

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 second part of Outcome 14 focuses on the responsibility of Los Angeles Unified School District (District) personnel under the IDEA regulations to make a series of attempts to convince parents to attend the IEP meeting. The focus of this study only pertains to the second part of Outcome 14 which states:

- 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 (IM) considers three “recorded attempts to convince the parent to attend the IEP meeting” to be a sufficient number to establish that the District 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 IM 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.

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. These records are separated into two groups:

1. Students in Welligent whose parents attended the IEP
2. Students in Welligent whose parents did not attend the IEP

As noted in the outcome, the study focused only on students whose parents did not attend the IEP meeting.

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 Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) asked the American Institutes of Research (AIR) to draw three samples of students with completed IEPs in the District data systems. In the past, the use of both the Student Information System (SIS) and Welligent data systems were used to ensure accurate representation of students with disabilities in the sampling since not all students' IEPs were available in the data systems. However, this is no longer an issue as the majority of student records are available in the Welligent IEP data system. The parent participation samples were drawn at three points in time and continued to use both databases containing IEP contact and attendance information from July 1, 2006 to December 2006; December 2006 to February 2007; and February to March 15, 2007. 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. These samples were stratified by local district, grade level and disability incidence and can be seen below in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1: Distribution of Students in the Parent Participation Analysis by, Local District

Local District	N	%
1	108	19.22
2	86	15.33
3	70	12.46
4	57	10.14
5	65	11.57
6	35	6.23
7	51	9.07
8	90	16.04
Total	562	100%

Table 2: Distribution of Students in the Parent Participation Analysis, by School Level

School Level	N	%
Elementary	201	35.77%
Middle	137	24.38%
High	195	34.70%
Spec Centers	29	5.16%
Total	562	100.0%

Table 3: Distribution of Students in the Parent Participation Analysis by, High and Low Incidence Disabilities*

High/Low Incidence Disabilities	N	%
High Incidence	445	79.18%
Low Incidence	117	20.82%
Total	562	100%

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

Data Collection and Entry

The instrument (Attachment A) was the same used during the 2005-2006 year three 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.

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. If there was no evidence of parent notification or parent response to a notification, such as the IEP notification form was missing or lacked a parent response, this was also considered as no evidence. 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. Of the IEPs reviewed where a parent did not attend the IEP, approximately 83.8% of student files contained evidence that the school made appropriate attempts to convince the parent to attend (see Table 4). The percentage of files without evidence to convince was 16%. It is important to note that although both the Welligent and SIS systems were used to collect parent participation data, discrepancies were only found where students appeared in Welligent and not in the SIS. This means that all students in the population used for drawing samples were in the Welligent system therefore findings are not reported by Welligent and non-Welligent IEPs.

Table 4: Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince

Evidence To Convince	N	%
No Evidence	91	16.19%
Evidence To Convince	471	83.81%
Total	562	100%

The overall percentages were also disaggregated by local district, and school level. As shown in Table 5, the percentage of students with evidence to convince range from a low of about 72% in District 3 to approximately 91% in District 2.

Table 5: Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince, by local district

Local District	No Evidence To Convince		Evidence To Convince		Total
1	14	12.96%	94	87.04%	100%
2	8	9.30%	78	90.70%	100%
3	19	27.14%	51	72.86%	100%
4	9	15.79%	48	84.21%	100%
5	11	16.92%	54	83.08%	100%
6	4	11.43%	31	88.57%	100%
7	6	11.76%	45	88.24%	100%
8	20	22.22%	70	77.78%	100%
Total		16.19%		83.81%	100%

By school level (Table 6), Students in elementary schools (89.05%) and special education centers (93.10%) are more likely to have evidence to convince than students in middle schools (81.75%) and high schools (78.46%).

Table 6: Percentages of students with and without evidence to convince, by school level

School Level	No Evidence To Convince		Evidence To Convince		Total
Elementary	22	10.95%	179	89.05%	100%
Middle	25	18.25%	112	81.75%	100%
High	42	21.54%	153	78.46%	100%
Spec Centers	2	6.90%	27	93.10%	100%
Total	91	16.19%	471	83.81%	100%

Implications

Based on these findings, the District 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 approximately 84% of IEPs where a parent did not attend.

To continue to progress, the District should continue to emphasize the importance of including signed notification forms in the students IEP and cumulative folder. Furthermore, the District should continue to emphasize documentation of parent attempts to convince on the IEP notification form.

Attachment A: Parent Participation Instrument

Office of the Independent Monitor
Least Restrictive Environment

Attachment A

Student in LRE

Page 1

District ID#	Last Name	First Name	Birthday	Grade	Current IEP Date	IEP Date if different:
00000000	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	1/1/1994	7	9/20/2006	

Attend School: XXXXXXXXXX Local District: 3
IEP Meeting Location: _____

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Eligibility: SLD Eligibility if different: _____

Page 5

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"/>	_____	_____	_____

Page 8

Page 8 Missing Welligent Percent of Time:
 Gen Ed RSP SDC (Minutes per Week): _____ DIS Gen Ed/Inclusion % of time: _____

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1. # of Weekly District Policy Total School Minutes
2. # of Weekly Total School Minutes School Report

Parent Participation

Student in PP Meeting Date Attended IEP Attended IEP Different _____

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Parent participated (If checked Stop)
 Parent indicated not able to attend (Look for documentation to proceed)
 Parent did not attend (Look for documentation to proceed without them)
 Parent notified 3 times (Look for documention of 3 attempts to notify)

Notification Form Present

1. I intend, however, proceed (If checked indicate Yes)
2. I cannot attend, send copy
3. I intend, if unable, reschedule/phone conf. (If checked look for Contacts)
4. Not convenient, reschedule

Evidence to convince: Yes/No _____

Initial Evaluations

Student in Evaluation Calendar LO Track A Break in Calendar

Assessment Plan	Page 10	Notification Form	Due Date	# of Days	0-60	61-75	76-90	Over 90
Sent Date	Meeting Date	Resched Date	10/3/2006	47	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text" value="5/19/2006"/>	<input type="text" value="9/20/2006"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	56	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="9/20/2006"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan Date	Signature Date	Comments if rescheduled						
<input type="text" value="5/19/2006"/>	<input type="text" value="9/20/2006"/>							
<input type="text" value="5/19/2006"/>	<input type="text" value="9/20/2006"/>							