

## OUTCOME 13 - FOCUS GROUPS

### Group – Special Education Managers/Supervisors (Total Time – 1 hour 30 minutes)

Leader:

Session Time:

Participants -

**Opening:** *We would like to learn some more about the mechanisms utilized by the District for ensuring compliant service delivery. In addition, we hope to better understand the challenges that may exist centrally and at the site level for meeting the targets of Outcome 13. We also want to explore possible alternatives for measuring compliance with service delivery that could replace the current measure used for Outcome 13. In order to get to all our questions, we may need to limit discussions to the time allotted.*

### Section A – Determining Caseloads - Total Time (\_\_\_ minutes)

I would like to discuss how caseloads and staffing levels might impact service deliver. We understand the District has been engaged in an aggressive recruitment plan to hire teachers and providers.

1. Does your department currently have staffing needs that have been difficult to fill?
2. Do you currently have schools that do not have a provider assigned? What steps are taken to determine if this is happening and how is this corrected?
3. How do you manage extended leaves? How are parents notified of the provider's leave and that their student will not receive services?
4. Do you think that the current caseloads enable providers to complete all their required tasks within their scheduled time and deliver services appropriately?
5. Do you have concerns or challenges regarding caseloads that may be impeding the District's ability to deliver all of the services as specified in IEPs?

### Section B – Service Delivery Challenges - Total Time ( \_\_\_minutes)

As you know, we recently conducted an online survey of all related service providers. The majority of providers reported attending IEPs, and conducting assessments and report writing as moderate and major factors that impede service delivery. We would like to better understand how this impacts service delivery and your thoughts on what could improve this situation?

6. How does attendance at IEP meetings impact the ability of providers to provide services?
7. Does the coordination and scheduling of IEP meetings impact service delivery?

8. How long is the average IEP meeting?
9. Do you have any suggestions on improving the coordination, scheduling, frequency or length of IEP meetings?
10. Do you have any concerns over how services are prescribed in the IEPs or documented in Welligent that may be impeding the District's ability to meet the targets of Outcome 13?
11. Have there been any changes to policies or practices regarding conducting assessments or report writing that have impacted a provider's workload?
12. Do you have any suggestions for improving this situation?

**Section C – Monitoring Service Delivery - Total Time ( \_\_\_\_ minutes)**

Let's discuss how you monitor service delivery.

13. What administrative mechanisms are available to you that allow you to identify service delivery issues including those required by Outcome 13 (frequency and duration)?
14. How efficient are those mechanisms (e.g. are the problems/issues identified quickly)?
15. What improvements to these mechanisms would you suggest?
16. How are parents updated on student progress and service delivery other than at IEP meetings? How often (weekly, monthly)? What format (in person, email, text, phone, etc)?

**Section D – Alternatives to Outcome 13 - Total Time ( \_\_\_\_ minutes)**

As I mentioned at the beginning of the focus group, one of the goals of these focus groups is to help us think of possible alternatives that could replace the current measure for Outcome 13, while still improving service delivery to students.

17. Do you feel that the current measure which requires 85% of students to receive 100% of their services, is realistic?
18. How do you think an outcome could be framed that would focus on site level accountability?
19. Do you think that an outcome requiring weekly or monthly service delivery reports to parents would improve service delivery?
20. Given national shortages and annual loss of staff due to retirements or changing districts, how can an outcome be framed that addresses these factors?

**Group – Service Providers (Total Time – 90 minutes)**

Leader:

Session Time:

Participants -

**Opening:** *We would like to learn some more about the factors that may impact a provider's ability to deliver services at schools. In addition, we hope to better understand the challenges that may exist at the site level for meeting the targets of Outcome 13. In order to get to all our questions, we may need to limit discussions to the time allotted.*

*The current measure for determining progress on Outcome 13 requires accurate and consistent documentation by providers. The measure has relied on an eight-week study that requires 85% of students to receive 100% of their services within this timeframe. This means that if students get 95% of their minutes owed, they are not considered as compliant with this outcome. We would like to explore possible alternatives to this outcome to one that improves service delivery.*

**Section A – Caseloads - Total Time ( \_\_\_ minutes)**

I would like to discuss how caseloads and assignments are determined. This will help us understand how issues regarding caseloads may have an impact on service delivery.

1. How many schools do you serve?
2. How many students are on your caseload?
3. Do you think that your current caseload enables you to complete all your required tasks within your scheduled time and deliver services appropriately?
4. If you are having problems with your caseload, what steps do you take to fix the problems? Who do you contact for assistance?
5. What would it take for you to meet 100% of your service delivery minutes?
6. Do you feel that workload is a consideration for determining your assignment?

**Section B – Service Delivery Challenges- Total Time ( \_\_\_ minutes)**

We understand that schools are dynamic and there are many situations that arise that might cause you to miss service sessions. We hope to better understand the reasons for missing sessions, and how an alternative outcome could be designed with realistic expectations and solutions.

7. What are some primary reasons for missing sessions?

- a. How much of an impact does getting sick have on meeting your direct service obligations?
  - b. How much of an impact does attending IEP meetings have on being able to deliver all of your services?
8. What are some of the challenges for making up sessions?

As you know, we recently conducted an online survey of all related service providers. The majority of providers reported attending IEPs, and conducting assessments and report writing as moderate and major factors that impede service delivery. We would like to better understand how this impacts service delivery and your thoughts on what could improve this situation?

9. How does attending IEP meetings impact your ability to provide services?
10. Does the coordination and scheduling of IEP meetings impact service delivery?
11. How long is the average IEP meeting?
  - a. Do you typically stay the entire time?
11. Do you have any suggestions on improving the coordination, scheduling, frequency or length of IEP meetings?
12. How does conducting assessments and report writing impact your ability to provide services?
13. Have there been any changes to policies or practices that have impacted your workload in this area?
14. Do you have any suggestions for improving this situation?

### **Section C – Monitoring Service Delivery - Total Time ( \_\_\_\_minutes)**

Let's discuss how you monitor service delivery.

15. Do you feel the current tools/reports and mechanisms are effective for monitoring service delivery?
16. Who do you contact to report issues or problems that might impede meeting your service delivery obligations?
  - a. Does the line of supervision change depending on the problem (e.g. too many students on caseload vs time spent in meetings or scheduling of IEPs)?
17. How efficiently/effectively are problems or issues you raised addressed and resolved?

18. How do you update parents on student progress and service delivery other than at IEP meetings? How often (weekly, monthly)? What format (in person, email, text, phone, etc)?

**Section D – Alternatives to Outcome 13 - Total Time (\_\_\_\_ minutes)**

As I mentioned at the beginning of the focus group, one of the goals of these focus groups is to help us think of possible alternatives that could replace the current measure for Outcome 13, while still improving service delivery to students.

19. Do you feel that the current measure which requires 85% of students to receive 100% of their services, is realistic?
20. How do you think an outcome could be framed that would focus on site level accountability?
21. Do you think that an outcome requiring weekly or monthly service delivery reports to parents would improve service delivery?

Group – Site Administrators (Total Time – 90 minutes)

Leader:

Session Time:

Participants -

**Opening:** *We would like to learn some more about the mechanisms utilized by the District for ensuring compliant service delivery. In addition, we hope to better understand the challenges that may exist centrally and at the site level for meeting the targets of Outcome 13. We also want to explore possible alternatives for measuring compliance with service delivery that could replace the current measure used for Outcome 13. In order to get to all our questions, we may need to limit discussions to the time allotted.*

*The current measure for determining progress on Outcome 13 requires accurate and consistent documentation by providers. The measure has relied on an eight-week study that requires 85% of students to receive 100% of their services within this timeframe. This means that if students get 95% of their minutes owed, they are not considered as compliant with this outcome. We would like to explore possible alternatives to this outcome to one that improves service delivery.*

1. How many schools are you assigned to?
2. What's the population of special education students at your school(s)?
3. What is your relationship with special education service providers in your building? (Does this relationship vary by role type - e.g. resource teacher vs. OT?)
4. How do you monitor the provision of special education services (and does that monitoring vary by role type)?
5. How would you know if a student (or group of students) was not receiving the services required?
6. What is your responsibility if a service provider is absent (and does that vary by role type)?
  - a. To whom do you report problems/issues in service delivery?
  - b. How effectively/efficiently are these problems/issues resolved?
  - c. How are provider's extended leaves managed?
7. What support do you need to perform your responsibilities to monitor special education programs and services in your building?

We recently conducted an online survey of all related service providers. The majority of providers reported attending IEPs, coordinating and scheduling IEPs, and conducting assessments and report writing as moderate and major factors that impede service delivery. We

would like to better understand how this impacts compliance at your school and your thoughts on what could improve this situation?

8. How does attending IEP meetings impact a provider's ability to provide services?
9. Does the coordination and scheduling of IEP meetings impact service delivery?
10. How long is the average IEP meeting?
  - a Do your providers typically stay the entire meeting?
11. Do you have any suggestions on improving the coordination, scheduling, frequency or length of IEP meetings?

As I mentioned at the beginning of the focus group, one of the goals of these focus groups is to help us think of possible alternatives that could replace the current measure for Outcome 13, while still improving service delivery to students.

12. Do you feel that the current measure which requires 85% of students to receive 100% of their services, is realistic?
13. How do you think an outcome could be framed that would focus on site level accountability?
14. Do you think that an outcome requiring weekly or monthly service delivery reports to parents would improve service delivery?

**Group – Local District SESCAs and LRE Specialists (Total Time – 1 hour 30 minutes)**

Leader:

Session Time:

Participants:

**Opening:** *We would like to learn some more about the mechanisms utilized by the District for ensuring compliant service delivery. In addition, we hope to better understand the challenges that may exist at the local district and the central mechanisms in place for meeting the targets of Outcome 13. We also want to explore possible alternatives for measuring compliance with service delivery that could replace the current measure used for Outcome 13. In order to get to all our questions, we may need to limit discussions to the time allotted.*

**Section A – Determining Caseloads - Total Time (30 minutes)**

I would like to discuss how caseloads and staffing levels might impact service deliver. We understand the District has been engaged in an aggressive recruitment plan to hire teachers and providers.

1. Does your local district currently have staffing needs that have been difficult to fill?
2. Do you currently have schools that do not have a provider assigned? What steps are taken to determine if this is happening and how is this corrected?
3. How do you manage extended leaves? How are parents notified of the provider's leave and that their student will not receive services?
4. Do you think that the current caseloads enable providers to complete all their required tasks within their scheduled time and deliver services appropriately?
5. Do you have concerns or challenges regarding caseloads that may be impeding the District's ability to deliver all of the services as specified in IEPs?

**Section B – Service Delivery Challenges - Total Time ( minutes)**

As you may know, we recently conducted an online survey of all related service providers. The majority of providers reported attending IEPs, and conducting assessments and report writing as moderate and major factors that impede service delivery. We would like to better understand how this impacts service delivery and your thoughts on what could improve this situation?

6. How does attendance at IEP meetings impact the ability of providers to provide services?
7. Does the coordination and scheduling of IEP meetings impact service delivery?



8. How are APEIS' assigned and how does this impact the ability of schools to provide services and coordinate and hold IEP meetings?
9. Do you collect data on the length of IEP meetings? How long is the average IEP meeting?
10. Do you have any suggestions on improving the coordination, scheduling, frequency or length of IEP meetings?
11. Do you have any concerns over how services are prescribed in the IEPs or documented in Welligent that may be impeding the District's ability to meet the targets of Outcome 13?
12. Have there been any changes to policies or practices regarding conducting assessments or report writing that have impacted a provider's workload?
13. Do you have any suggestions for improving this situation?

### **Section C – Monitoring Service Delivery - Total Time ( minutes)**

Let's discuss how you monitor service delivery.

14. What administrative mechanisms are available to you that allow you to identify service delivery issues including those required by Outcome 13 (frequency and duration)?
15. How efficient are those mechanisms (e.g. are the problems/issues identified quickly)?
16. What improvements to these mechanisms would you suggest?
17. How are parents updated on student progress and service delivery other than at IEP meetings? How often (weekly, monthly)? What format (in person, email, text, phone, etc)?

### **Section D – Alternatives to Outcome 13 - Total Time ( minutes)**

As I mentioned at the beginning of the focus group, one of the goals of these focus groups is to help us think of possible alternatives that could replace the current measure for Outcome 13, while still improving service delivery to students.

18. Do you feel that the current measure which requires 85% of students to receive 100% of their services, is realistic?
19. How do you think an outcome could be framed that would focus on site level accountability? What supports would local districts need to oversee such effort?
20. Do you think that an outcome requiring weekly or monthly service delivery reports to parents would improve service delivery?

21. Given national shortages and annual loss of staff due to retirements or changing districts, how can an outcome be framed that addresses these factors?

**Group: RSP Phone Interview**

Leader:

Session Time:

**Participants:**

1. How many students are on your caseload?
2. Do you have other students that are not on your caseload? If yes, please explain.
3. Do you go to classrooms to work with students or do you pull out students?
4. What happens if you are absent or unavailable for a service?
5. Do you have to call in or tell someone?
6. If yes, who do you have to inform? What is the process?
7. Does someone take your place?
8. If yes, please explain.
9. If someone takes your place, does this other person enter the information on the log?
10. Does the principal or assistant principal ever review your logs?
11. If yes, what is the process? How often?
12. Has the principal ever asked your questions about your service delivery or log?
13. How are parents updated on service delivery other than IEP meetings? How often and what format?
14. I would like to discuss with you possible alternative ways to measure service delivery.
15. Do you feel the current measure which requires 85% of students to receive 100% of their services is realistic?
16. What do you think an outcome for RSP services could look like?
17. Do you think an outcome requiring monthly or periodic service delivery reports to parents, such as through the MiSiS parent portal, would improve service delivery?