

Office of the Independent Monitor
*Study of the Accuracy of District Data on
Timely Completion of Evaluations 2007-08*

Outcome 10 focuses on the timely completion of initial evaluations. The state of California requires that all initial evaluations be conducted and the IEP held within 60 calendar days upon the receipt of the signed assessment plan. During the 2003-2004 school year, the parties agreed to the following outcome for determining the District's compliance with the Modified Consent Decree. The outcome states:

By the end of the 2005-2006 school year:

- a. 90% of all initial evaluations shall be completed within 60 days.
- b. 95% of all initial evaluations shall be completed within 75 days.
- c. 98% of all initial evaluations shall be completed within 90 days.

An initial evaluation is any evaluation other than a District initiated three-year reevaluation. Completion means that the evaluation has been completed and an IEP meeting convened. If the evaluation or IEP meeting is delayed because of parent request or the child is unavailable for testing, the completion period shall be extended by the period of such parental request or unavailability.

This study validates the accuracy of the District's Timely Evaluation (TE) data for making a determination on Outcome 10 for the 2007-2008 school year. The study is a continuation of the 2006-2007 school year, and was guided by the same research questions and methodology. The study focused on the following questions:

1. Are there discrepancies between the *date* of the signed assessment plan as reported by the Welligent IEP data system from the *date* of the signed assessment plan within the student's IEP file?
2. Are there discrepancies between the *date* of the IEP meeting as reported by the Welligent IEP data system from the *date* of the IEP meeting within the student's IEP file?
3. Are there discrepancies between the timely completion categories calculated in Welligent from the timely completion categories calculated from date of the signed assessment plan and IEP meeting date in a student's IEP file?
4. Do any discrepancies between the timeline categories in Welligent and in student's IEP file have any impact on the overall calculation of completed timely evaluations for Outcomes 10?

Methodology

Determination of timeliness of initial evaluations requires two essential pieces of information. The first is the date of the school's receipt of the signed assessment plan. Upon receipt of the signed assessment plan, compliance timelines begin. The second is the date of the IEP meeting. Once the IEP meeting is held, the timeline concludes. Timeliness categories are determined by

the total number of days required to conduct the IEP meeting upon the school's receipt of parental consent to assess.

The Welligent system automatically calculates timeliness of evaluations based on the IEP due date. First, a due date is calculated based on the date of the receipt of the signed assessment plan entered into the Welligent system. Based on the due date, the Welligent then calculates timeliness from the IEP meeting date. For instance, if the IEP meeting was held prior to the IEP due date, the IEP was considered completed within the 60 day timeline. The program also accounts for and excludes calendar days that occur during school breaks such as off-track vacation days, school vacation periods over ten calendar days, and vacation days as a result of a track change.

Several exceptions exist within the Welligent system's calculation for determining timeliness of IEPs. These exceptions are mainly associated with students enrolled in pre-school, ages 3 to 5. The first exception is noted for students for whom an assessment plan is signed and received prior to their third birthday. In accordance with law, students who have not yet turned 3 years old must have an IEP on or before their third birthday.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the District provided the OIM with a Welligent data extract of students that received an initial evaluation IEP. The extract included relevant information such as: date of receipt of the signed assessment plan, IEP meeting date, and track information for each student.

To validate the accuracy timely evaluation data reported by the Welligent, the OIM developed a methodology to identify discrepancies between Welligent and data found in the student's IEP file. The student's IEP file found at the school site in the student's cumulative record file should contain hardcopies of the signed assessment plan with the date of the initial IEP. In order to compare the timeliness of initial evaluations data reported by the Welligent and students' IEP files, the following information was collected: date of signed assessment plan; date of IEP meetings; IEP notification forms for rescheduled IEPs; and track information. Total number of days to complete initial evaluations were then calculated and assigned to a timeliness category for comparison with the category assigned by the Welligent system.

Sample Design

The objective of the sampling strategy was to obtain a representative sample of newly completed initial IEPs by local district and school level. Welligent databases were provided by the District and were used to randomly select students for the timely evaluation study during two periods of the 2007-2008 school year. Tables 1 and 2 show the final distributions of the overall timely evaluation sample (N=1,579) across local school districts and school level.

Table 1: Distribution of Students in the Timely Evaluation Analysis, by Local District

Local District	N	%
1	225	14.25%
2	213	13.49%
3	132	8.36%
4	147	9.31%
5	173	10.96%
6	115	7.28%
7	135	8.55%
8	129	8.17%
R	310	19.63%
Total	1,579	100%

Table 2: Distribution of Students in the Timely Evaluation Analysis, by School Level

School Level	N	%
Pre-School	207	13.11%
Elementary	1,222	77.39%
Middle	73	4.62%
High	66	4.18%
Spec Centers	11	0.70%
Total	1,579	100.0%

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was obtained by trained research assistants at school sites. Data was entered onto an instrument developed by the OIM (Attachment A) and included the following information: student demographic information; date of signed assessment plan; IEP meeting date; IEP reschedule dates; and student track information. The methodology for collecting the date of the signed assessment plan sought to obtain this data from the original hardcopy of the assessment plan found in the student’s IEP file. If signed hardcopies were not available, data was then obtained from school personnel with access to the Welligent system. IEP meeting dates and track information were obtained from the student’s IEP. Data regarding the re-scheduling of an IEP was obtained primarily from the IEP notification form. In some cases, reschedule data was obtained centrally from the Welligent IEP administrative screen fields.

When both the date of the signed assessment plan and IEP meeting date were determined, the total number of days to complete the initial evaluation was counted from the date of the signed assessment plan. Non-school calendar days were excluded in this count; however, non-school calendar days were identified and accounted for. This means that even if a student had a vacation period during the evaluation time, this did not add to the number of days it took to complete the IEP in order to correspond with the values of the timeliness categories. To account for non-

school calendar days, multi-track and traditional school calendars, as well as student track information was used.

Upon the determination of total days to complete the IEP, students were assigned to one of four timeliness categories: within 60 days; 61-75 days; 76-90 days; and over 90 days. Student category data was then compared to category data from the Welligent system.

Each student record was reviewed three times to calculate for both the number of days required to complete the initial evaluation, and to determine its corresponding timeline category. An additional review was added to the 2007-2008 study, for students whose data did not match for either the number of days or timeline categories. For these students, student level Welligent reports were requested by the OIM and provided by the District. Upon data collection, this information was then entered into a timely evaluation database and sent to the American Institute of Research (AIR) for analyses.

Findings

The accuracy of the date of receipt of the signed assessment plan is essential for determining the accuracy of the timeliness of an initial evaluation. Table 3 shows the number and percentage of matches between the data reported by Welligent and that found in the student’s IEP file. Of those with both signed assessment dates found in the Welligent and IEP files, 89% had exact matches. This is an improvement from the 2006-2007 school year, which found 68% matches. Differences were found for 162 cases between the date of the signed assessment plan reported by Welligent and that observed at the school. This has implications on the calculation of timeliness by the Welligent program since it is highly dependent on the date of the signed assessment plan for determining the IEP due date.

Table 3: Number and percentages of students whose date of receipt of the signed Assessment Plan in the Welligent match the IEP

Exact Matches	Welligent – IEP	
	N	%
Matches	1,362	89.4%
Non-Matches	162	10.6%
Total N	1,524	100%

Mean 23.74 Std. Deviation 48.26 Std. Error Mean 3.79

Table 4 shows the number and matches of the date of IEP meetings between Welligent and IEP files and demonstrates a one-to-one correspondence between the Welligent data obtained centrally and the IEP observed at the school site.

Table 4: Number and percentages of students whose date of the IEP meeting date in the Welligent match the IEP

Exact Matches	Welligent – IEP	
	N	%
Matches	1,548	99.4%
Non-Matches	10	0.6%
Total N	1,558	100%

Mean 4.60 Std. Deviation 78.11 Std. Error Mean 24.70

To determine if the discrepancies found between the Welligent system and the students’ IEP files had an affect on the overall performance toward the outcomes, an analysis was conducted to determine the reliability of the data by the four timeliness categories: within 60 days; 61-75 days; 76-90 days; and over 90 days. Again, it is important to note that this analysis does not look at exact matches, therefore allowing for minor variations in dates of signed assessment plans and IEP meetings. Essentially, this analysis only captures students with discrepancies large enough to place them into a different category.

Table 5 compares the number of cases from the Welligent data system to the findings from the OIM study. The table also includes the number of category matches and net difference in category. For example, the Welligent data system reported 1,453 cases of IEPs completed within the 60 day timeline while the OIM study found 1,324 cases that matched this category. As is expected, shift in categories were bilateral. This means that some of the cases originally in the 60 day category shifted into other categories, while cases originating in another category shifted to the within 60 days category. The difference presented in the table is the net difference found in the OIM study. As is noted in the table, there was a net difference of minus 129 cases within the 60 day category.

Table 5: Comparison of matches of Welligent and OIM findings with Pre-school, by Category

	0-60 days		61-75 days		75-90 days		91 or more days	
	Welligent	OIM	Welligent	OIM	Welligent	OIM	Welligent	OIM
Count	1,453	1,324	77	134	24	48	25	52
Matches	1,315		59		18		22	
% matches	90.5%		76.6%		75.0%		88.0%	
Difference	-129		57		24		27	

Due to the differences in programming for calculating the timeliness of an initial evaluation by the Welligent IEP system for pre-school students, these students were removed to determine the levels of accuracy for each time category. In addition, this table more accurately represents the matches for the Welligent data since the majority of pre-school students that demonstrated a discrepancy between the number of days and categories were reconciled upon a review of the Welligent report provided by the District (Table 6).

Table 6: Comparison of matches of Welligent and OIM findings without Pre-school, by Category

	0-60 days		61-75 days		75-90 days		91 or more days	
	Welligent	OIM	Welligent	OIM	Welligent	OIM	Welligent	OIM
Count	1,257	1,151	68	119	22	43	25	40
Matches	1,143		53		18		22	
% matches	90.9%		77.9%		81.8%		88.0%	
Difference	-106		51		21		15	

Summary

Overall, the Welligent IEP system is reliable for determining the number of days required to complete an initial assessment and for accurately reporting timeline categories. The study found some discrepancies between the Welligent data reported and the OIM count; however, upon further inquiry many of these discrepancies were reconciled. The study found four types of IEPs that yielded the most discrepancies which include: pre-school students under the age of 3; pre-school students ages 3 to 5; students that may have changed tracks or schools after an assessment plan was signed and received by the school; and, dates of receipt of an assessment plan found at the school site that differed with that entered into the Welligent system. The first three types of discrepancies are a result of limitations of the OIM study and/or different timeline requirements for pre-school students. The limitations within the OIM study refer to the missing information regarding changes in school track obtained and reviewed by the OIM. Recognizing this limitation, the OIM requested Welligent reports that provide a detailed account of the days counted for determining the timeliness of the evaluation, which also included information on track changes that may have occurred during the assessment timeline. This allowed for a more precise verification of the data and resulted in a reconciliation of many cases where discrepancies were observed.

The majority of the discrepancies observed for pre-school students existed from the different requirements for determining timeliness of an evaluation. For example, pre-school students under the age of 3 are required to have an initial evaluation completed and IEP held by their 3rd birthday. In many instances, the assessment plan was provided to the parent and returned to the school up to 6 months prior to the child's 3rd birthday. In these cases, the Welligent counted the number of days between the assessment plan and the IEP date resulting in a count that did not coincide with the time category. For instance, a student whose assessment plan was received 4 months prior to their 3rd birthday and IEP was held on their 3rd birthday may show within the Welligent that the evaluation took 120 days to complete. The Welligent will consider this same example within the 60 day timeline because it was completed before or on the child's 3rd birthday, as required by law.

For pre-school students between the age of 3 to 5, on many occasions, schools and providers have limited access to the child because the child is not yet in school. Therefore, in these cases, notations existed within the Welligent system that explained that an extension had been requested and granted by the parent due to the limited access to the child. These cases were then verified by the OIM.

Lastly, school site visits found a small number of cases where the date of the receipt of the assessment plan observed at the school site (hardcopy) differed from the date reported within the data system. In some cases, this resulted in the changing of a timeline category.

Overall, improvements are noted within the Welligent IEP system's ability to maintain and determine the timeliness of evaluations. One main difference from the data observed during the 2006-2007 school year, is that the Welligent system was re-programmed to count days that maintain a one-to-one correspondence with the timeline categories. This facilitated the validation of the data regarding the number of days required to complete the evaluation and the corresponding timeline category. In addition, the Welligent program appears to be accurately capturing changes in tracks, extended vacation periods and parental requests for extensions. Therefore, the Welligent system appears to be accurately maintaining and reporting information on the timeliness of initial evaluations.

Least Restrictive Environment

Student in LRE

Page 1
 District ID# _____ Last Name _____ First Name _____ Birthday 10/14/1996 Grade 6 Current IEP Date 10/18/2007 IEP Date if different: _____
 Attend School: _____ Local District: 1 Instructional Setting: AC
 IEP Meeting Location: _____

Page 4
 Eligibility: MDO 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

Initial Evaluations

Student in Evaluation

Calendar Track 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	<input type="text" value="11/6/2007"/>	<input type="text" value="41"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text" value="9/6/2007"/>	<input type="text" value="10/18/2007"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="41"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<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	Ajusted Due Date	<input type="text" value="Comments if rescheduled"/>					
<input type="text" value="9/7/2007"/>	<input type="text" value="11/2/2007"/>	<input type="text" value="11/6/2007"/>						
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>						