

The Role of Families in California's Monitoring System

NCSEAM
Educational Benefit Workgroup
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People acting together as a group can accomplish things which no individual acting alone could ever hope to bring about.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Roles of Parents

- ◆ Parents in local districts provide direct input through meetings, surveys, and interviews.
- ◆ SEEDS parent consultants participate on monitoring teams to:
 - conduct input meetings and interviews,
 - provide summaries and analyses,
 - participate in monitoring planning, debriefing and post-review meetings.

Roles of Parents

- ◆ SEEDS staff who are parents of children with disabilities:
 - Participate in the state-level design team
 - Provide analysis of parent input at the state level
 - Recruit, train, and coach Parent Moderators for input meetings.
 - Assist in the development of Parent Questions
 - Participate in the development and pilot of Educational Benefit review
 - Disseminate parent concerns via SEEDS website.

The Parent/Guardian Input Session for VR

- ◆ Conducted by teams of parents of children with disabilities trained in facilitation and special education content areas.
- ◆ Conducted in multiple languages.
- ◆ Built local capacity through Community Resource Sheet and invited guests.

The Neutral Facilitator

Neutral facilitators support relationships that build capacity for locally designed change:

- ◆ Parent/District
- ◆ District/SEA
- ◆ Parent/SEA
- ◆ Parent/Local Community Resources

Parent Input Shapes the Monitoring Plan (Rationale)

- ◆ Parents provide data on the compliance areas under investigation.
- ◆ Parents raise concerns about compliance in other areas.
- ◆ Parents share their experiences and perspectives on the relationships, processes, and results that affect their children receiving special education services.

Parent Input into Monitoring Plan (Criteria)

- ◆ Item is included in monitoring plan if:
 - It is *identified during one of the parent input process*;
AND
 - It appears to be a *violation of state or federal law* or regulation;
AND
 - It is *potentially systemic* (e.g., expressed by several parents, affects a number of students, occurs at a number of school sites)

Parent Roles in Developing the VR Monitoring Plan

- ◆ Conduct Parent/Guardian Input Session in advance (use other methods if attendance is low).
- ◆ Summarize key points at debriefing meeting following the Input Session.
- ◆ Attend Monitoring Plan meeting to add parent perspective to other data sources.

Developing the CCR SESR Monitoring Plan

- ◆ Securing and Analyzing Parent Input
- ◆ Conducting Review of KPIs
- ◆ Developing the CCR SESR Monitoring Plan

Securing and Analyzing Parent Input for CCR SESR

- ◆ Overall purpose is to get meaningful input from parents of students
- ◆ Requires district to design the method for gaining parent input with representatives from parent organizations (CAC and PTI or FRC - see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/sed/caprintorg.htm>)
- ◆ Can select method(s) from focus group, parent input meeting or survey
- ◆ Must use CDE questions at a minimum
- ◆ Must meet minimum participation criteria
- ◆ Must include all identified areas of concern in monitoring plan
- ◆ Must include parent rep concurrence with issues identified in monitoring plan

Methods for Obtaining Parent Input for CCR SESR

- ◆ Focus Group
 - Involves securing input from an invited group of parents using a specific question protocol. Participants should be invited based on specific criteria.
- ◆ Parent Input Meeting
 - All parents and members of the advocacy community are sent announcements to provide input on specific questions at an open, public input session.
- ◆ Survey
 - Is a written instrument sent to all parents in the district that requests input on specific questions.

Participation Criteria for CCR SESR

Method	Participation Criteria
Focus Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +1 group (at least 15 participants) for every 1,000 special education students residing in district. +If home language surveys shows that 25% of population has a designated language other than English, then at least 1 group conducted in that language
Parent Input Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 15 participants for every 1,000 special education students residing in district. +If home language surveys shows that 25% of population has a designated language other than English, then at least 1 meeting conducted in that language
Survey	20% of families' responses are returned and included in data

Origin of Questions

- Purpose of the questions is to focus on most frequent concerns
 - Parents from SEEDS Project have conducted parent input sessions and interviews over two years
 - SEEDS conducted analysis of most frequent concerns
 - Reviewed most frequent noncompliant items
- Crafted questions and probes based on prior years' questions that would most effectively elicit information in the "focus" areas.
- Piloted questions in interviews with parents – analyzed responses to see if questions got responses in the "focus" areas
- Adjusted questions and identified compliance items associated with each of the questions and probes based on typical responses.
- Edited questions to be "family-friendly"
- Brought to state design team for further revision.

Responses to Questions

Questions	Compliance Items	Categories of Most Frequent Parent Concerns									
		Parent Rights/Process Issues	Staffing Concerns	Services	Communication	General Ed/Shared Ed Collaboration	Transition	IEP Process	Behavior/Outcomes	Outcomes	IEP Implementation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency (1=Most Frequent) (X = question and probes generated responses in these high frequency concerns during pilot)											
1. Tell me about special education services for your child?			X	X						X	
What kind of class is she or he in?			X	X						X	
What services does he receive?			X	X						X	
How often?			X	X						X	
2. Tell me about your IEP meeting?						X		X			
How often do you have an IEP meeting?	3-6: Annual review of IEP 4-1.2: IEP reviewed annually					X		X			
Who typically attends your IEP meeting?	3-4.1: IEP team participants					X		X			
Is a general education teacher part of your team?	3-4.1.2: General education teacher					X		X			
Is your child re-evaluated every three years?	2-4.1: Triennial review of IEP					X		X			

Parent Input Questions

1. Let's talk about your student's special education program.
2. Does your student's school year start smoothly? How does summer school go?
3. What is your experience with IEP/IFSP meetings?
4. Describe your role in developing the IEP/IFSP?
5. Was your information included when planning goals? Were your concerns addressed?
6. Were notices and documents provided in your native language?
5. Does the IEP team see your student in the same way that you do?
6. How were you involved with writing the goals that are listed on the IEP?
7. What helps your student to be successful at school?
8. How do you receive information about your student's progress?
9. If your student did not progress, were adjustments made?
10. Are all of your student's teachers aware and understand his or her learning needs and what supports are required for success in school?
11. Is your child engaged and involved in learning activities? What does he or she like to do at school in or outside of the classroom?
12. How does the IEP team make decisions about your child taking state and district-wide tests?
13. How are the language needs of your student met?
14. Secondary transition is planning your student's preparation for adult life. This may include independent living, employment and/or continuing education. Describe the transition planning process for your child (age 14 or older).

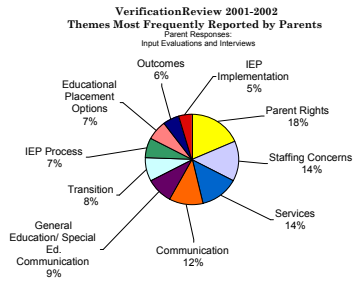
Sample Probes

1. Let's talk about about your student's special education program.
 - What kind of class is she or he in?
 - What services does he receive?
 - How often?
2. What is your experience with IEP/IFSP meetings?
 - How often do you have an IEP meeting?
 - Who typically attends your IEP meeting?
 - Is a general education teacher part of your team?
 - Is your child re-evaluated every three years?
3. Describe your role in developing the IEP/IFSP?
 - How did you assist in developing your child's educational plan?
 - Was the information you provided about your child included when planning goals?
 - Were your concerns about your child addressed?
 - Was an interpreter provided, if you needed one?
 - Were notices and documents provided in your native language?
 - Do you feel you were an equal partner at the meeting?

Association with High Frequency NC Items

Question/Probe	Related Compliance Items
3. Describe your role in developing the IEP/IFSP?	
How did you assist in developing your child's educational plan?	
Was the information you provided about your child included when planning goals?	2-1-1.5: Include assessment information provided by parents 2-1-1.8: Review of existing information, including that provided by parents
Were your concerns about your child addressed?	3-3-10.2: IEP team considers parent concerns
Was an interpreter provided, if you needed one?	3-3-3: LEA ensures parent understands proceedings of IEP, including provision of interpreter.
Were notices and documents provided in your native language?	2-1-1: Assessment plan in native language 6-1-2.9.2.1: Prior Notice in native language 6-19-1: Confidentiality notice under FERPA in native language
Do you feel you were an equal partner at the meeting?	2-3-2: Parents provided with copies of assessment reports 3-3-3: LEA ensures parent understanding of IEP proceedings 3-3-4: Parents notified early enough to plan attendance at IEP meeting 3-3-5.1: Parents notified of who will attend IEP meeting.

Analysis of Parent Input



Parent Involvement in Educational Benefit Review

- ♦ Participated in the design and pilot of the Educational Benefit review process at the state level.
- ♦ Incorporated related questions into the Parent/Guardian Input Session protocol.
- ♦ Participated in a local County Office of Education Educational Benefit review.

Our Next Steps

- ♦ Continue to build relationships with parent groups to enhance the diversity of the SEEDS consultant bank and disseminate key concepts related to monitoring.
- ♦ Continue to articulate the parent voice in state-level monitoring activities.

As in all cuisines, what a cook needs most is good will.

Given this, with curiosity, patience, and a few utensils and some special ingredients, you are in for a fascinating time.

Emily Hahn