



INTERACTIVE INSTITUTE **2021**
BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A CULTURE OF HIGH-QUALITY DATA

Indicator 8 Survey Design: Practical Suggestions to Increase Response Rates and Representativeness

April 13–15, 2021



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Collect, Report, Analyze, and
Use High-Quality Part B Data





Presenters

Amy Bitterman, IDEA Data Center

Hadley Moore, IDEA Data Center

Cassidy Canzani, Vermont Agency of Education

Miki Imura, Colorado Department of Education



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Agenda

- Background
- Survey design steps
 - Operationalize parent involvement
 - Vermont's experiences
 - Design your survey instrument
 - Plan for administration
 - Pilot and revise survey
 - Colorado's experiences
- Discussion

Background



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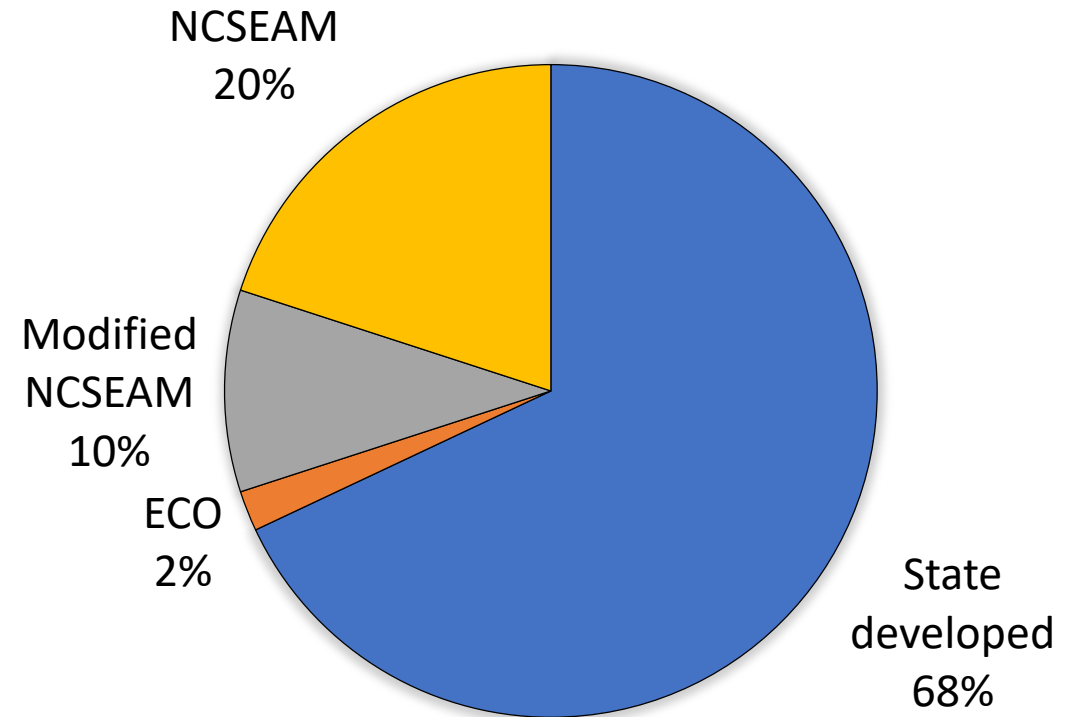
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Why Now?

Increased interest in making changes to surveys for Indicator 8

- FFY 2020–25 State Performance Plan/annual Performance Report (SPP/APR)
- School closures and reopenings
- Virtual learning environments

Survey Used: FFY 2018



National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring (NCSEAM)
Source: [OSEP 2020 Part B FFY 2018 SPP/APR Indicator Analysis Booklet](#)

Peer Sharing

- Poll: For Indicator 8 are you considering revising your survey or developing a new survey?
 - Session poll results
 - Revising survey: 38% of respondents
 - Developing a new survey: 62% of respondents

Question: If you are considering changing your survey, why?

We have been getting quite a bit of feedback about our survey and have known we need a change. We planned to do this even before COVID hit, so it's taken a bit longer than expected to get the process started.

Requests from LEAs to include more specific/usable questions

No changes

We have just changed over to a new survey this past year and want to make sure we consider all the bases.

Low response rates, improved opportunity for families to provide input, increased anonymity

Question: If you are considering changing your survey, why?

We want to get more stakeholder input but we have heard that the survey questions could be more parent friendly.

We are reviewing survey content and distribution after the effort has come under new management, and as part of larger efforts to review/ revise our special education frameworks and as part of the new APR package

Due to low response and our increase the New Hampshire Department of Education is creating a Family Voice Survey to include questions required in Indicator 8 will be part of this new survey.

Response Rate and Representativeness

- Response rate = number of completed surveys / total number of eligible respondents
- Representativeness = extent to which the demographics of the students whose parents participated in data collection activities are representative of the demographics of all students receiving special education services in the state
- **If your data are not representative, they will not paint an accurate picture of the nature and level of parent involvement in your state**

Indicator 8 FFY 2020–25 SPP/APR Changes

- Response rates
 - Report number of respondent parents
 - Compare the response rate for the reporting year to the response rate for the previous year
 - Analyze the response rate to identify potential nonresponse bias

Indicator 8 FFY 2020–25 SPP/APR Changes (cont.)

- Representativeness
 - Describe the metric used to determine representativeness
 - Consider gender as one of the categories in the analysis of representativeness
 - Include race and ethnicity in the analysis and at least one other demographic (required starting with FFY 2021 SPP/APR due 2/1/23)



Survey Design Impacts Data Quality!

- If the survey is
 - Too long
 - Not relevant or important to the parent
 - Unclear or confusing
 - In a language the parent doesn't understand
- Representativeness and response rates will suffer

Survey Design Steps



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Step 1: Operationalize Parent Involvement



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Determine What You Want to Measure

- Develop a clear definition of the construct of “parent involvement” for your state
 - What does parent involvement mean?
- Use stakeholders as a source
- Consider basing around a parent involvement framework
- Review relevant research, literature, and other parent surveys
- Determine which elements of the construct to measure through the survey

Peer Sharing: Vermont



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Parent Involvement Concerns

- Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and LEAs wanted to make better use of parent involvement data
- Low response rates affected
 - Data reliability and usefulness for LEAs and the state
 - AOE's ability to disclose aggregated data on responses to LEAs

Goals of Stakeholder Engagement

- Goals for survey instrument
 - Simplify and reduce respondent burden
 - Target useful and actionable information
- Goals for survey distribution
 - Increase response rate
 - Increase representativeness of responses

Structure of Stakeholder Engagement

- **September 2020:** Introduced concerns and goals to Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VSEAP)
- **October 2020–January 2021:** Met regularly with subcommittee of VSEAP to share and refine ideas
- **January–March 2021:** Made recommendations and sought feedback from VSEAP, Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators (VCSEA), and Vermont Family Network (VFN)
- Debriefed both early and late in the stakeholder engagement process at Special Ed Director’s Check-Ins (open to all LEA directors)

Subcommittee Engagement

- Informal meetings with guiding questions
 - Opinions on NCSEAM questions used in past years
 - Advice on increasing survey participation
 - Advice on connecting data collection to broader family engagement efforts
- Ideas came from both subcommittee and AOE representatives
- Encouraged out-of-the-box thinking, while managing expectations about feasibility of implementation

Sample of Ideas Generated

- Data collection
 - Incorporate into general education feedback mechanisms
 - Use (with permission) another state's survey, with or without edits
 - Switch from survey to running focus groups
- Distribution
 - Wider use of local/regional family and disability outreach groups
 - Use online channels and social media to reach families
 - Hand out surveys at individualized education program (IEP) meetings

Feedback Sought From LEAs

- Do the proposed survey instruments provide the right insights for LEAs?
- Do LEAs agree or disagree with recommended revisions to the survey instrument?
- With AOE support, would districts be able to distribute the surveys in upcoming school years?

Collecting Feedback on Recommendations

Informal feedback collection

- Directly in VSEAP and VCSEA meetings
- By email

Observations

- Both stakeholder groups were more enthusiastic about specifics than general planning
- Parents tended to want more descriptive survey questions while administrators preferred questions to be open-ended

Step 2: Design Your Survey Instrument



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Can You Design Your Survey to Maximize Participation?

- Yes!
- In general, make sure people are able to complete your survey and/or do not get frustrated and stop before they finish the survey
- Several overall design tips for survey design include
 - Distribute your survey in the languages in your community
 - Keep questions brief
 - Use simple, straightforward language
 - Define any unfamiliar terms or abbreviations
 - Make sure response options are clear and mutually exclusive

Survey Introduction

- A clear introduction increases the likelihood that respondents will complete your survey
- Be sure to
 - Include a title that respondents and others can easily understand and that describes the survey content
 - Explain who you are and the purpose of the survey
 - Mention the time commitment up front
 - Provide contact information in case respondents have questions or feedback

Survey Layout

- A clear and approachable layout is important
- Some tips include
 - Limit the number of items so the survey is as short as possible
 - Keep the survey instrument simple and uncluttered
 - Number survey items and pages
 - Provide enough space/characters for people to write responses or comments to open-ended questions

Survey Item Order

- The order of survey items also can help increase participation
- Be sure to
 - Start with an easy or interesting question
 - Place the most important questions near the beginning of the survey and the most difficult or sensitive items toward the end
 - Order items in a logical way and number them sequentially
 - Group items by topic and introduce each change in topic

Step 3: Plan for Administration



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Select Procedures to Maximize Responses

- Consider pros and cons of online vs. paper surveys
- Formally invite families to participate
 - If printed communication includes link to online survey, make sure link is visible and not too long
- Include options for the survey in the languages in the community
- Ensure that you can measure representatives and response rate

Step 4: Pilot and Revise Your Survey

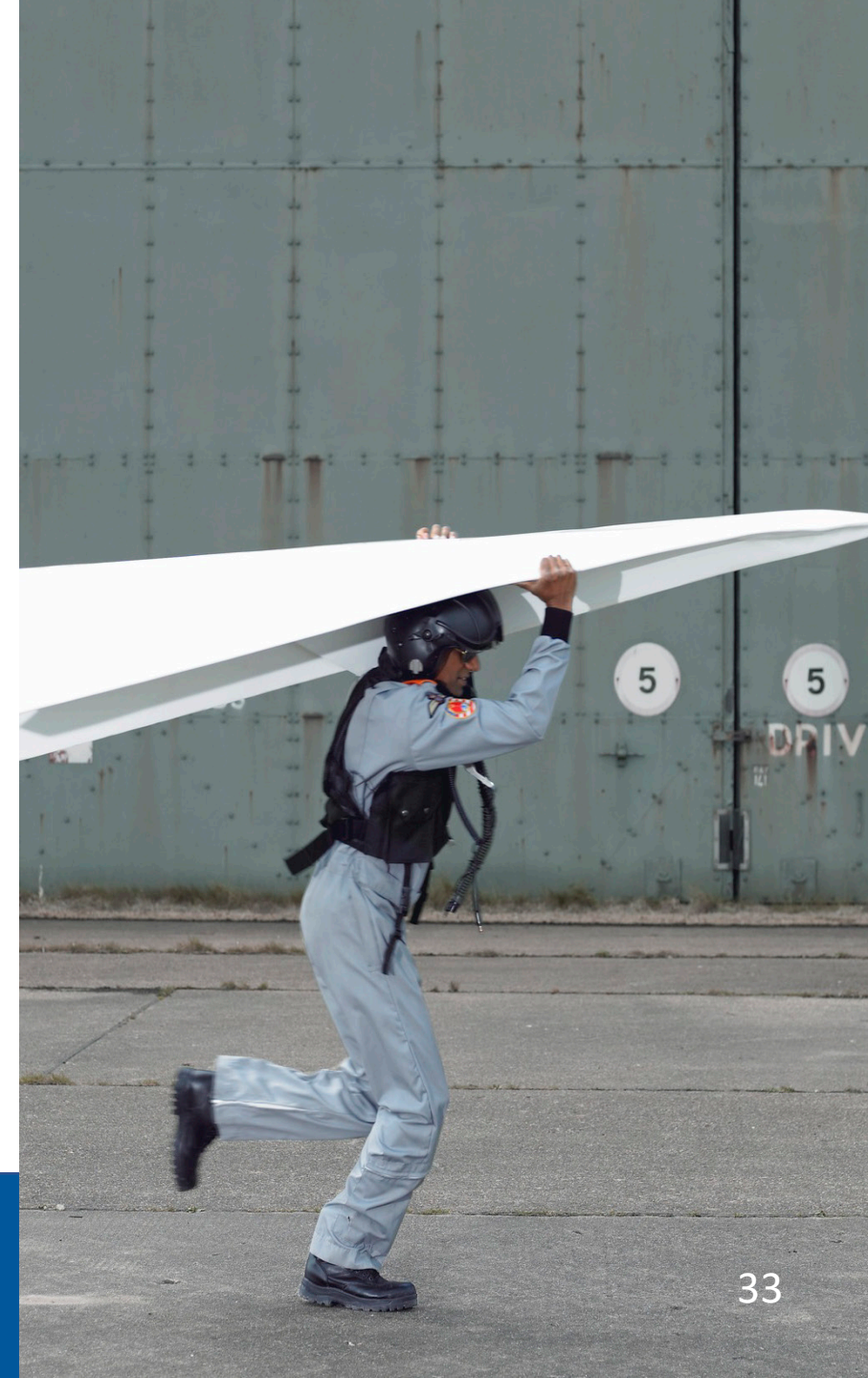


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Pilot Before Data Collection

- Piloting the survey is critical to ensure development of a high-quality survey
- Pilot with
 - Experts and stakeholders
 - Sample of potential responder parents
- Gather information on
 - Survey items
 - Survey organization and functionality
 - Administration procedures
- Use what you learn to improve and refine your survey



Peer Sharing: Colorado



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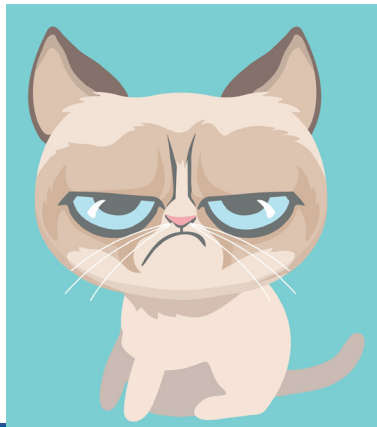
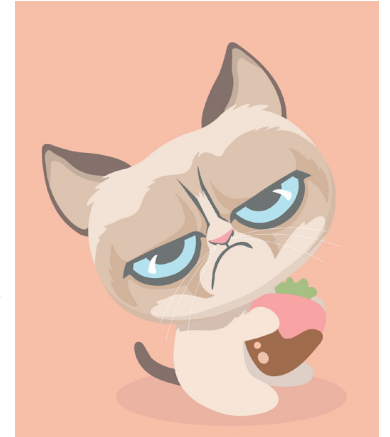
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We Used to Receive Complaints About Our Parent Survey Questions



Hard to understand
"Teachers and administrators respect my cultural heritage."

Compliance heavy
"My recommendations are documented on the Prior Written Notice"



The Qs have little to do with schools' facilitation of parent involvement
"I was given timely notice of the IEP meeting."

Eliciting Help From Stakeholders

We want a parent survey that

- Asks questions that **really capture** parent involvement
 - “given a timely notice of the IEP meeting”
- Guides LEAs/schools to more effective facilitation of parents’ involvement
- Aligns with six Parent Teacher Association (PTA) standards Colorado Department of Education’s (CDE’s) Family-School-Community partnership office pushes



Six PTA Standards

Welcoming all families into the school community

Families are active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Communicating effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.

Supporting student success

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Speaking up for every child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Sharing power

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

Collaborating with the community

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Stakeholder Discussion

Families and school staff **continuously collaborate** to support students' learning and healthy development **both at home and at school** and have regular **opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills** to do so effectively.

- What does it mean to continuously collaborate?
- What does it look like, feel like, smell like?
- When did you last feel like you and school staff collaborated to support your child's learning and development?

Newsletters – all kids included

Professional development – IEP 101

Have parents teach professional development

Newsletters include success for all kids

Schools host quarterly training

Increase collaboration with teacher and parent – interactive homework assignments

Drafted New Questions Based on Stakeholder Discussions

Standard

Supporting student success

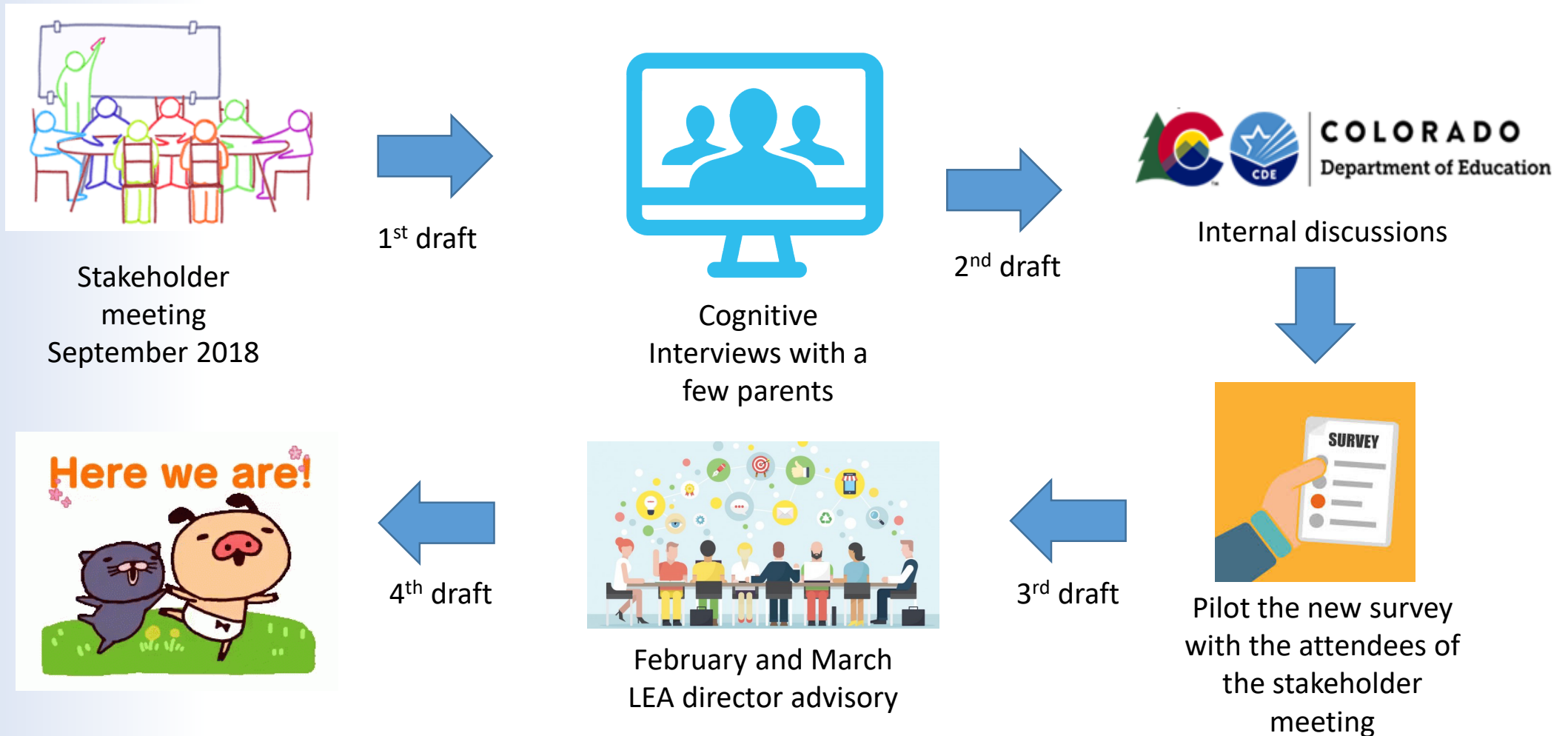
Description

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to **support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school**, and have regular **opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills** to do so effectively.

Items drafted
for the new
survey

- **My child’s special education staff and I share strategies that we can use to support my child both at school and at home**
 - **Always – Often – Sometimes – Never**
- **My child's special education staff/school/district provides opportunities for me to strengthen my knowledge about special education issues (such as parent training seminars, information sessions, newsletters, etc.)**
 - **Many times a year (4 or more) – A few times a year (2-3 times) – Once a year – Never**

After So Many Drafts... It's DONE!



New Survey—Starting in SY2019-20



COLORADO
Department of Education

Exceptional Student Services Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202-5149

Por favor, mire al otro lado para información en Español.

September, 2019

Dear Parent(s) of <Student Name>,

The Colorado Department of Education and your local special education administrative units (e.g., school districts, BOCES) conduct a survey every school year to learn how parents are involved in their child's special education program.

The information you give will be used to improve the education of children with disabilities in your school district and throughout the state of Colorado. The aggregated state-wide results will be reported publicly and to the U.S. Department of Education after the completion of the school year. Please visit <http://tinyurl.com/yylfsd2y> for previous year's survey results.

You have three options to complete this survey:

- ❖ **Paper survey** - Fill out the survey and mail it in the postage-paid envelope provided with this survey before June 1, 2020.
- ❖ **Online** - Visit <http://tinyurl.com/xxxxx> to complete the survey before June 1, 2020. To access the online survey, you will need to enter the Access Code shown in the box below:

Student Name: <student name>

Access Code: <access code>

- ❖ **Phone** - Call 303-866-6943 to complete the survey by phone.

The information you provide is confidential, which means your response will be stored in a secure network environment and will not be improperly disclosed to third-party entities.

We greatly appreciate your participation!

If you have questions or need assistance with this survey, please contact:
Joyce Thiessen-Barrett
Coordinator of Family, School and Community Partnering
[303-866-6757](tel:303-866-6757) | Barrett_J@cde.state.co.us

1560 Broadway, Suite 1100, Denver, CO 80202-5149 P 303.866.6694 F 303.866.3808
Katy Anthes, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education | www.cde.state.co.us



Access Code <access code>

For the purpose of this survey,

- 1) Items that refer to "I", "me", or "my" are meant to also include the other members of your family who are involved with your child's education, as appropriate.
- 2) "Special education staff" includes special education teachers, related service providers (e.g., speech and language pathologists, occupational/physical therapists, psychologists), and others who support your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Please choose a response that best describes your experience over the past year:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
1. I feel welcomed by my child's special education staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My child's school has someone available to answer my questions about special education services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My child's special education staff invites me to speak up on behalf of my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My child's special education staff keeps me informed about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. My child's special education staff keeps me informed about what they are doing to help my child achieve his/her IEP goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My child's special education staff and I share strategies that we can use to support my child both at school <u>and</u> at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please choose a response that best describes your experience over the past year:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. I am satisfied with the options I have to communicate with my child's special education staff (such as face-to-face meetings, emails, texts, phone, child log, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. My child's special education staff is willing to work with my schedule when arranging meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Before my child's IEP meeting, my child's special education staff helps me prepare to be an active participant (such as providing draft IEPs, explaining expectations of the meeting, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. My child's special education staff and I have similar expectations for my child's IEP goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. My child's special education staff explains what options I have if I ever disagree with the special education services being provided to my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. My child's IEP includes my input.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. My child's special education services were delivered as described in the IEP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please choose a response that best describes your experience over the past year:

	Many Times (4 or more)	A few times (2-3 times)	Once	Never
14. My child's special education staff asks for my opinion about how well special education services are meeting my child's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. My child's special education staff/school/district provides opportunities for me to strengthen my knowledge about special education issues (such as parent training seminars, information sessions, newsletters, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Please choose a response that best describes your experience over the past year:

		Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
1.	I feel welcomed by my child's special education staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	My child's school has someone available to answer my questions about special education services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	My child's special education staff invites me to speak up on behalf of my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	My child's special education staff keeps me informed about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	My child's special education staff keeps me informed about what they are doing to help my child achieve his/her IEP goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	My child's special education staff and I share strategies that we can use to support my child both at school <u>and</u> at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please choose a response that best describes your experience over the past year:

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.	I am satisfied with the options I have to communicate with my child's special education staff (such as face-to-face meetings, emails, texts, phone, child log, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	My child's special education staff is willing to work with my schedule when arranging meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Before my child's IEP meeting, my child's special education staff helps me prepare to be an active participant (such as providing draft IEPs, explaining expectations of the meeting, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	My child's special education staff and I have similar expectations for my child's IEP goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	My child's special education staff explains what options I have if I ever disagree with the special education services being provided to my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	My child's IEP includes my input.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	My child's special education services were delivered as described in the IEP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please choose a response that best describes your experience over the past year:

		Many Times (4 or more)	A few times (2-3 times)	Once	Never
14.	My child's special education staff asks for my opinion about how well special education services are meeting my child's needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	My child's special education staff/school/district provides opportunities for me to strengthen my knowledge about special education issues (such as parent training seminars, information sessions, newsletters, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Welcoming all families into the school community
2. Communicating effectively
3. Supporting student success
4. Speaking up for every child
5. Sharing power

Excluded
from the
Indicator 8
calculation



Parents who
respond with an
average of 3.0
(often, agree, a
few times) or
above = believe
the schools
facilitate parent
involvement

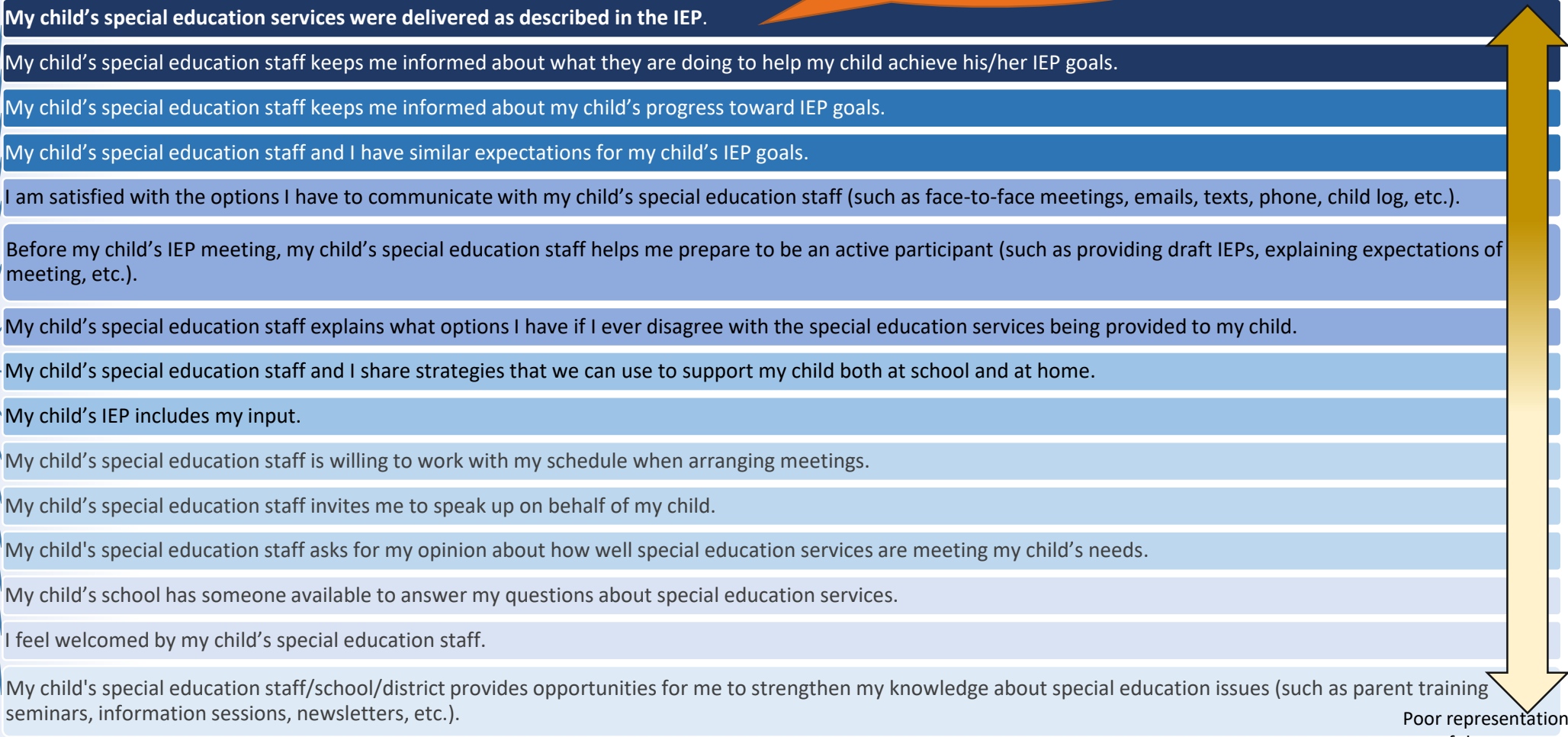
How Well Does Each Question Represent the Target Construct?

This question represents the construct the best

Greater representation of the construct

Parents' belief that their children's schools facilitate parent involvement

60.5% Explained by these 15 questions



Other Interesting Things About the New Survey

		1	2	3	4
1	I feel welcomed by my child's special education staff.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
2	My child's school has someone available to answer my questions about special education services.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
3	My child's special education staff invites me to speak up on behalf of my child.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
4	My child's special education staff keeps me informed about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
5	My child's special education staff keeps me informed about what they are doing to help my child achieve his/her IEP goals.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
6	My child's special education staff and I share strategies that we can use to support my child both at school and at home.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
7	I am satisfied with the options I have to communicate with my child's special education staff (such as face-to-face meetings, emails, texts, phone, child log, etc.).	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8	My child's special education staff provides me with information about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9	Before my child's special education staff provides me with information about my child's progress toward IEP goals, I have already provided draft IEP goals to my child's special education staff.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	My child's special education staff provides me with information about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	My child's special education staff provides me with information about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12	My child's IEP goals are based on my child's strengths, interests, and needs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13	My child's special education staff provides me with information about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	My child's special education staff provides me with information about my child's progress toward IEP goals.	Never	Once	A few times (2-3 times)	Many Times (4 or more)
15	My child's special education staff/school/district provides opportunities for me to strengthen my knowledge about special education issues (such as parent training seminars, information sessions, newsletters, etc.).	Never	Once	A few times (2-3 times)	Many Times (4 or more)

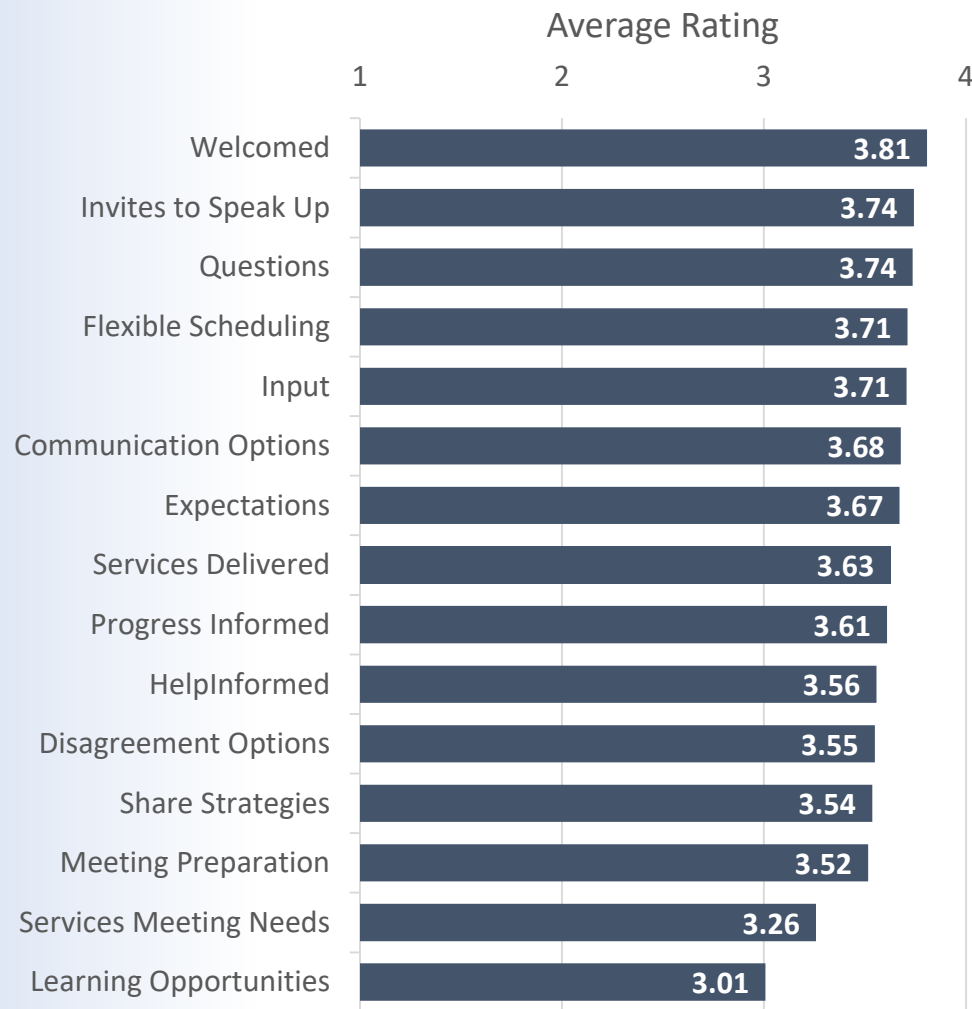
- Respondents are not differentiating #4 and #5
- #4 / #5 is strongly related to #6
 - Parents who are informed of their children's progress (or informed of what the school is doing) tend to also share strategies with teachers

Other Interesting Things About the New Survey (cont.)

					4
1	I feel welcomed by my child's special education staff.				Always
2	My child's school has someone available to answer my questions.				Always
3	My child's special education staff invites me to speak up on behalf of my child.				Always
4	My child's special education staff keeps me informed about my child's progress.				Always
5	My child's special education staff keeps me informed about what my child needs.				Always
6	My child's special education staff and I share strategies that work for my child.				Always
7	I am satisfied with the options I have to communicate with my child's special education staff (e.g., emails, texts, phone, child log, etc.).				Strongly Agree
8	My child's special education staff is willing to work with my school.				Strongly Agree
9	Before my child's IEP meeting, my child's special education staff helps me prepare to be an active participant (such as providing draft IEPs, explaining expectations of the meeting, etc.).	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
★ 10	My child's special education staff and I have similar expectations for my child's IEP goals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	My child's special education staff explains what options I have if I ever disagree with the special education services being provided to my child.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12	My child's IEP includes my input.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13	My child's special education services were delivered as described in the IEP. *Not Scored	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14	My child's special education staff asks for my opinion about how well special education services are meeting my child's needs.	Never	Once	A few times (2-3 times)	Many Times (4 or more)
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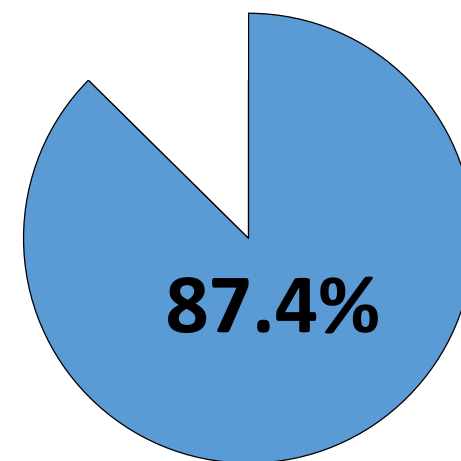
- A strongly related cluster #9 - #13
- #10 seems to be the center of the cluster (most strongly related to #9 - #13)
 - Parents who believe they and the school share the same expectation also tend to believe the IEP includes their input, service is delivered as written, etc.
 - Seems like #10 = proxy for trust

How Did the New Survey Do?

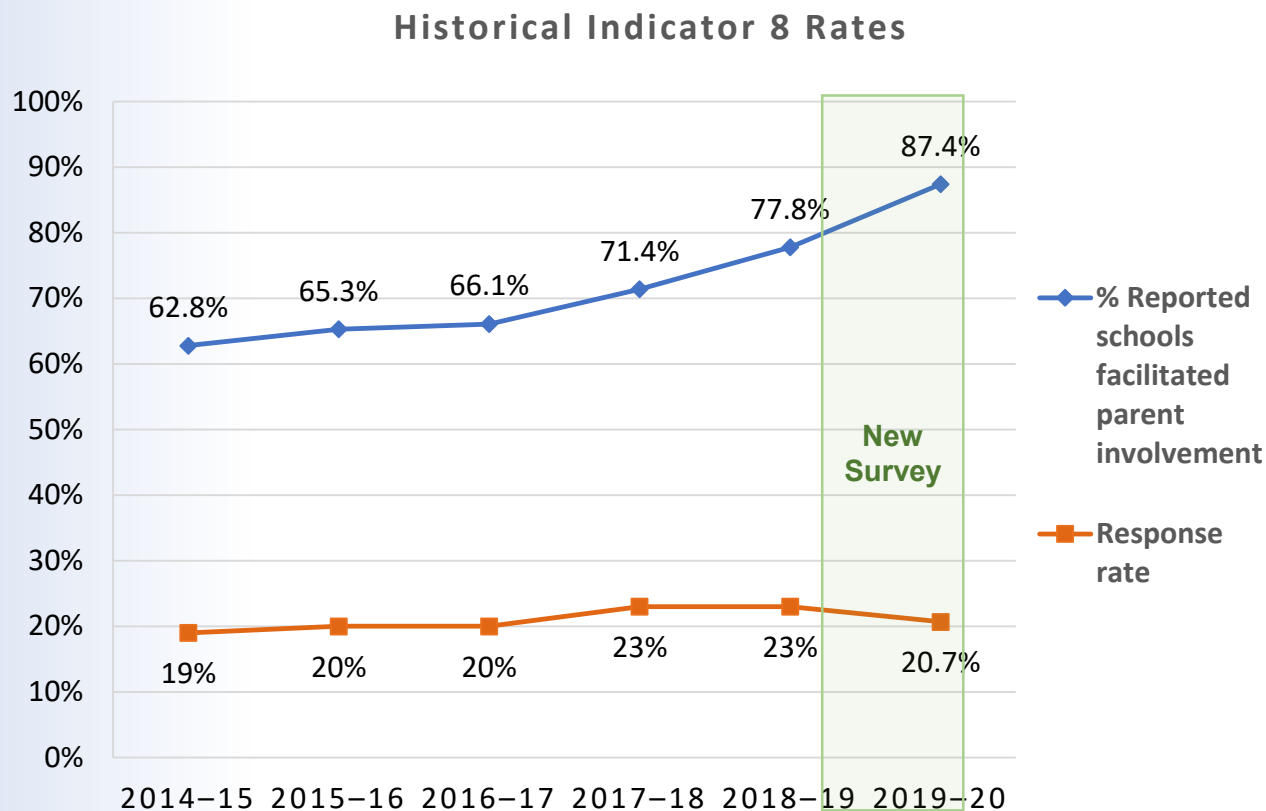


Parent involvement = 87.4%

Parents who respond with an *average* of 3.0 (often, agree, a few times) or above



Changes Since the New Survey Introduction



- % of parents who reported schools facilitated parent involvement increased due to the survey questions change
- Response rate hasn't changed (also COVID-19)

Discussion



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Contact Us

Amy Bitterman, AmyBitterman@Westat.com

Hadley Moore, HadleyMoore@Westat.com

Cassidy Canzani, cassidy.canzani@vermont.gov

Miki Imura, imura_m@cde.state.co.us

For More Information



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IDEA DATA
CENTER

Collect, Report, Analyze, and
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Project Officers: Richelle Davis and Rebecca Smith

