

Office of the Independent Monitor
Study of Parent Participation at IEP Meetings
Outcome 14

Background

In the area of parent participation at individualized education program (IEP) meetings, the parties agreed to a two-part outcome. The first part of Outcome 14 focuses on the percentage of parents of students with disabilities attending IEP meetings. It states:

- By June 30, 2006, the District will increase the rate of parent participation in IEP meetings in the area of attendance to 75%

The parties reached consensus that parent attendance at IEP meetings would be defined as parents who physically attended the IEP or participated in a telephone or video conference. They expressed their preference for using Welligent data for the purposes of establishing a baseline attendance rate and developing an outcome.

In 2003-04, Welligent data placed the rate of parents attending their child's IEP in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) at approximately 60%. The District proposed a parent attendance outcome of 70%. The plaintiffs, using data from the national Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS) showing a 90% attendance rate among a nationally drawn sample of parents, proposed an outcome of 85%.

The decision to set an outcome of 75% was based on an assessment of the Welligent data. Because 20% of current IEPs in the Welligent system contained no data on parent participation, it is possible that available data may have underestimated the rate of parent attendance. This hypothesis was supported by the findings of a survey conducted for the Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) in which 80% of parents contacted had attended their child's last IEP. If, as the plaintiffs postulated, this survey overstated the percentage of parents attending IEPs, it is possible that the actual rate of parent attendance at IEP meetings ranged between 60% and 70%. Based on these findings, an outcome of 75% was considered a viable target.

The second part of Outcome Number 14 focuses on the responsibility of District personnel under the IDEA regulations to make a series of attempts to convince parents to attend the IEP meeting. This part of the outcome was agreed upon by both parties and is presented below:

- By June 30, 2006, 95% of the records of IEP meetings in which the parent does not attend will provide evidence of recorded attempts to convince the parent to attend the IEP meeting in accordance with Section 300.345(d) of the IDEA regulations
- Evidence of compliance with this outcome will be based on criteria determined by the Independent Monitor defining "recorded attempts to convince" and be assessed through a scientific sample of those records of IEP meetings in which the parent did not attend

For the purpose of assessing compliance with this outcome, the Independent Monitor considers three "recorded attempts to convince the parent to attend the IEP meeting" to be a sufficient number to establish that LAUSD was "unable to convince parents that they should attend."

A recorded attempt to convince was defined as “an effort to arrange a mutually agreed upon time and place, such as: (1) Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls; (2) Copies of correspondence sent to parents and any responses received; and (3) detailed records of visits made to the parents home or place of employment and the results of those visits.” The District was expected to collect evidence of recorded attempts to convince and record the results of those attempts in its data system.

If a parent provided written or verbal confirmation that they did not wish to attend the IEP meeting and the District could provide evidence of this confirmation in the form of a signed Parent Notification form, a logged telephone call or personal conversation with a date, a logged record of a visit to a home or place of employment with a date, or an email message or fax, the Independent Monitor considered that to be sufficient evidence that the District was unable to convince the parents that they should attend the IEP meeting. In this case, the District did not need to provide evidence of additional recorded attempts to convince the parents that they should attend the IEP meeting.

Findings from 2004-2005 Study of Parent Participation

This study was conducted during the 2004-2005 school year to measure compliance levels associated with the second component of Outcome 14 which requires the District to demonstrate evidence of attempts to convince a parent to attend their children’s IEP. During the 2004-2005 school year, the study found evidence of recorded attempts to convince parents to attend their children’s IEP for 79% of those parents who did not attend. In addition, it did not find any statistical differences between students in the Welligent IEP system and those not in the Welligent system.

Methodology

Information on parent attendance is recorded in a student’s IEP. The records of students whose IEPs are in the Welligent system can be retrieved at the central office level. For students who are not in the Welligent database, information on parent attendance is located in their school file. In addition, as noted, not all IEPs in the Welligent system have information on parent attendance.

In summary, there are three groups of students:

1. Students in Welligent whose parents attended the IEP
2. Students in Welligent whose parents did not attend the IEP
3. Students not in Welligent (but present in other District data systems such as the Student Information System) with information on IEP attendance in their school file

As noted in the outcome, the study focused on groups 2 and 3: students whose parents did not attend the IEP and those not in the Welligent system.

Sample Design

In order to determine whether there was evidence to convince a parent to attend an IEP meeting in 95% of the records when a parent did not attend an IEP meeting, the OIM asked the American Institutes of Research (AIR) to draw four consecutive samples of students with completed IEPs in the District data systems. The parent participation samples were drawn at four points in time from two databases containing IEP contact and attendance information from July 1, 2005 to November 2005; November 2005 to January 2006; January to April 2006; and April to June 1, 2006. These samples were stratified by disability type, local district and grade level. The samples were drawn in conjunction with samples for a study of the accuracy of the District's Least Restrictive Environment data and clustered to maximize efficiency without introducing bias. Tables 1 and 2 show the distribution of the sample compared to the special education population.

Table 1: District Distribution for Special Education Population* and Total Parent Participation Sample

Local School District	Students in Population	%	Students in PP Sample	%
Missing	4,132	4.7%	26	1.9%
1	14,154	16.3%	244	18.2%
2	11,267	12.9%	193	14.4%
3	10,884	12.5%	154	11.5%
4	9,753	11.2%	155	11.6%
5	9,783	11.2%	156	11.6%
6	6,162	7.1%	104	7.8%
7	7,546	8.7%	141	10.5%
8	9,414	10.8%	168	12.5%
NPS	3,925	4.5%	-	-
Other	27	0.0%	-	-
Total	87,047	100%	1,341	100%

* Source: Combined database, June 2006

Table 2. School Level Distribution for Special Education Population* and Total Parent Participation Sample

School Level	Students in Population	%	Students in PP Sample	%
Elementary	42,098	48.4%	552	41.2%
Middle	17,139	19.7%	322	24.0%
High	19,700	22.6%	409	30.5%
Special Centers	3,903	4.5%	53	4.0%
NPS	3,900	4.5%	-	-
Other	128	0.1%	-	-
Missing	179	0.2%	5	0.4%
Total	87,047	100%	1,341	100%

* Source: Combined database, June 2006

Data Collection and Entry

The instrument (Attachment A) was the same used during the 2004-2005 year two study and was designed to identify and collect data on whether parents attended the IEP and for those that did not attend, to collect data on whether schools had recorded attempts to convince parents to attend. For all students, existing attendance data such as the date the IEP was signed was uploaded from the District data systems and placed on the instrument. Any information on recorded attempts was also present on the instrument.

Data was collected to confirm or determine if and when consent was provided for the most recent IEP. IEP notification forms were reviewed to determine if parents had provided consent to proceed with the IEP in their absence, did not plan to attend, or requested to have the IEP rescheduled. For those parents that indicated that they would prefer to have the IEP rescheduled, data was collected on the evidence present in the student file of the number of subsequent attempts to convince the parent to attend.

Research assistants (RAs) were trained to review student files and record data on the instrument developed by the OIM. RAs were directed to first confirm data on attendance and IEP consent date for students with information on parent attendance.

Once non-attendance status had been confirmed, RAs reviewed the full student IEP and cumulative folders to search for evidence to convince in the form of IEP notification forms, notes, or records of telephone calls in student cumulative folders and IEPs. These documents were reviewed because methods of contact are confidential documents that are placed in these folders. RAs were not required to interpret any data but only to enter the information that they found within the student's cumulative or IEP folders onto the instrument.

Data was collected and entered into a database. 108 students were dropped from the analysis due IEPs that were not available as a result of a student's exiting or transferring to another school. The distribution of students by local district and school level in the analyzed sample is closely aligned with that in the overall special education population in LAUSD (Tables 3 and 4) and the low and high incidence populations (Table 5).

Table 3. Distribution of Students in the Parent Participation Analysis by, Local District

Local District	N	%
1	228	18.49%
2	178	14.44%
3	150	12.17%
4	136	11.03%
5	148	12.00%
6	100	8.11%
7	138	11.19%
8	155	12.57%
Total	1,233	100%

Table 4. Distribution of Students in the Parent Participation Analysis, by School Level

School Level	N	%
Elementary	506	41.04%
Middle	309	25.06%
High	366	29.68%
Spec Centers	52	4.22%
Total	1,233	100.0%

Table 5. Distribution of Students in the Parent Participation Analysis by, High and Low Incidence Disabilities*

High/Low Incidence Disabilities	N	%
High Incidence	979	79.40%
Low Incidence	254	20.60%
Total	1,233	100%

* Specific Learning Disabilities and Speech and Language Impairment are considered high incidence disabilities for this analysis. All others are low incidence.

Findings

If a parent provided consent to proceed with an IEP in their absence, this was considered sufficient evidence of attempts to convince the parent to attend. If the parent stated that they did not expect to attend the IEP and requested a copy, this was considered sufficient evidence to convince. If there was evidence of three attempts to convince the parent to attend the IEP and the school proceeded to convene the IEP without the parent, this was considered sufficient evidence of attempts to convince. If a parent requested that a school reschedule the IEP and there was evidence that the school held the IEP prior to making three attempts without any supporting documentation of parental consent to proceed in the IEP or cumulative folders, this was considered insufficient evidence of attempts to convince. Based on these guidelines, each student whose parent did not attend the IEP was coded as a “Yes” or “No” in the field of evidence of attempts to convince.

Below are the percentages of students for which there was no evidence to convince parents to attend the student’s IEP meeting. These estimates have been weighted to represent the proportions of high and low incidence disability categories in the special education population using the June 1, 2006 combined database. Of the IEPs reviewed where a parent did not attend the IEP, approximately 81% of student files contained evidence that the school made appropriate attempts to convince the parent to attend (see Table 6). The percentage of files without evidence to convince was 19%.

Table 6. Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince¹

Evidence To Convince	N	%	Confidence Interval Min	Confidence Interval Max
No Evidence	236	19.11%	14.1%	24.1%
Evidence To Convince	997	80.89%	78.4%	83.3%
Total	1,233	100%		

¹ Confidence intervals for Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 can be found in Attachment C

The overall percentages were also disaggregated by Welligent status, local district, and school level. Table 7 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between Welligent and non-Welligent students with and without evidence to convince. It is noted that non-Welligent students demonstrate higher rates of evidence than Welligent students. This may indicate that the results may be underestimating the number of records with evidence to convince. However, considering that the majority of students in the special education population are now in the Welligent system, this finding has considerably less impact.

Table 7. Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince, by Welligent status

Welligent Status	No Evidence To Convince		Evidence To Convince		Total
Non-Welligent	22	9.2%	147	90.8%	100%
Welligent	214	15.24%	849	84.76%	100%
Total	236	14.08%	997	85.92%	100%

Pearson:

Uncorrected chi2(1) = 5.7536

Design-based F(1, 1231) = 5.4567 P = 0.0197

When examining the percentages by local district, the differences are not statistically significant. As shown in Table 8, the percentage of students without evidence to convince range from a low of about 12% in District 1 to almost 25% in District 2.

Table 8. Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince, by local district

Local District	No Evidence To Convince		Evidence To Convince		Total
1	29	12.38%	199	87.62%	100%
2	42	24.59%	136	75.41%	100%
3	30	19.59%	120	80.41%	100%
4	28	18.9%	108	81.1%	100%
5	31	20.32%	117	79.68%	100%
6	18	19.89%	82	80.11%	100%
7	25	17.62%	113	82.38%	100%
8	33	22.18%	122	77.82%	100%
Total	236	19.11%	997	80.89%	100%

Pearson:

Uncorrected chi2(7) = 11.7861

Design-based F(6.98, 8597.43)= 1.5994 P = 0.1307

By school level, the differences in the percentage of students with and without evidence to convince by school level are statistically significant at the 1% significance level (Table 9). Students in elementary schools are less likely to have no evidence (15%), whereas students in high schools are more likely (25%) to lack evidence that the school made sufficient contact to convince parents to attend the IEP.

Table 9. Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince, by school level

School Level	No Evidence To Convince		Evidence To Convince		Total
Elementary	78	15.51%	428	84.498%	100%
Middle	58	19.32%	251	80.68%	100%
High	92	24.9%	274	75.1%	100%
Spec Centers	8	14.11%	44	85.89%	100%
Total	236	19.11%	997	80.89%	100%

Pearson:

Uncorrected $\chi^2(3) = 13.2433$

Design-based $F(2.94, 3,624.38) = 3.7933$ $P = 0.0104$

Implications

Based on these findings, LAUSD did not meet the negotiated target of Outcome 14 which requires the District to provide evidence of recorded attempts to convince the parent to attend the IEP meeting for 95% of the records for IEPs where a parent did not attend. The study found evidence of attempts to convince for 81% of IEPs where a parent did not attend.

The results provide several indications of how the District can improve its performance to achieve the 95% threshold. First, the District should continue to direct and train school staff to record attempts to convince into the Welligent system and to place paper notifications in student school files. The District should also include an edit in the Welligent system that requires the data entry of information into the system on attempts to convince on the IEP notification form for parents that do not attend their children's IEP. Additionally, the District should include an edit in the Welligent system that includes the notification form as part of the default IEP for printing. This will ensure that the notification form is printed with the entire IEP and included within the child's IEP folder.

Attachment A: Parent Participation Instrument

Office of the Independent Monitor

LRE

Page 1	District ID# _____ Last Name _____ First Name _____ Birthday 9/30/1999 Grade 0 Current IEP Date 4/16/2004 IEP Date if different: _____ Attend School: _____ Local District: _____ Previous IEP Date: _____ IEP Meeting Location: _____																																																																
Page 4	Eligibility: DD Eligibility if different: _____																																																																
Page 5	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Performance area</th> <th>Wk</th> <th>Freq</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Month</th> <th>Freq</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Minutes outside Gen Ed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Performance area	Wk	Freq	Total	Month	Freq	Total	Minutes outside Gen Ed	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____
Performance area	Wk	Freq	Total	Month	Freq	Total	Minutes outside Gen Ed																																																										
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____																																																										
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____																																																										
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____																																																										
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____																																																										
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____																																																										
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____																																																										
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____																																																										
Page 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Page 8 Missing Welligent Percent of Time: <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Gen Ed <input type="checkbox"/> RSP <input type="checkbox"/> SDC (Minutes per Week): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> DIS <input type="checkbox"/> Gen Ed/Inclusion % of time: _____																																																																
Page 12	_____ _____ _____																																																																
1. # of District Policy Total Instructional Minutes: <input type="text"/> 2. # of Total Instructional Minutes School Report: <input type="text"/>																																																																	

Parent Participation

Student in PP <input type="checkbox"/>	Attended IEP <input type="text"/>	Attended IEP Different _____
Page 10		
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent participated (If checked Stop) <input type="checkbox"/> Parent indicated not able to attend (Look for documentation to proceed) <input type="checkbox"/> Parent did not attend (Look for documentation to proceed without them) <input type="checkbox"/> Parent notified 3 times (Look for documentation of 3 attempts to notify)	Recorded Contacts _____ Date _____ Method 1: _____ Who: _____ Method 2: _____ Who: _____ Method 3: _____ Who: _____	
Notification Form Present <input type="checkbox"/> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> I intend, however, proceed (If checked indicate Yes) 2. <input type="checkbox"/> I cannot attend, send copy 3. <input type="checkbox"/> I intend, if unable, reschedule/phone conf. (If checked look for Contacts) 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Not convenient, reschedule	Evidence to convince: Yes/No _____	

Transition Plan

Student in ITP <input type="checkbox"/>
Transition Plan Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Attachment B: Confidence Intervals

Confidence Intervals for Parent Participation Results

Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince

	N	p	Min	Max
No Evidence	236	0.1911	14.1%	24.1%
Evidence to Convince	997	0.8089	78.4%	83.3%

Percentages of students without evidence to convince, by Welligent status

	N	p	Min	Max
Non-Welligent	22	0.0920	0.0%	21.3%
Welligent	214	0.1524	10.4%	20.1%

Percentages of students without evidence to convince, by local district

	N	p	Min	Max
1	29	0.1238	0.4%	24.4%
2	42	0.2459	11.6%	37.6%
3	30	0.1959	5.4%	33.8%
4	28	0.1890	4.4%	33.4%
5	31	0.2032	6.2%	34.5%
6	18	0.1989	1.4%	38.3%
7	25	0.1762	0.0%	32.6%
8	33	0.2218	8.0%	36.4%

Percentages of students without evidence to convince, by school level

	N	p	Min	Max
Elem	78	0.1551	7.5%	23.5%
Middle	58	0.1932	9.2%	29.5%
High	92	0.2490	16.1%	33.7%
Special Centers	8	0.1411	0.0%	38.2%