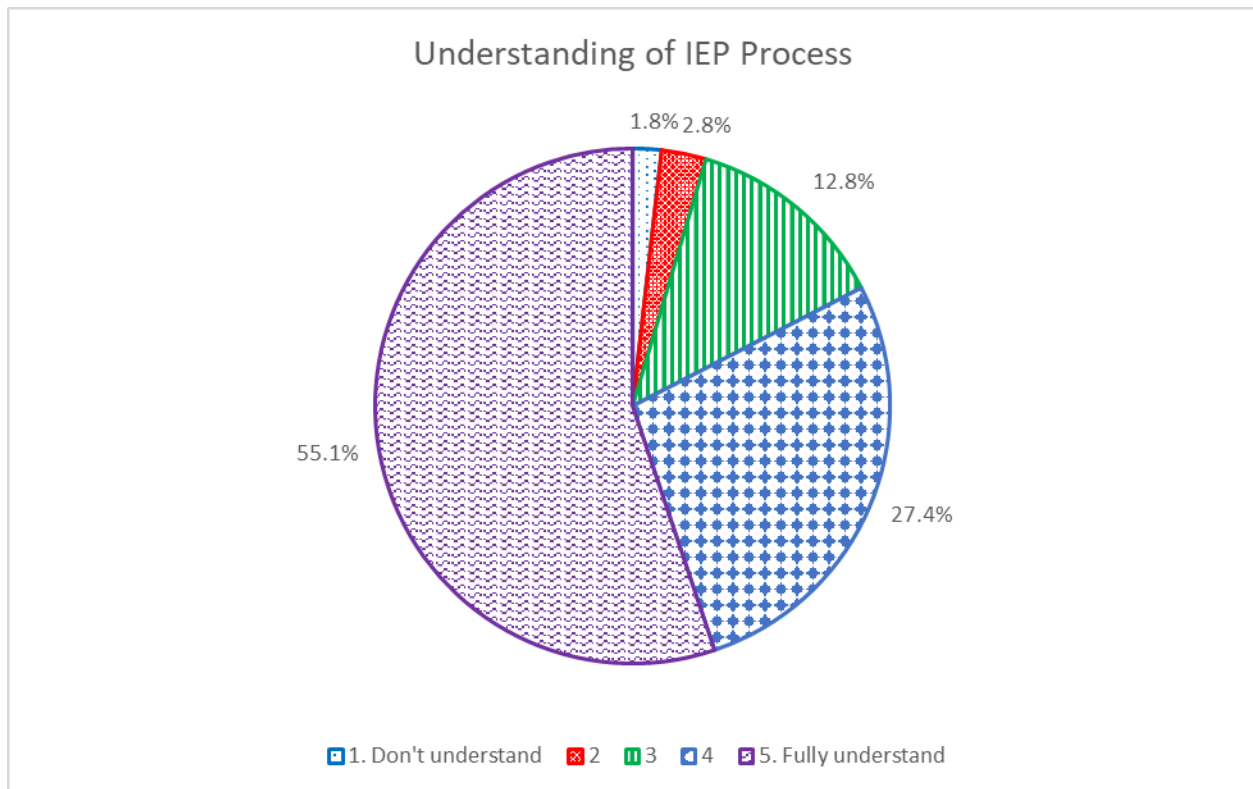
Parent Comment

“Please explain to me in a simpler term about the IEP I had one myself so its hard for me to understand what it all does for my child.”

Item 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?” Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of people at each stage of the continuum from 1 to 5.

Figure 2: Reported levels of understanding the IEP process



The mean response for this item was **4.3** 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 (55.1%)** scored the item a “5.” This is the highest rate of the past seven years. Less than 2% of respondents (1.8%) scored the item a “1,” meaning they did not understand the IEP process at all.

Item 3: How do you feel about being involved in your child’s education?

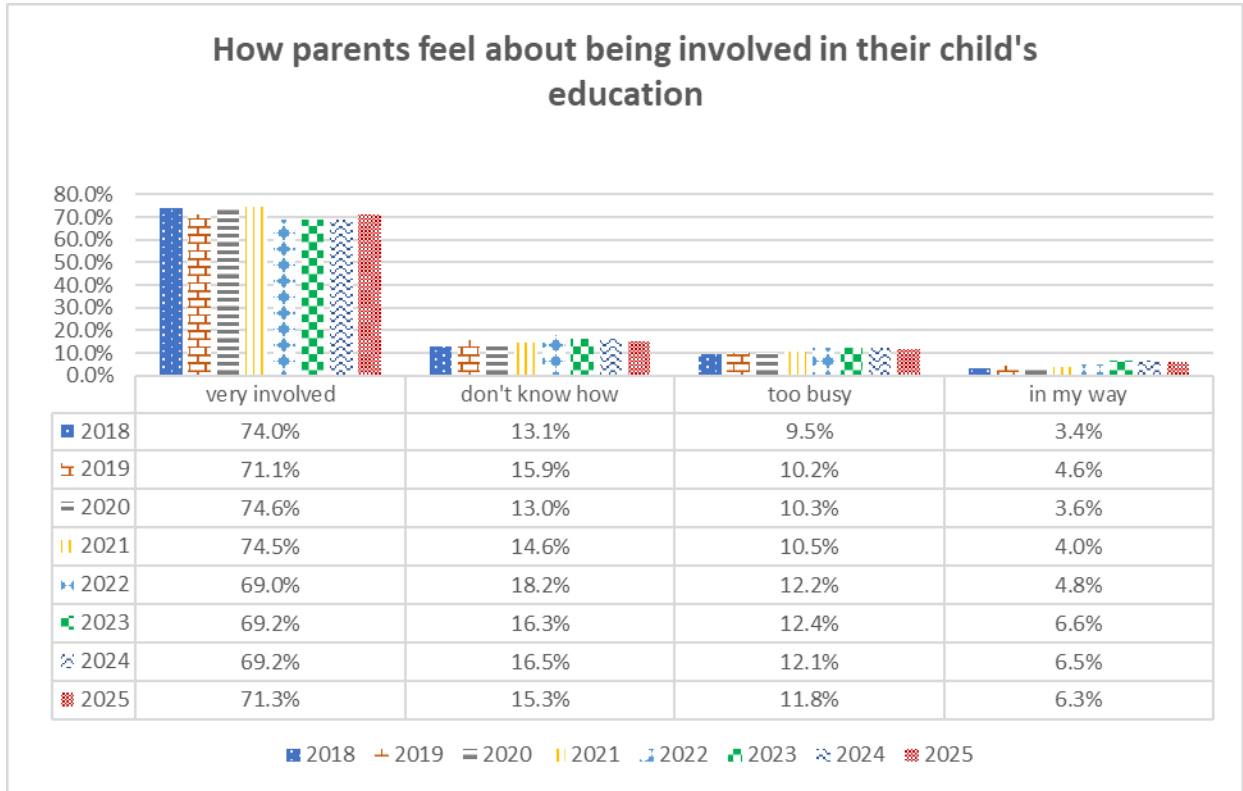
A third item asked parents to describe their feelings about involvement in their child’s education. This item allowed respondents to check any of the four response options that applied to them. Responses to the first option showed 68.6% of respondents felt they were very involved in their child’s education (see Figure 3). Respondents were also able to indicate if they wanted to be more involved. 14.7% of respondents indicated they wanted to be more involved but did not know how to be. And 10.9% indicated they wanted to be more involved but were too busy. 5.8% of respondents indicated they preferred to be

Parent Comment

“His growth this school year has shown what positive relationships, proactive interventions, meaningful communication between home and school can do to improve the success of a student with an IEP.”

involved in their child’s education in their own ways rather than receive help from the school (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Parents’ feelings about involvement in their child’s education



Item 4: Do you feel that school staff welcome you to participate in planning for your child’s education?

The next question was whether respondents felt the school staff were welcoming their participation in their child’s education. This has been an area of strength for Kentucky. In 2022, 89.5% of respondents reported feeling welcomed. This rate has continued to increase, and in 2025, 93.43% of respondents reported feeling welcomed.

Item 12: Has your school helped prepare your son or daughter for future employment through vocational training (e.g., exploring jobs, paid work experiences)?

An important aspect of education is to prepare students for future employment through vocational training. This training can include, but is not limited to, Career Technical Education (CTE) classes, internships, career exploration, and paid work experiences. Because official transition planning begins at 14 years of age, this question was asked only for respondents whose child was 14 years old or older (n=2,766). In 2025, 73.5% of respondents indicated that the school had helped prepare their child for future employment through vocational training. This is a further drop from 2024 (74.9%), which was the first year that this indicator had not been at least 90%. This is a major concern, as it demonstrates that 2024 was not an outlier and that results are trending downward. This also corresponds with lower outcomes in the Youth One Year Out (YOYO) data, which shows

that competitive employment and, to a lesser extent, higher education enrollment dropped in 2025. We tested for meaningful differences among groups for this item and found few. Parents of students with the Multiple Race designation reported somewhat lower (61.6%) on this item than the average, and parents of White students scored the highest (76.5%). The only primary disability category with a large enough sample size to draw meaningful inferences from that differed from the mean significantly was parents of students with Mild Mental Disability (MMD) (86%). Parents of males responded more favorably (76.8%) than those of females (72.4%), and the child's age impacted responses in a predictable way, increasing incrementally from age 14 to 18 before dropping off. However, all these differences are relatively small compared to the declines from 2023 to 2024 and from 2024 to 2025.

Disaggregated Results

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

Tables 1-3 report the item regarding overall meaningful involvement (used for Indicator 8), the level of understanding of the IEP (mean ratings), and school staff being welcoming. Data were disaggregated by race/ethnicity, primary disability category, and age. This is done to identify any areas where one or more groups might have significantly different responses than others. This difference could indicate an area of strength that could be extended to other groups or an area of weakness. Groups with fewer than 10 responses were not reported. Table 1 provides the data by race/ethnicity.

Table 1: Disaggregated data of school involvement, staff welcoming, and IEP understanding by race/ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	School Involved me in a Meaningful Way	School Staff are Welcoming	Understand IEP Score (Mean score out of 5)
Asian	95.7%	95.0%	4.07
Black or African-American	91.6%	92.2%	4.32
Hispanic or Latino	93.7%	92.7%	4.08
Multiple Race	93.8%	92.9%	4.32
Native American	83.3%	87.5%	4.71
Pacific Islander	91.3%	87.0%	3.26
White	94.1%	93.8%	4.33

While all race/ethnicity groups had high levels of feeling involved in a meaningful way (above 80%), there were differences between groups. Asian families had the highest rate of feeling involved in a meaningful way (95.7%), with White families reporting the second highest rate (94.1%). Native American families reported the lowest rate of feeling involved of any race/ethnicity group (83.3%). There is an 80% confidence level that this difference is statistically significant. Among the other race/ethnicity groups, there was a range (91.3 -93.8%) for parents feeling involved in their child's education in a meaningful way.

All subgroups reported high levels of feeling that school staff were welcoming (87.0% or higher), with a range of 87.0% - 95.0%. Similar to feeling involved, Asian families reported the highest level of feeling welcomed (95.0%), and White families reported the second-highest level (93.8%). The groups that reported the lowest levels of feeling welcomed were Native Americans and Pacific Islanders (87.5% and 87.0%, respectively).

Responses disaggregated by race/ethnicity showed that, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "I don't understand the IEP process" and 5 being "I fully understand the IEP process," the mean ranged from 3.26 to 4.71. Pacific Islanders, who had the lowest rate of feeling welcome, had the lowest median score on understanding the IEP process. On the other hand, Native Americans had the second lowest rate of feeling welcomed, but had the highest reported mean of understanding of the IEP process.

When examining the data by primary disability category, the range of parents reporting feeling involved in a meaningful way was 87.9% to 100%, and the range for feeling welcomed was 91.4% to 97.0%. The range of understanding of the IEP process was 3.97 – 4.45.

Parents who did not know their child's primary disability category had the lowest level of understanding of the IEP process (3.97). This makes sense as understanding your child's primary disability category is an important part of the IEP process. Parents of students whose primary disability category was deaf-blindness had the highest rates of feeling involved (100%) and mean scores for understanding the IEP process (4.45), and the second-highest rating of feeling welcomed (96.9%).

Looking at the more common primary disability categories (speech or language disability, specific learning disability, autism, and developmental disability) shows a range of 92.8 – 95.5% and a rate of 93.9% for feeling involved. This same group had a range of 92.5 – 95.0% for feeling welcomed, with a rate of 93.6%. The range of understanding of the IEP process was 4.33 – 4.36, with a mean of 4.34. These figures indicate strong feelings of involvement, welcoming, and high levels of understanding. Table 2 provides the data by primary disability category.

Table 2: Disaggregated data of school involvement, staff welcoming, and IEP understanding by primary disability category

Primary Disability Category	School Involved me in a Meaningful Way	School Staff are Welcoming	Understand IEP Score (Mean score out of 5)
Autism	92.8%	92.8%	4.35
Deaf-Blindness	100.0%	96.9%	4.45
Developmental Delay	93.7%	94.2%	4.33
Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD)	92.0%	91.7%	4.27
Functional Mental Disability (FMD)	97.4%	96.5%	4.43
Hearing Impairment	95.7%	95.1%	4.28
I don't know	94.5%	94.4%	3.97
Mild Mental Disability (MMD)	96.7%	95.4%	4.31
Multiple Disabilities	90.8%	91.8%	4.31
Orthopedic Impairment	95.7%	93.3%	4.17
Other Health Impairment	91.9%	91.4%	4.34
Specific Learning Disability	93.6%	92.5%	4.35
Speech or Language Impairment	95.5%	95.0%	4.36
Traumatic Brain Injury	87.9%	93.1%	4.24
Visual Impairment, including Blindness	99.0%	97.0%	4.37

We next analyzed the data by five age groups that roughly correspond to grade groups: Preschool <5, elementary (5-9 years old), middle school (10-13 years old), high school (14-18 years old), and older than 18. Students in the last age bracket are unlikely to graduate with a regular diploma.

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: Disaggregated data of school involvement, staff welcoming, and IEP understanding by age group

Age Group	School involved me in a meaningful way	School staff are welcoming	Understand IEP scores (mean out of 5)
<5 (3,320)	94.10%	94.80%	4.3
5-9 (6,461)	95.10%	94.30%	4.3
10-13 (4,239)	92.20%	91.70%	4.34
14-18 (3,035)	92.50%	92.40%	4.29
>18 (64)	95.30%	95.20%	4.38

Parents of students across all age groups reported meaningful involvement and welcoming services from the school (92.2%-95.3%). The range for feeling welcomed was 91.7% - 95.2%. There was

essentially no difference across age levels in reported means for understanding the IEP process (4.2–4.3).

To understand parental perspectives on involvement, we also disaggregated the data for the question about how involved a parent felt in their child’s education. 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. This data was also disaggregated by students’ race/ethnicity, primary disability category, and age (Tables 4-6). Table 4 reports how parents feel about being involved in their child’s education by race.

Table 4: Parents’ reported feelings about involvement in their child’s education by race/ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	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
Asian	66.0%	0.7%	24.1%	15.6%
Black or African-American	74.8%	5.2%	14.6%	11.3%
Hispanic or Latino	61.6%	4.9%	21.7%	18.4%
Multiple Race	70.9%	4.7%	16.7%	14.9%
Native American	58.3%	8.3%	25.0%	12.5%
Pacific Islander	39.1%	43.5%	30.4%	49.9%
White	71.9%	6.6%	14.7%	11.2%

When disaggregated by race/ethnicity, the range of parents who indicated they were very involved in their child’s education was 39.1% - 74.8%. This demonstrates a downward shift from the 2024 data range of 57.1% - 77.8%. Outlier data (39.1%) are reported by parents of students who are Pacific Islanders. Outliers are more common when sample sizes are small. In this case, there were only 23 respondents whose child’s race/ethnicity was given as Pacific Islander.

Pacific Islanders also represented a significant outlier when indicating they did not need school involvement (43.5%) compared to the other disaggregated racial data (.7% - 8.3%).

Removing the outliers of Pacific Islanders and Native Americans helps focus on data with higher sample sizes, which are thus more reliable. White, African American/Black, and Multiple Race parents reported higher percentages of being very involved in their child’s education than Asian or Hispanic/Latino parents. The range of parents who indicated they did not know how to be involved in their child’s education was 14.6% - 24.1%. This is similar to the 2024 data range of 15.8% - 25.0%.

Some parents reported being too busy to be more involved in their child’s school (11.2% - 18.4%). Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and multiple race parents had the highest levels of being too busy to be more involved (18.4%, 15.6%, 14.9%), and White, Black/African-American, and Native American parents had the lowest rates of being too busy to be more involved (11.2%, 11.3%, 12.5%).

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

Table 5: Parents' reported feelings about involvement in their child's education by primary disability category

Primary Disability Category	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.
Autism	72.4%	4.9%	17.6%	10.8%
Deaf-Blindness	84.8%	6.1%	3.0%	3.0%
Developmental Delay	69.4%	7.1%	15.9%	12.7%
Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD)	67.8%	8.2%	14.4%	12.4%
Functional Mental Disability (FMD)	75.8%	7.4%	10.4%	8.7%
Hearing Impairment	72.4%	4.9%	14.7%	8.0%
I don't know	61.1%	7.0%	21.1%	15.5%
Mild Mental Disability (MMD)	66.3%	12.6%	10.7%	13.0%
Multiple Disabilities	72.0%	4.9%	17.2%	13.0%
Orthopedic Impairment	63.0%	6.5%	19.6%	17.4%
Other Health Impairment	73.9%	8.0%	12.0%	10.2%
Specific Learning Disability	72.2%	6.1%	13.0%	12.7%
Speech or Language Impairment	74.6%	5.4%	14.7%	10.7%
Traumatic Brain Injury	60.3%	1.7%	27.6%	20.7%
Visual Impairment including Blindness	82.0%	4.0%	13.0%	10.0%

The parents of students who were deaf-blind reported the highest rates of being involved (84.8%). Parents of children with functional mental disability (FMD), speech/language impairment, other health impairment (OHI), autism, multiple disabilities, and specific learning disabilities all reporting in the mid to low 70% (72.2% - 75.8%). The responses to "I am very involved" negatively correlate with each of the other three questions in this table. This indicates that the question about whether families feel very involved is valid and reliable.

Parents who reported high rates of not knowing how to be more involved in their child's education were those whose children had traumatic brain injury, orthopedic impairment, autism, multiple disabilities, or those who did not know what their child's primary disability category was. Table 6 reports how parents feel about being involved in their child's education by age.

Table 6: Parents' reported feelings about involvement in their child's education by age group

Age Group	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.
<5 (3320)	71.8%	5.1%	17.3%	11.5%
5-9 (6461)	72.1%	5.1%	16.3%	12.1%
10-13 (4239)	70.7%	6.6%	14.9%	11.8%
14-18 (3035)	69.9%	9.8%	11.9%	11.4%
>18 (64)	82.8%	3.1%	10.9%	10.9%

For the second consecutive year, parents of students older than 18 scored highest in terms of involvement. This year, parents of those students ages 14-18 reported the lowest rate of involvement. Consistent with previous years, parents of students younger than five showed high rates of “not knowing how to be involved.”

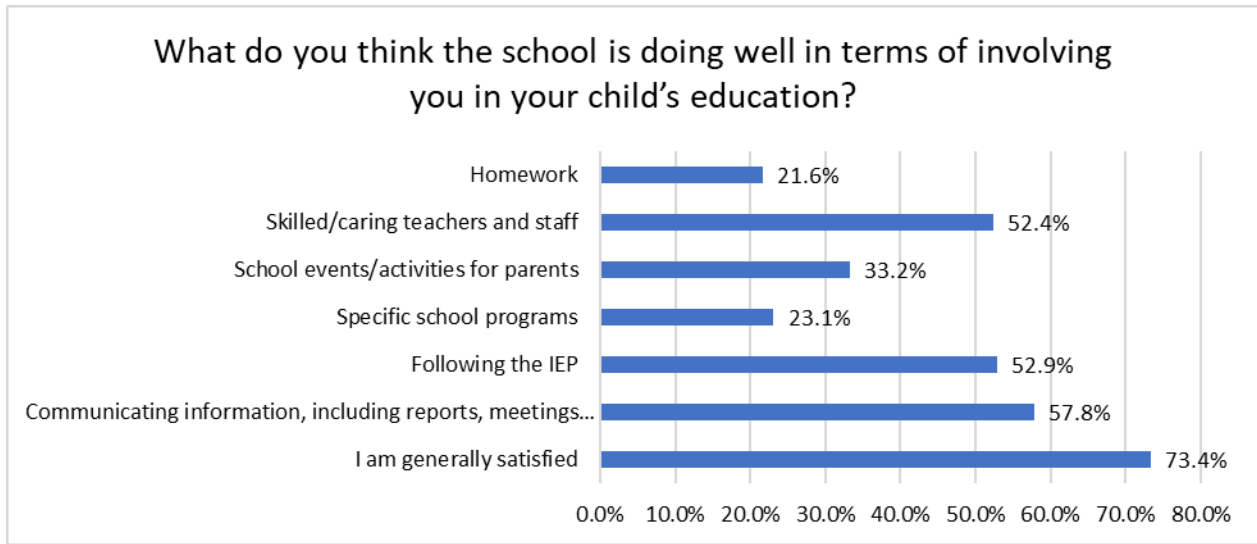
Item 5: What do you think the school is doing well in terms of involving you in your child’s education?

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? Response options were not mutually exclusive. “Other” was also an option for both items, with an opportunity to supply a text-based response. A sample of these responses is included in Appendix C.

The results of the question “What do you think the school is doing well in terms of involving you in your child’s education?” are given in Figure 4. Across all responses, 73.4% of parents were generally satisfied with the efforts of school personnel to involve them in their child’s education. Slightly more than half of parents confirmed that the school did well in communicating information (57.8%), following the IEP (52.9%), and having skilled/caring teachers and staff for students (52.4%). Lower numbers reported that the school was doing well at offering homework (21.6%), hosting events for parents (33.2%), and offering specific school programs (23.1%). These results are very similar to the 2024 data.



Figure 4: What parents think schools do well to involve them in their child's education



Item 6: What do you think the school can do better to involve you in your child's education?

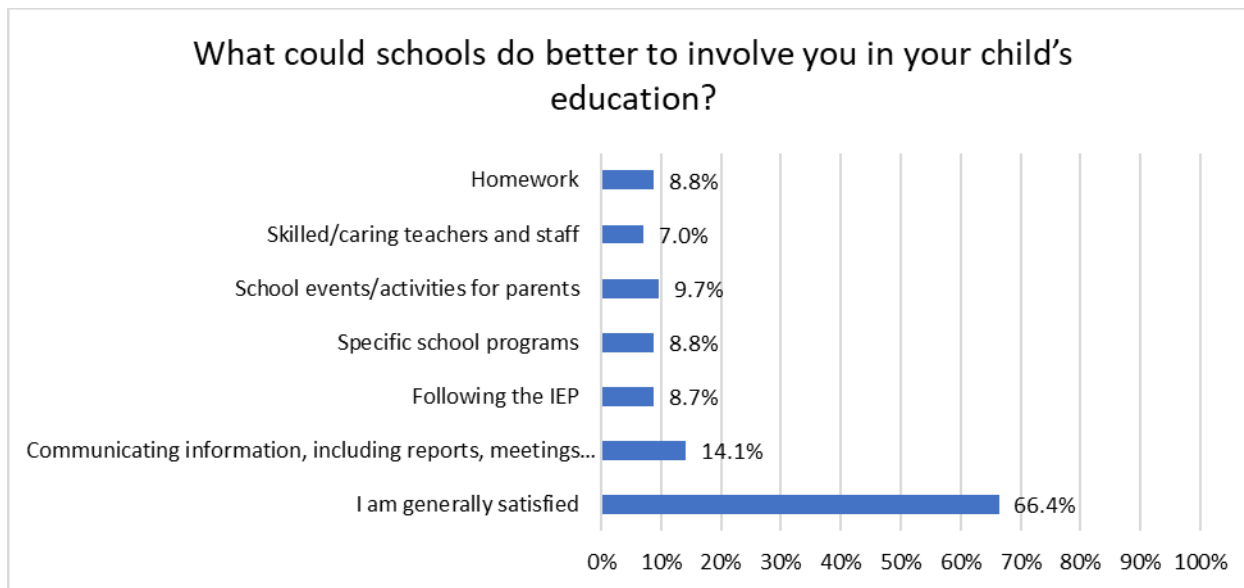
Among all the responses to the multiple-choice question, “What do you think the school can do better to involve you in your child’s education?” 66.4% reported being generally satisfied with no perceived need for improvement (see Figure 5). Correspondingly, a low percentage of respondents identified a need for specific changes from the multiple-choice options for ways schools could better involve them. The two highest areas noted were related to communication (14.1%) and events for parents (9.7%).

Scores for individual items for both what the school is doing well and what it could do better remained remarkably consistent with scores from the previous year. The quotations on this page represent the two types of comments related to communication.

Parent Comment

“I feel as though they want to provide her an education with no parental involvement or feedback.”

Figure 5: What parents think schools could do better to involve them in their child's education



Parent Comment

“The special needs students are not always thought of during school events.”

Narrative comments for what the school is doing well and could be doing better largely referred to the same categories in the multiple-choice options. We include a sample of these comments in Appendix C. Parents often noted differences between one school experience and another, or between one teacher and the next.

Additionally, there was a theme of concern about schools being understaffed,

underfunded, and teachers being overwhelmed or needing more training.

Parent Comment

“My school is currently great, but we were in two...schools before that did none of these things well.”

Survey Format

At the request of the Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL), we examined differences in responses to items based on whether the survey was completed online (n=14,618) or by paper (n=2,501). Responses did tend to vary in meaningful but not uniform ways. Table 7 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 7: Responses for parent-reported involvement, staff welcoming, and IEP understanding by survey format

Item	Online (n=14,618)	Paper (2,501)
School involves parents meaningfully	93.2%	97.0%
School staff are welcoming	92.6%	98.1%
Understand IEP (mean score out of 5)	4.31	4.28
Very Involved	71.8%	68.9%
Involved in own way	6.0%	7.9%
Too busy to be involved	11.4%	14.2%
Don't know how to be involved	15.3%	15.6%

Parents who took the survey on paper scored more favorably than those who took it online for Indicator 8 and staff being welcoming. However, parents who responded to the item “Which of the following statements describes how you feel about being involved in your child’s education?” scored more favorably when taking the survey online than those who took it on paper. The response “I am very involved” was significantly higher for those taking it online, while “being involved in their own way,” “being too busy to be involved,” and “not knowing how to be involved” all scored higher by parents taking the survey on paper. This is the second year that these patterns have been evident.

It is unclear why responses differ by response method. The online respondents reported statistically higher percentages of feeling positive about being involved. At the same time, online respondents rated schools statistically lower on involving parents meaningfully. Interviews or focus groups would help delve into the factors leading to these results.

The other difference in survey administration was the language in which the survey was administered. While most surveys were in English, 96 were in Spanish, two were in Arabic, and two were in Swahili. No respondents used the Somali or Amish translations. Differences between English- and Spanish-language survey administrations showed that respondents taking the survey in Spanish had slightly higher scores on Indicator 8. Paradoxically, Spanish-language survey takers also reported being less likely to be involved, having a lower understanding of the IEP, and having higher rates of being too busy or not knowing how to be involved.

Representativeness

It is important to understand how representative our sample was to the population of parents of all students with IEPs in the state of Kentucky. We use Child Count data from December 2024 to generate population data and compare disaggregated sample categories of interest to those of the population. The Annual Performance Report (APR) requires two demographic variables to be analyzed: race/ethnicity (mandatory) and region, selected by the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC). We report these two variables here, along with gender, primary disability category, and age. To determine whether a demographic group in our sample is representative of that population, we use a threshold of 3% difference in the percentage of each group in the sample to the corresponding percentage in the population. If the difference is less than 3%, we consider the demographic group representative; if the difference is 3% or more, we

consider the group not representative and note whether it is over- or under-represented. Tables 8-12 present the results of our representativeness analysis.

Table 8: Comparison of sample and population demographics by race/ethnicity, highlighting areas where the sample is not representative

Race/ethnicity	Sample (%)	Population (%)	Difference
White	84%	74%	10.4%*
Black	5%	11%	-6.0%*
Hispanic	3%	8%	-4.8%*
Multiple	6%	6%	0.4%

*=sample is not representative of the population

Table 9: Comparison of sample and population demographics by gender, highlighting areas where the sample is not representative

Gender	Sample (%)	Population (%)	Difference
Male	64.6%	65.0%	-0.4%
Female	34.6%	35.0%	-0.4%

*=sample is not representative of the population

Table 10: Comparison of sample and population demographics by primary disability category, highlighting areas where the sample is not representative

Primary Disability Category	Sample (%)	Population (%)	Difference
Mild Mental Disability	6.1%	9.0%	-2.9%
Functional Mental Disability	1.4%	2.0%	-0.6%
Specific Learning Disability	14.4%	17.0%	-2.6%
Emotional-Behavioral Disability	3.4%	3.0%	0.4%
Autism	18.5%	12.0%	6.5%*
Multiple Disabilities	6.5%	2.0%	4.5%*
Other Health Impairment	8.0%	15.0%	-7.0%*
Developmental Delay	8.7%	12.0%	-3.3%*
Speech or Language Impairment	24.1%	26.0%	-1.9%

*=sample is not representative of the population

Table 11: Comparison of sample and population demographics by region, highlighting areas where the sample is not representative

Region	Sample (%)	Population (%)	Difference
Central Kentucky Educational Cooperative	16.6%	17.4%	-0.8%
Green River Regional Educational Cooperative	22.5%	19.5%	3.0%
Kentucky Educational Development Corporation	12.2%	7.0%	5.2%*
Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative	13.3%	5.8%	7.5%*
Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services	8.6%	8.3%	0.3%
Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative	3.1%	6.6%	-3.5%*
Southeast South-Central Educational Cooperative	5.2%	13.7%	-8.5%*
Western Kentucky Educational Cooperative	14.9%	10.0%	4.9%*
Greater Louisville Education Cooperative	3.7%	11.7%	-8.0%*

*=sample is not representative of the population

Table 12: Comparison of sample and population demographics by age group, highlighting areas where the sample is not representative

Age Group	Sample (%)	Population (%)	Difference
<5	19.4%	8.3%	11.1%
5 to 9	37.7%	40.5%	-2.8%
10 to 13	24.6%	27.2%	-2.6%
14 to 18	17.6%	23.2%	-5.6%
>18	0.0%	1.0%	-1.0%

*=sample is not representative of the population

As shown in Table 8, respondents were not generally representative by race/ethnicity.



Proportionally, parents of White students were more likely to respond to the survey than were parents of Black or Hispanic students. Given that parents of White students were generally more positive in their responses, this could indicate an overall inflation of Indicator 8 figures and other items. It could also indicate that responding to surveys such as these is another form of parent involvement that varies by race/ethnicity. It might also be the case that surveys are distributed or encouraged to be taken with different efforts based on race/ethnicity, either consciously or unconsciously. Continued efforts are suggested to help district

personnel understand and address equitable response rates.

In the area of primary disability category, parents of students with Other Health Impairments (OHI) and Developmental Delay (DD) were under-represented, while parents of students with autism and Multiple Disabilities were over-represented. While there is no way of knowing definitively, this might be due to the fact that the medical field does not use the term OHI, and parents could be unfamiliar with the disability categories used in education, and thus inaccurately report their child's disability. OHI is consistently under-represented. While this might be accurate, it may also be due to the fact that the label is not immediately intuitive or congruent with terms used in medicine, which parents might use more often. On the other hand, parents of students with autism tend to be an active community and represent a group with a label more easily recognizable to the general public. Multiple Disabilities as a discrete category might confuse some parents and lead to inaccurate selection. Helping parents understand education-related disability categories might be useful. This finding might also indicate an overall need to better understand the IEP. To improve representativeness and understanding of the IEP process, the Kentucky Department of Education could encourage the formation of disability-specific parent groups, especially for parents of students with OHI or multiple disabilities.

We conceptualize regions by the SERTAC and find substantial variation in representativeness by region. Of particular note is the under-representation of the Louisville metropolitan area (Greater Louisville Education Cooperative - GLEC) and the Southeast South-Central Educational Cooperative (SESC). These regions have consistently been underrepresented and may require state intervention to foster greater participation. Regions that are over-represented were also over-represented in the previous two years, which likely indicates a greater emphasis being placed on the survey in these regions. Garnering strategies from over-represented regions and sharing their methods with under-represented regions (as well as state-wide) might yield positive results.

Representativeness by student age also continues to follow a similar pattern to that in previous years. Parents of younger students are over-represented, perhaps indicating a strong initial desire to participate in many domains of their child's education, which is common among all students with and without disabilities. This tends to wane as children get older, with the 14-18 age group underrepresented. This may be related to survey fatigue or burnout. It may also indicate a higher level of frustration with the school system or the typical decline in parent involvement in older students with and without disabilities. Coupled with the repeated low scores regarding transition services, the under-representation of parents of students in this age group is concerning. Efforts to make high school personnel aware of the importance of receiving feedback from their parents may increase the representativeness of this group and add greater validity to survey results.

Discussion and Recommendations

It is encouraging to note that Indicator 8 continues to remain both steady and high. Although there has been no considerable improvement over the years, there is little room for improvement, possibly indicating a ceiling effect. However, increasing the response rate could help determine whether responses to Indicator 8 have reached a ceiling. Response rates remain steady, though there is room for improvement, particularly in certain regions and districts. We recommend that

the state encourage districts to request and analyze their individual reports to identify areas for improvement. At the time of this report, 99 districts had requested reports from KYPSO. We sense a fairly healthy competition between districts on response rates, but those who do better seem to consistently do better each year, and the competition does not seem to extend to actual Indicator 8 scores.

Parents of White students continued to score higher than those of Black and Hispanic students in most categories; however, there was a marked improvement among parents of Black students this year. Parents of students classified as having Other Health Impairments (OHI) and Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD) tended to score lower than other disability groups, however parents of most other disability categories gave remarkably similar scores on most items. As in previous years, parents of younger students tend to score higher on most items, and scores decline as students age. Parents reported greater levels of knowing how to be involved in their child's education this year than they did last year, which is a positive sign, as this is something that is directly actionable by schools. However, parents reported being too busy to be involved this year at higher rates than last year. This may again be a sign that school systems must be flexible in how they reach parents. It is notable that the two highest groups reporting being too busy to be involved were parents of Asian and Hispanic students. It may also be noteworthy that parents of students with Orthopedic Impairments scored highest on both being too busy to be involved and not knowing how to be involved. Overall, parents report general satisfaction with the school's efforts to involve them in their child's education, including efforts to communicate and adherence to the IEP.

The relatively low score that parents give regarding involvement in their child's transition planning is concerning. As noted, this is the second year that this item has received low marks. It should also be noted that it coincides with lower measures of postschool outcomes, particularly regarding employment. KYPSO is in a unique position to analyze both parental involvement and postschool outcomes as we provide data for both Indicators 8 and 14. We do not believe it is a coincidence that the drop-off in parental involvement in transition planning in 2024 corresponded to poorer employment outcomes in 2025 (for 2024 exiters).

Although the parent survey does not directly measure postschool outcomes and the YOYO does not directly measure parent involvement, the relationship is well established and evident in our findings. Talking to parents about their child's opportunities for postsecondary education and employment, and promoting high expectations, is not only in society's best interests but is also very likely to increase the state's scores on Indicators 8 and 14.

While this report provides ample evidence that parents believe schools are involving them in meaningful ways, we recommend considering more objective indicators of parental involvement, such as participation in IEP meetings, involvement in transition planning, and use of tools like the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. This additional data can tell us more about the overall nature of parental involvement and ways to more effectively engage parents. KYPSO is well-positioned to analyze such measures if the state is interested in doing so.

References

Chu, S. Y., & Jhuo, R. A. (2024). Parent–professional partnership in promoting school readiness skills for children with disabilities entering first grade. *Early Years, 44*(1), 206-223.

Zeng, W., Ju, S., & Zhang, D. (2024). The relationships among parent involvement, student self-determination, and postsecondary education enrollment for students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 35*(1), 3-13.

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/parent and select “*Click here to access the 2025 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.



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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
126 Mineral Industries Building
Lexington, KY 40506*

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, 2025**. 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 2025

Welcome to the 2025 Parent Survey. 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 2024-25 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? (note: it should end with either "County" or "Independent") **Please do not leave this blank.**

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, 2024?

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

School Strengths

- The ARC consultant does a great job communicating and ensuring the needs of the student are a priority.
- They're doing great! It would help to have a way to know how/what my daughter is doing each day, i.e. what it means when she's having a 'good' day and what she worked on each day.
- I cannot emphasize enough how caring my child's teachers are, as well as the school administration. They truly want my child to succeed.
- School year has been by far the best year with communication and implementation of my child's IEP. They have been on top of things. I'm not sure what has changed but bravo! I've also seen improvements in my child's behavior. So win-win!
- I love the 21st century program
- I love being involved with my child school program
- Always well informed and school staff are always so helpful and caring.
- Communication by SPED teacher is EXCELLENT!!
- General education teacher is absolutely wonderful in communicating and keeping me posted. I felt like the staff was uneducated in the needs of children with autism and constructed a situation that increased my child's meltdowns due to their lack of concern in meeting his individual needs. I am ashamed of the school district accepting funds for such terrible care. They have also released records without permission and created allegations that were only proof of their lack of understanding of the processes.
- Our current school did cross country and allowed my child to participate even though he would not make most cuts. This was a great opportunity to learn so many skills and have a supportive group of friends.
- The team does an absolutely amazing job. My child is doing things I never thought we would see. They involve us every step along the way.
- She loves all of her teachers and therapists! She's learning so much!
- Speech therapy is great
- Thankful for the very kind and caring staff.
- Very thankful they don't bog them down with homework and let them be kids when they get home.
- There were a few teachers that went above & beyond. I appreciate that. By no means expect it but greatly appreciate it. Teachers have a hard job-a labor of love. I don't take that lightly & am so grateful for the care and attention some have given to my c(hild)



Areas for School Improvement

- The school doesn't communicate. The teachers don't follow the iep. There isn't leniency for children with iep's (sic)
- We now have infinite campus. But I feel this is not a good fit

- Not satisfied since the child has not improved with her area of concern and the school did not have a plan to change the plan or do anything until we called a meeting.
- I am terrified of this new republican administration interfering with my child's education. Everyday I worry that the programs will be ended so money hungry billionaires can get tax breaks. I worry that without diversity equity and inclusion in the school
- There appears to be a barrier between general education and special education. The special education department appears to be lacking and doing bare minimum. I feel much push back from administration.
- Always send my date and time right before Christmas break. My work schedule is made 8 weeks in advance. I call and email but don't get a response then they tell me it's too late to reschedule
- transparent communication, partnering with parents, teaching the skill child is lacking and not assuming the child wont, instead realize they child cant because they lack the skill. Stop punishing the children, teach them use PBIS, too much focus is on the reading, writing, math and not on the social, emotional, & executive functioning skills they need to become the best version of themselves
- We do have 1-2 meetings a year but more meeting, or even just message updates every few months or so would be amazing. Getting told specifics of what they are working on that month so we can try to incorporate that specific thing more at home.
- The teacher did not return for this school year and the class is being taught by a sub. The classroom staff is working hard - but there needs to be a special ed teacher teaching this class.
- Send progress reports home for special education students
- Necesitan estar más preparados para esta nueva Era de la tecnología y otras herramientas de evolucionar (They need to be better prepared for this new era of technology and other evolving tools.)
- My kids have IEPs and are doing great. However, I know there is a significant shortage of knowledge with some staff on how to manage ADHD, ASD, and sensory processing differences. Some staff are very knowledgeable and some have no knowledge, incorrect understanding/knowledge and there is little sped oversight of higher needs kiddos.
- I feel with schools implementation of restricting parents in the building. It can feel like we are not part of their education at all unless the school needs something from parents
- The overall high school is very inclusive. The neurotypical student body seems to embrace, welcome and accept the special needs students. The special needs students are included in volleyball, baseball, basketball games. They have peer tutors and having special needs does not seem to be a negative thing in their high school. It is very refreshing, and not typical compared to what I have heard about the other high schools in our district.
- The school doesn't even follow my child's IEP and does excessive discipline
- Information is not there. NO COMMUNICATION AT ALL