# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements i

1. Executive Summary 1
   - Background and Purpose of Study 1
     - Research Goals 1
     - Specific Objectives 1
   - Survey Approach and Development 2
     - Parent Survey 2
     - Principal Survey 3
   - Findings 3
     - Parent Survey Overall Findings – Quantitative 3
     - Parent Survey Overall Findings – Qualitative 4
     - Principal Survey Overall Findings – Quantitative 5
     - Principal Survey Overall Findings - Qualitative 5

2. Background 6

3. Survey Approach and Development 8
   - Parent Survey 8
   - Principal Survey 10
   - Database Construction and Analysis 10
   - Limitations 11

4. Survey Return Rates and Demographics 12
   - Survey Return Rates 12
   - Parent and Student Demographics 12

5. Parent Survey Findings 15
   - School Environment Issues 15
   - Communication Issues 19
   - Admission Review, and Dismissal Issues/Individual Education Plan Participation 23
   - Results/Progress 28

6. Findings from Parental Open-End Responses 30
   - Prevalent Themes: Question 1 30
     - Summary of What Is Needed to Assist in Child’s Education 31
     - Additional Comments on Special Education Services: Question 2 32

7. Principal Survey Findings 35
   - Successful Parent Involvement Strategies Implemented by Schools 35
   - Successful Parent Involvement Strategies Implemented by Schools for Parents of Special Education Students 36
Successful Parent Involvement Strategies Implemented by Teachers  37
Parent Involvement Plans  37
Parent Input and Opinions  38
Parent-Teacher Organizations and Volunteer Opportunities  38
Communication Methods  40
Services Provided to Encourage Parental Involvement  40
Parent Contributions  42
School-provided Parent Training Workshops  42
School Holds Annual Meeting  44
Primary Factors Preventing Parental Involvement  45

8. Summary  46

9. Appendices  48

Appendix A – Parent Survey and Cover Letters  49
Appendix B – Pre-Notification Letters  55
Appendix C – Principal Survey and Cover Letter  57
Appendix D – Campus Coordinator and District Contact Letters  61
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Summary by Category 4
Table 2: Question Modifications 9
Table 3: Parent Reported Level of Education 12
Table 4: Student Demographics* 13
Table 5: Structured Survey Reporting Components 15
Table 6: Questions Pertaining to School Environment Issues Category 15
Table 7: Average Ratings across Questions in School Environment Category 16
Table 8: Distribution of Responses to Q 2.a.: ‘School personnel encourage me to be involved in my child’s education’ 16
Table 9: Distribution of Responses to Q 2.b.: ‘I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child’s program’ 16
Table 10: Distribution of “Always” Responses by Grade Level and Eligibility Category to Q 2.b.: ‘I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)’ 17
Table 11: Distribution of Responses to Q 3.a.: ‘My child’s school is a positive and welcoming place for my family’ 17
Table 12: Distribution of “Agree” Responses by Eligibility and Ethnic Categories to Q 3.a.: ‘My child’s school is a positive and welcoming place for my family’ 18
Table 13: Distribution of Responses to Q 3.b.: ‘Teachers understand my child’s needs’ 19
Table 14: Distribution of Responses to Q 3.c.: ‘Teachers show a willingness to discuss my child’s needs’ 19
Table 15: Questions Pertaining to Communication Issues Category 20
Table 16: Average Ratings Across Questions in Communication Issues Category 20
Table 17: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.a.: ‘The school communicates regularly with me regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues’ 21
Table 18: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.b.: ‘I communicate with my child’s teacher(s) regularly regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues’ 21
Table 19: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.c.: ‘School personnel provide information on parent organizations, community agencies, or trainings related to the needs of my child’ 21
Table 20: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.d.: ‘School personnel provide me information to help me assist in my child’s education’ 22
Table 21: Distribution of Responses to Q 5.a.: ‘The school provides me information on my child’s disability’ 22
Table 22: Distribution of Responses by Eligibility Type to Q 5.a.: ‘The school provides me information on my child’s disability’ 23
Table 23: Distribution of Responses to Q 5.b.: ‘Information is provided to me in my primary language’ 23
Table 24: Questions Pertaining to IEP and ARD Issues Category 23
Table 25: Average Ratings across Questions in IEP and ARD Issues Category 24
Table 26: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.a.: ‘I participate in my child’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings’ 24
Table 27: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.b.: ‘My concerns and recommendations are considered by the ARD committee in the development of my child’s IEP’ 25
Table 28: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.c.: ‘At the ARD meeting, we discuss how my child will participate in state assessments (like the STAAR)’ 25
Table 29: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.d.: ‘At the ARD meeting, we select accommodations that my child needs’ 26
Table 30: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.e.: ‘The school provides my child with all the services documented on my child’s IEP’ 26
Table 31: Distribution of Responses to Q 7.a.: ‘Teachers and administrators ensure that I fully understand the Procedural Safeguards (also known as the Rights Booklet)’ 26
Table 32: Distribution of Responses to Q. 7.b.: ‘My child’s evaluation report is written in terms I understand’ 27
Table 33: Distribution of Responses from Parents of High School Students to Q 7.c.: ‘The school provides planning for life after high school, including services to help my child reach his or her goals’ 27
Table 34: Distribution of Responses to Q 7.d.: ‘The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in planning for life after high school’ 27
Table 35: Distribution of Responses by Grade Level to Q 7.d.: ‘The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in planning for life after high school’ 28
Table 36: Distribution of Responses to Q 7.e.: ‘The school includes my child in the ARD meeting’ 28
Table 37: Questions Pertaining to Results/Progress Issues Category 28
Table 38: Average Ratings across Questions in Results/Progress Issues Category 29
Table 39: Distribution of Responses to Q 8.a.: ‘My child is making progress because of the services he/she is receiving’ 29
Table 40: Distribution of Responses to Q 8.b.: ‘I am satisfied with the progress my child is making’ 29
Table 41: English-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 1: ‘As a parent, what do you need to help assist your child in his/her education?’ 30
Table 42: Spanish-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 1: ‘As a parent, what do you need to help assist your child in his/her education?’ 31
Table 43: English-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 2: ‘Is there anything you would like to share with us about the special education services your child receives?’ 32
Table 44: Spanish-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 2: “Is there anything you would like to share with us about the special education services your child receives?” 33

Figure 1: School Has Written Campus-Level Parent Involvement Plan 37

Figure 2: Percentage of Parents Who Actively Participate in Your School’s PTA/PTO 39

Figure 3: Percentage of Parents of Students Receiving Special Education Services Who Actively Participate in Your School’s PTA/PTO 39


Table 46: Services Provided by Schools to Encourage Parental Involvement 41

Figure 4: Services Provided by Schools to Encourage Parent Involvement 41

Figure 5: School-provided training workshops to encourage parent involvement? 43

Figure 6: Frequency of Parent Trainings 43

Figure 7: When Trainings are Most Likely to Occur? 44

Figure 8: School holds annual meeting to inform parents about special education programs and services? 44

Figure 9: Percentage of parents with students receiving special education programs and services attend annual meeting? 45

Table 47: Summary by Category 46
Acknowledgements

NuStats and Education Service Center Region 9 (ESC Region 9) gratefully acknowledge the many organizations and individuals who assisted with the development, distribution, completion and return of the parent and principal surveys, all of whom share an interest in making special education services more effective and efficient.

Parents: Over the past nine years (2006–2015), approximately 33,173 parents have participated in this survey. Of these, just over 20,629 provided written comments about the special education services their children have received. This past spring alone (2015) 3,298 parents completed the survey. Our deepest gratitude goes to these parents. From this response group, 1,975 of these parents provided comments, suggestions, and observations in the open-ended section of the survey. We hope the information will be instrumental in the continued efforts of this project to provide insightful information to special education administrators, policymakers, and teachers.

Students: While this was a survey distributed to parents, the intent of this study is to improve special education services in Texas. In addition to the indirect support for this study by being the focus of their parents’ concern, many students also served as couriers in delivering the surveys home.

District and Campus Staff: We are grateful to district and campus staff for supporting the distribution of the survey to parents. District and campus staffs’ efforts to locate students took time and energy. This support is one of the key factors in the success of this study.

 Principals: We are grateful to the school principals who took the time to respond to the principal survey associated with this study; 916 principals returned the survey in spring 2015, which was a decrease of 11 surveys (1 percentage point) from the 2014 response.

Development Committees: We appreciate the efforts and hard work of all members of the development committee.

Staff from the Education Service Center Region 9 and the Texas Education Agency: Staff in these two organizations provided overall guidance and support during the administration of this survey. We hope you will have the opportunity to use the insight provided by parents to improve special education services provided to students in Texas schools.

Disclaimer: The descriptions and interpretations provided in this report are those of NuStats and do not necessarily reflect positions of the Texas Education Agency, Region 9, or other organizations and entities associated with or participating in this survey.
1. Executive Summary

Background and Purpose of Study

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires that each state develop a six-year performance plan. This State Performance Plan (SPP) evaluates the State’s efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and illustrates how the State will continuously improve upon this implementation. The Texas SPP was submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) for approval on January 30, 2006. OSEP approved the Texas SPP on May 22, 2006. The most recent information found on the Texas Education Agency website (www.tea.state.tx.us) shows the Texas SPP was most recently updated February, 2014.

OSEP identified five monitoring priorities and twenty indicators to be included in the SPP. For each of the indicators, the State must report progress on measurable and rigorous targets and improvement activities over a six-year period of time. The findings presented in this report summarize survey findings related to Indicator 8: Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving service and results for children with disabilities.1 This report covers the tenth administration of the survey (spring 2015), with previous surveys conducted in fall 2006, spring 2007, spring 2008, spring 2009, spring 2010, spring 2011, spring 2012, spring 2013, and spring 2014.

There are over 1,200 school districts in Texas ranging in size from 20 to over 200,000 students, and over 8,400 campuses within Texas with some districts having over 100 separate campuses.

Research Goals

Each year, one-sixth of the Texas school districts are selected to participate in the study, ensuring each district of 50,000 students or less is included once in the six year cycle. Districts with 50,000 or greater students are included in the study each year. The survey is offered in English and Spanish, and as a paper or web/online survey, in order to encourage as many parents as possible to complete the survey. Eligible participants are selected based on specific demographic characteristics of their child, such as ethnicity, eligible disability category, and grade level. The research is focused on: communication between schools, teachers and parents; school climate; teacher’s involvement with parents of their students; and parent’s involvement with their child’s education.

Specific Objectives

The survey is intended to produce anonymous and unbiased data that will inform TEA of the successful areas of the special education programs, and the areas where improvements are necessary. Each question falls into one of the following categories:

- Environment
- Communication
- ARD/IEP Participation
- Results

Each of the eight closed-ended survey questions are abstract questions with sub-dimensions designed to inspire parents to respond candidly and with little burden.

Survey Approach and Development

Parent Survey

Survey development and production. In September 2005, the Parent Coordination Network reviewed questions from the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) Parent Survey and the Statewide Survey of Parents of Students with Disabilities that had been distributed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Regional Education Service Center 9 (Region 9) in 2003. A separate survey development committee was created to develop the SPP survey in fall 2008. The survey’s questions focus on the following issues: parent satisfaction, communication between parents and school, parents’ understanding of information, services and information provided, school climate, the teacher’s role, and parent participation in training. English and Spanish versions were developed. There were several modifications to the questions for 2015. These will be presented in the Survey Development and Production Section.

Sampling. In 2015, 18,550 parents were selected to be included in the survey from 202 districts across the state. One-sixth of all Texas districts are sampled each year, with every district included at some point during a six-year cycle. However, each district with at least 50,000 students is included each year. Once districts and campuses were randomly selected for 2015, which is the second year in the six-year cycle, parents were randomly selected based on demographic characteristics of their child including ethnicity, grade level, and eligibility category (i.e., learning disability, speech disability, autism, etc.).

Survey Distribution. Beginning in April 2015, each parent or guardian received an envelope with the selected child’s name, a letter of instruction, the survey, and a return (postage-paid) envelope. Region 9 supplied NuStats with postcards that provided information on free, statewide resources for parents of children receiving special education services. These postcards were included in as many of the student packets as possible. Due to the limited number of postcards received, NuStats included them in packets for all districts with the exception of:

Region 1
- Brownsville

Region 2
- Freer

Region 3
- Bay City
- Halletsville

Region 4
- Aldine
- C O R E Academy
- Beatrice Mayes
- Bay Area Charter Inc
- Fort Bend
- Hardin
Region 5
- Colmesneil
- Hudson

Region 6
- Caldwell
- Buffalo
- Bremond
- Big Sandy

Region 7
- Frankston
- Ranch Academy

Region 10
- Frisco
- Garland

A web component was provided for parents to complete the survey via web, if they chose. For questions, phone numbers were provided for Region 9, TEA, and NuStats. Technical support was provided in both English and Spanish. Districts were given leeway in their method of distributing the surveys to the parents; however, parents were asked to return the surveys by June 5, 2015. This deadline was extended until June 19, 2015. To reduce the burden on school staff members, every participating campus received a maximum of 20 surveys.

**Principal Survey**

In addition to the parent survey, 2,498 surveys were mailed to principals of campuses included in the sample. These surveys were shipped to each campus with the parent survey packets, and principals were asked to return the survey by June 5, 2015. A web component was also offered to the principals to enable them to complete survey online. The principal’s survey questions focused on items that paralleled the parent survey. This deadline was also extended until June 19, 2015. There were no changes made to the principal survey for 2015.

**Findings**

**Parent Survey Overall Findings – Quantitative**

A total of 3,298 completed parent surveys were returned with 2,918 returned via mail, and 380 through web (a return rate of 18 percent). Of these, 2,648 English and 650 Spanish-language surveys were completed in time to be included in the quantitative analyses. Roughly 1,975 parents also provided responses to the open-ended questions.

A total of 23 questions from the parent survey were divided into four topic-specific categories and examined. Grouping the three types of responses (Always-Neither, Yes-No, and Agree-Disagree), Table 1 presents a summary of responses within these categories. For each category, responses were overall positive. The percentages of responses in the least positive category were higher this year in two categories, and lower in the other two. School Environment Issues once again fell under 5 percent (decreasing slightly by .2 percent), and Communication Issues decreasing by .6 percentage points. The response patterns for this year’s survey were very similar to findings from the previous years. This consistency argues for both the reliability and validity of findings.
Table 1: Summary by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always Agree Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes Neutral</td>
<td>Never Disagree No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Environment Issues</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARD/IEP Participation</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results/Progress</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note that percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Parent Survey Overall Findings – Qualitative

Although the participants generally responded positively to questions regarding their interactions with the school (as seen in the summary ratings in Table 1), there were items for which the ratings were less positive (parental actions are not included for this consideration). Below are selected areas for which at least 10 percent of the ratings fell into the Negative category, along with the survey category in which it is found:

‘School personnel provide information on parent organizations, community agencies, or trainings related to the needs of my child’; Communication Category. Overall, 11.3 percent of parents felt that school personnel do not provide information on information, agencies or trainings related to their child’s needs.

‘The school provides me information on my child’s disability’; Communication Category. (This issue was also identified in spring 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014.) Of note, the highest negative rating in the entire survey was received from parents of students with Other Health Impairments, with a negative rating of 33.2% (see Table 21).

‘The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in planning for life after high school’; ARD/IEP Participation Category. (This issue was also identified in spring 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014.) Of note, this question was to have been answered by parents of students age 14 and up. The negative response rate for parents of high school students was 18.3 percent.

‘The school includes my child in the ARD meeting’; ARD/IEP Participation Category. This year was the first year that this question was presented in the survey. This question was specified to be answered by parents of children age 14 and up. Parents that completed a Spanish-language survey showed a negative response rate of 10.4 percent.

Two of these items center on Communication issues, specifically on the school’s lack of provision of information to parents on their child’s disability and resources for outside agencies and support. It has been noted in previous years that the item regarding information about a child’s disability likely reflects providing understandable and useful information.

Generally within each of the categories in Table 1, findings from respondents in the spring 2015 survey were similar to the spring 2014 survey. This year, Communication Issues was the lowest-rated area, followed closely by ARD/IEP Participation issues. These low ratings were driven
primarily by negative responses to the ‘school provides me information on my child’s disability’ question noted above.

Overall, parent open-ended responses parallel the responses received in the structured survey. Parents who responded to the survey were overall satisfied with the services received by their child’s school. The following is a list of the overall findings from parent open-ended responses.

- **Overall satisfaction** – The majority of respondents expressed being satisfied with the special education services provided by schools.
- **More information and training** – Parents noted that they need help understanding their child’s disability. They asked for the school to provide more specific and relevant information.
- **Communication improvements** – While overall satisfied, parents noted concern with communication between parents and the special education staff (or communication between the special education setting and the general education setting). Parents want to be kept informed and want to know how to contribute to the academic progress of their children.

**Principal Survey Overall Findings – Quantitative**

Of the 2,498 principal surveys that were distributed, 687 completed surveys were returned via mail, and 229 through web, representing a 37 percent return rate. Overall, results from 2015 were similar to previous years’ results, however, in one specific area, there was a significant reduction: School has a written campus-level parent involvement plan (26 percent decrease).

**Principal Survey Overall Findings - Qualitative**

Overall, the qualitative findings of the principal survey for 2015 are very similar to those of previous years. The most important issues identified by principals center mainly on communication, be it via telephone, email, written notes or face-to-face meetings. The majority of principals reported their campuses have made efforts to offer parent conference meeting times in the evening, as well as offering assistance to aid parents in the ability to attend school functions. Examples of this are babysitting services and transportation services. As in previous years, the majority of principals report that parents of students receiving special education services attendance of PTO/PTA and other parent organizations as issues of importance.
2. Background

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires each state to develop a six-year performance plan. This State Performance Plan (SPP) evaluates the State’s efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and illustrates how the State will continuously improve upon this implementation. The Texas SPP was submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) for approval on January 30, 2006. OSEP approved the Texas SPP on May 22, 2006, and was last updated February, 2014.

OSEP identified five monitoring priorities and twenty indicators to be included in the SPP. For each of the indicators, the State must report progress on measurable and rigorous targets and improvement activities over a six-year period of time. The findings presented in this report summarize survey findings related to Indicator 8: Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving service and results for children with disabilities.

Since 2000, Texas has been following the OSEP Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP), which is designed to assess, on an ongoing basis, the impact and effectiveness of state and local efforts in providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and to their families. In addition, state and local agencies must ensure a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to children and youths with disabilities.

During the spring of 2002, OSEP monitored the State of Texas; in 2003, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received the OSEP Monitoring Report, which specified areas of noncompliance, highlighted strengths, and suggested areas of improvement for Texas IDEA-B (ages 3–21) and IDEA-C (ages 0–3) programs. The ongoing improvement and planning activities that have occurred in response to the federal monitoring process are referred to as the Texas Continuous Improvement Process (TCIP). Using the TCIP, the State submitted an Improvement Plan in response to the OSEP Monitoring Report. It addresses areas of improvement identified during three phases of the process: the self-assessment, validation planning (public meeting), and validation data collection (on-site visit).

Regional Education Service Center 9 (Region 9) is the statewide lead for Parent Coordination. The Parent Coordination Network is made up of representatives from each of the 20 regional education service centers. This Network is committed to ensuring that parents of students with disabilities receive accurate and timely information that will help them support their children in their education. The Network meets to review the State’s current status regarding parent involvement and related issues and to determine the extent to which Texas agencies had achieved the results outlined in the TCIP. An overview describing the CIMP, TCIP, the self-assessment, the Texas Monitoring Report, and the Improvement Plan may be found by accessing the following website: http://goo.gl/GRWbwW.

In response to the Improvement Plan, the TEA and the Parent Coordination Network, through the leadership of Region 9, conducted a survey in 2003 of parent understanding of special education issues. The surveys were distributed to 32,000 parents. Since 2006, the parent survey has been conducted on an annual basis. The results from the 2010 through 2015 surveys are posted on the Parent Coordination Network website at www.texasparent.org under the Projects tab.

---

Based on SPP’s Indicator 8, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is required to collect parent involvement information for students receiving special education services. To assist in this task, Region 9 contracted NuStats to help develop, distribute, and analyze the spring 2015 survey. This report summarizes information collected from the spring 2015 surveys of principals and parents.
3. Survey Approach and Development

Parent Survey

Survey purpose

This survey was developed to obtain information regarding parent involvement with their child’s school. The survey was directed to parents of students receiving special education services. Information derived from this survey will be included in the six-year Texas State Performance Plan (SPP). Following the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, each state developed a plan to address 20 indicators, one of which is Indicator 8: Parent Involvement (percent of parents with a child receiving special education services that report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities). Although not required by the SPP, a parallel survey of principals of schools included in the survey was undertaken to obtain strategies used by schools to enhance parent involvement.

Survey development and production

In September 2005, the Parent Coordination Network reviewed questions from the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) Parent Survey and the Statewide Survey of Parents of Students with Disabilities distributed by TEA and Region 9 in 2003. A separate survey development committee was created to develop the SPP survey. Committee members included representatives from TEA, Region 9, Academic Information Management, and from local schools and districts. In addition to the surveys reviewed, committee members also reviewed SPP resources from the Federal Resource Center website (www.dssc.org) and information included in Joyce Epstein’s Parent Involvement Survey. Lastly, committee members reviewed findings from the Statewide Survey of Parents of Students with Disabilities Receiving Special Education Services. The survey, distributed in fall 2006, spring 2007, and spring 2008, was revised for use in spring 2009, spring 2010, spring 2011 and spring 2012. In spring 2013, the survey instrument was again revised and a web component was added as an option. The survey instrument underwent revisions in spring 2014 and spring 2015.

A one-page, scannable questionnaire was then developed. The committee selected questions from prior surveys with a focus on parent involvement, in addition to creating new items. The survey’s questions focus on the following issues: parent satisfaction, communication between parents and school, parents’ understanding of information, services and information provided, school climate, the teacher’s role, and parent participation in training. The survey was distributed on scannable forms, printed with English on one side, and Spanish on the other. A sample of the parent survey is included in Appendix A. Additionally, two open-end questions are included on the back of the cover letter given to all parents. This letter is translated into Spanish and each parent receives the letter in English and Spanish so that they have the option to use the version most appropriate for them.

Survey Modifications. Several changes to the question wording were made in 2015. The changes are presented in Table 2:
Table 2: Question Modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open-Ended Q1</td>
<td>As a parent, what do you need to help</td>
<td>As a parent, what do you need from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assist your child in his/her education?</td>
<td>school to help assist your child in his/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2b</td>
<td>I am considered an equal partner with</td>
<td>her education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teachers and other professionals in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>planning my child’s program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6c</td>
<td>My recommendations are included in my</td>
<td>Removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>child’s IEP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6d</td>
<td>At the ARD meeting, we discuss how my</td>
<td>Q6c - At the ARD meeting, we discuss how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>child will participate in state</td>
<td>my child will participate in state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessments (like the TAKS or STAAR).</td>
<td>assessments (like the STAAR).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6e</td>
<td>At the ARD meeting, we select</td>
<td>Q6d - At the ARD meeting, we select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accommodations that my child needs.</td>
<td>accommodations and/or modifications that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>my child needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6f</td>
<td>The school provides my child with all</td>
<td>Q6e - The school provides my child with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the services documented on my child’s</td>
<td>all the services documented on my child’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IEP.</td>
<td>IEP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sampling

The spring 2015 parent survey included 18,550 parents, from which NuStats received 2,918 returned via mail, and 380 through web, for a total of 3,298. One-sixth of all Texas districts are sampled each year with every district included at some point during the six-year cycle. However, each district that enrolls 50,000 students or more is included each year.

To select districts and campuses, a sampling matrix that considered geographic area, district size, and student demographics was developed. The sample for the spring 2015 (and samples for annual surveys for future distribution) was derived from this matrix. In large districts (those enrolling more than 50,000 students), a further sample of campuses was selected. Selecting campuses within the larger districts facilitated the distribution of surveys so that campuses would not receive only one or two parent surveys. A list of all districts and campuses sampled each year will be maintained to ensure that all districts (and campuses within the larger districts) will be included in the survey during the six-year cycle. For the spring 2015 survey, 2,498 campuses within 202 districts were included in the final sample of eligible schools. Note that districts with fewer than 10 listed students receiving special education services were not included in the final sample due to privacy concerns. To reduce the burden on school staff members, every participating campus received a maximum of 20 surveys.

Once the districts and campuses were selected, a sample of students was drawn based on data provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) database. Students were selected from the 2014–2015 school year to ensure the most recent data for identifying students’ campuses. NuStats entered into a confidentiality agreement with TEA to protect the identity of students. Following all analyses, data sets containing personally identifiable data were destroyed and/or overwritten. The final database includes information regarding student grade level, gender, ethnicity, and eligibility category. Students were then selected according to a sampling framework that considered these variables proportionately from the various campuses/districts. From this process, 18,550 students were selected to be included in the spring sample. To increase the return rates for smaller incidence eligibility categories, over- and under-sampling were used. For example, while students with a learning disability constitute about 36 percent of the state population, they were included at about 31 percent in the sampling framework.
Survey Distribution

Letters, included in Appendix B, were sent to district superintendents and special education directors informing them of the purpose of the survey, and when to expect the surveys to arrive. Approximately one month after the letters were distributed, surveys were sent bundled by campus to the districts included in the survey. Each package included the surveys and instructions to the campus contact person outlining methods for distributing the surveys. These surveys were to be completed by the parent or guardian of the students listed on the return envelopes. Each campus was asked to distribute the surveys to parents. Campuses were allowed to select their own method—sent home with the student, hand-delivered, or mailed to the student’s home. To ease the burden on campuses of distribution of surveys, parents of all students received packets where both English and Spanish versions were included.

Each parent received an envelope with the child’s name, a letter of instruction, the survey, and a return (postage-paid) envelope. Parents of most students also received a card from TEA that provided information on free, statewide resources for parents of children receiving special education services. For questions, phone numbers were provided for Region 9, TEA, and NuStats. Survey assistance was available in both English and Spanish. Parents were asked to return the surveys by early June 2015. Surveys received through mid-June 2015 were included in the analyses.

Principal Survey

In addition to the parent survey, 2,498 surveys were mailed separately to principals of campuses included in the final spring survey sample. These surveys were distributed in late April, and principals were asked to return the survey by early June 2015. Postage-paid, self-addressed envelopes were also provided, along with the option of completing the survey via web. The principal survey used for the spring 2015 effort was the same survey used in 2013 and 2014.

The principal survey, consisting of 15 questions, focused on items regarding parent involvement that parallel the parent survey. A copy of the principal survey is included in Appendix C. As part of this survey, principals were asked to identify successful parent involvement strategies and to list the most important contributions that parents make to their schools. In addition, principals were asked to identify strategies and practices that are targeted specifically to parents of students who receive special education services. Other issues included in the survey were: successful parent involvement strategies implemented by schools and teachers, parent participation in school activities, methods used by schools to communicate with parents, input from parents, services provided in school that help increase parent involvement, successful parent contributions made to schools, parent training/annual meeting opportunities, and factors that impede parent involvement.

Database Construction and Analysis

All surveys returned in a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope, were examined—surveys that were not scannable (torn, smudged) were separated and recoded onto new sheets. Web surveys were merged with the mail surveys into one database. All primary data analysis was conducted using SPSS, with some supplemental analysis using Microsoft Excel.

Open-ended comments received by parents and principals were coded. Responses were analyzed by question and clustered into various themes.
Limitations

The information presented in this report is appropriate at the state level and for many Education Service Centers. In addition, only some of the very largest districts had information from a sufficient number of parents to be representative. Surveys might have been distributed to parents of students not in the sample list; however, this is not likely given that the student’s name was on the cover letter, and letters are included in the survey packets instructing each campus to only distribute surveys to the correct students.

For the spring 2015 survey, one district’s surveys were delivered to an incorrect address. After numerous phone calls, the surveys were located and retrieved by the district contact. Another district’s surveys were delivered to the wrong state. A second mailing of surveys was sent when this was determined, and the second shipment again went to the wrong state. Upon contacting the post office, the surveys were shipped to the correct district.

In addition to mailing errors, a few campuses contacted NuStats beyond the final date for survey return to let us know the surveys had been misplaced and were never sent to the parents.
4. Survey Return Rates and Demographics

Survey Return Rates

A total of 3,298 parent surveys were completed in time to be included in the analyses. There were 2,645 English and 650 Spanish-language surveys that were usable (that is, non-blank). The total number is within the desired bounds of +/- 1.6 at the 95% confidence level. Otherwise stated, we can be (at least) 95 percent sure that the findings to individual questions are within +/- 1.6 percentage points of the actual population distributions. The overall return rate for parent surveys was 18 percent. Of the 3,298 completed surveys, 3,076 parents also answered the open-ended questions. Of the 2,498 principal surveys that were distributed, 916 were returned, which represents a 37 percent return rate.

Parent and Student Demographics

Parents were asked to provide personal information on the highest level of education they had completed. Table 3 contains this information for both the Spanish and English-language surveys, as well as the combined result. Note that these are self-reported data not subject to verification. Overall, 43.6 percent of the parents reported having not gone to college, 23.7 percent had attended some college, and 32.8 percent had a college degree. The Spanish results show that a large majority (84.8 percent) of parents did not attend college. These findings are slightly more positive than what was reported for this question in the 2014 survey. The percentage of parents that reported they are college graduates is higher, as is the percentage of parents that reported having some college. Also, the percentage of parents that reported having not gone is college is less than it was in 2014. In past surveys, this question on parents' education level had one of the highest refusal rates (7.7 percent) of all the survey questions. The refusal rate dropped to 5.9 percent in 2014, and to 5.1 percent in 2015, which may be attributed to the addition of the option of “Less than High School”, offering parents a broader choice of responses.

Table 3: Parent Reported Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>English n=2549</th>
<th>Spanish n=580</th>
<th>Overall n=3129</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 presents demographic information of students whose parents completed surveys. The state data was obtained from the Texas Education Agency Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2013-14
Report. In general, the percentages returned were similar to the sample distributions. A significant difference is noted in the Grade Span category which shows parents of Elementary (including PK/Kindergarten/EE) students were more inclined to complete the survey than were sampled. Inversely, the parents of High School students were less likely to complete the survey than were sampled.

As noted earlier, deliberate over- and under-sampling were utilized to try and match return percentages to state distributions based on previous surveys. Of the 202 districts included in the original mailing, 178 were included in the analyses. Surveys from the remaining districts may have been received after the survey return due date, preventing them from being processed in time to be included in the analysis. In some cases, students may have left the district after the PEIMS data collection in fall 2014.

Table 4 gives an indication of the relative success of the over-/under-sampling approach. The number of surveys completed is relatively close to the overall state special education population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Student Demographics*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health impaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Span</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary (including PK/Kindergarten/EE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (5–8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (9–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Disadvantage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that percentages in this, and other tables, may not total 100 due to rounding.

**The data presented for the state special education population is the most recently available (2014).

Information was obtained from: *Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2013-14*. Division of Research and Analysis, Department of Assessment and Accountability, Texas Education Agency - November 2014
Factors Affecting Whether Parents Receive Survey Packets

- **Leaving school.** For a variety of reasons—graduation, dropout, or withdrawal to home school, among others—some students leave the school system altogether. However, this effect is likely small given the minimal time interval between PEIMS collection and survey distribution.

- **Not distributed by school.** As previously noted, it is possible that some districts or campuses forgot to distribute the survey materials, or opted not to distribute the survey materials to parents.

- **Not taken home.** As previously noted, although several methods for delivering survey materials to students' parents were suggested, it was likely that many schools sent the surveys home with students. It is quite possible that some survey packets did not make it home or that occasionally the survey was completed by the student instead of the parent.

- **Mobility.** Mobility is defined as student movement from one district to another during a school year. According to previous TEA Academic Excellence Indicator System (2007 AEIS) reports, roughly 22 percent of Texas students are considered mobile. Mobility data are not available separately for students receiving special education services, but there is no reason to suspect that they would differ dramatically from students in general.

The return percentage was slightly lower in 2015 (18 percent) compared to 19 percent in 2014. Survey packets returned to NuStats as undeliverable were tracked for the first time in 2015. A total of 490 parent survey packets were returned by campuses to NuStats. In summary, NuStats estimates that about 20–25 percent of survey packets were never received by the parents for one or more of the reasons listed above.

Important Factors after Parents Receive Survey Packets

- **Doubt that completing a survey will help their child.** Another reason for non-return of the survey might be parents' skepticism that this survey would have any positive impact for their child.

- **Suspicion.** Other parents may have been suspicious of the intent of the survey. Although reassurances were given that the unique code number would not identify the child or the school for any reason other than for analysis, the unique number may have influenced some parents not to complete the survey.

- **Lack of time.** While many parents would like to complete the survey, many may feel that they do not have enough time and, given other pressing responsibilities, choose not to complete the survey.

- **Apathy.** Some parents simply may not care to fill out the survey. It is likely that this is a relatively small percentage.

- **Loss, other.** It is likely that a certain percentage of parents lost the questionnaire, forgot about it, or did not complete the survey for some reason other than those listed above.
5. Parent Survey Findings

This section describes the attitudes and perceptions of the parents of students receiving special education services on school environment, communication with school and teachers, ARD/IEP Participation and parent’s opinion of the progress their child is making. For ease of analysis, the questions asked in the parent study were grouped into four categories to better understand the patterns amongst these factors. These categories were defined in the 2009 survey, and revised for the 2014 survey findings. Table 5 describes the sets of questions that fall into each of these categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Environment Issues</td>
<td>Centered on school actions and behaviors and perceptions of school climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td>Communication between the school, teachers, and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARD/IEP Participation Issues</td>
<td>Issues specific to Individual Education Plan and Admission, Review, Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results/Progress</td>
<td>Perception of results/progress as a result of special education programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that three types of scales were used to obtain information on the questions, including “Always, Sometimes, and Never” (for ease of use, we define this as a Type 1 scale for subsequent analysis); “Agree, Neutral, and Disagree” (Type 2); and “Yes or No” (Type 3) scales.

School Environment Issues

The first category of questions, School Environment Issues, includes questions pertaining to the school, the principal and other personnel, or the school’s special education services in general. Table 6 lists the five questions that fall under this category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School personnel encourage me to be involved in my child’s education.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child’s program (IEP).</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child’s school is a positive and welcoming place for my family.</td>
<td>Agree, Neutral, Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers understand my child’s needs</td>
<td>Agree, Neutral, Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers show a willingness to discuss my child’s needs</td>
<td>Agree, Neutral, Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to the questions in this category are averaged and presented in Table 7. Within the always to never range, there were two questions, with the always response ranging from a high of 78 percent to a low of 66 percent. The three items in the agree to disagree scale range from a high agree response of 100 percent to a low agree response of 71 percent.
Table 7: Average Ratings across Questions in School Environment Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Type 1 Scale</th>
<th>Type 2 Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 presents the distribution of responses to whether parents felt encouraged by school personnel to be involved in their child’s education. Three-quarters (75 percent) of all parents indicated that school personnel always encouraged them to be involved in their child's education, while 3.2 percent said school personnel never encouraged. Responses in the Spanish-language survey were slightly less positive than in the English-language survey in the Always response category, and slightly more positive than in the English-language survey in the Never response category. Overall, these results differed slightly with a minimal increase in Always and a .7 percent decrease in Never responses, and a slight decrease (.5 percent) in Sometimes responses from the 2014 survey.

Table 8: Distribution of Responses to Q 2.a.:
'School personnel encourage me to be involved in my child’s education'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2614</th>
<th>Spanish n=639</th>
<th>Overall n=3253</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>75.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central to issues surrounding parent involvement, is the relationship between the school staff and parents, as shown in Table 9. Overall, over three-quarters (76 percent) of parents believed that they were an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning their child’s program, which is 3 percent higher than the proportion from the 2014 report. The Spanish-language survey takers were less likely to agree that they were an equal partner. The percentage of the Spanish-language survey takers who disagreed that they were an equal partner was nearly 3 percent higher than the results from 2014.

Table 9: Distribution of Responses to Q 2.b.:
'I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child’s program'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2597</th>
<th>Spanish n=603</th>
<th>Overall n=3200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 compares the frequency of Always responses to this question for parents who took surveys among the different grade levels and disability categories. Of those surveys where the student’s grade level was known, parents of high school students with a Learning Disability, parents of a
middle school child with a Learning Disability, and parents of elementary school students with Speech disabilities generally agreed more that they were considered an equal partner. On the other hand, parents of high school students and middle school students with a Speech Disability, and parents of Middle school students with All Other Disabilities provided the least positive response to this question.

**Table 10: Distribution of “Always” Responses by Grade Level and Eligibility Category to Q 2.b.: ‘I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Category</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary (Grades 1–4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=1780)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other¹</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle (Grades 5–8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=968)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other¹</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High (Grades 9–12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=550)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other¹</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A key element to the school environment is addressed in the question that asks if the school is a positive and welcoming place for the student. Table 11 presents the distribution of responses to the school environment question and shows that 82 percent of the parents felt that their child’s school was always a positive and welcoming place. Less than 3 percent of parents felt that the school was never a positive and welcoming place for their child, while about 15 percent said school was sometimes a positive and welcoming place. These findings differ to those reported in the 2014 survey by a significant (8 percent) increase in the always category, a 1 percent decrease in the never category, and with a 7 percent decrease in the sometimes category.

A comparison of the results between parents using the two different language versions of the survey shows a slightly higher positive response to this question from parents who responded using the Spanish-language survey. The differences in the responses in all three categories were minimal.

**Table 11: Distribution of Responses to Q 3.a.: ‘My child’s school is a positive and welcoming place for my family’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The disability category titled “All Other” covers a wide range of disability categories with relatively small numbers of parents within each specific category.
Table 12 presents the demographic distribution of agree responses to this question by eligibility category and ethnicity of the students. Overall, parents of students receiving services for Speech Disabilities responded more positively than parents of students from the rest of the categories. The highest percentage of favorable responses came from parents of students with Speech Disabilities, whose ethnicity is reported as Other, with a 100 percent positive rating. Parents of Hispanic students with Intellectual Disabilities also responded positively with just over 91 percent responding agree and parents of Other ethnicity students with Autism showed nearly 90 percent positive responses.

Of the six eligibility categories, parents of students with All Other Disabilities showed the least positive overall responses. The table suggests that parents of African American students with All Other Disabilities, were least pleased (71 percent), followed by parents of African American students with Autism (nearly 73 percent) and parents of African American and Other students with Other Health Impairments (nearly 74 percent).

Table 12: Distribution of “Agree” Responses by Eligibility and Ethnic Categories to Q 3.a.: ‘My child’s school is a positive and welcoming place for my family’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Category</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=633</td>
<td>n=869</td>
<td>n=1625</td>
<td>n=171</td>
<td>n=3298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 and Table 14 present the distribution of responses for the two questions, both of which pertain to a teacher’s attitude and caring for a child and not necessarily to the teacher’s skills in instruction. Similar to the 2014 survey, overall, parents were more positive about the teacher’s willingness to discuss their child’s needs than the teacher’s understanding of those needs. In reference to the results in the spring 2015 survey, more than three-quarters (77 percent) of the parents reported that the teachers always understood their child’s needs. This is an increase of 2 percent over the 2014 results. Over 83 percent reported that the teachers always showed willingness to discuss the child’s needs, which was a minimal (.2 percent) decrease over the 2014 results.

“\textit{We are very involved in our child’s education. We have to fight for anything out of the norm. My child is in general education all day but was behind all year in reading. I found out at the end of the year about a reading intervention program that he could have been pulled out of social studies for. At our new school, our case manager is smart and understands our child and is helpful. However, administrators and classroom teachers do not have enough training on autism.}”

—Parent

<sup>5</sup> The disability category titled “All Other” covers a wide range of disability categories with relatively small numbers of parents within each specific category.
### Table 13: Distribution of Responses to Q 3.b.: ‘Teachers understand my child’s needs’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2616</th>
<th>Spanish n=628</th>
<th>Overall n=3244</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14: Distribution of Responses to Q 3.c.: ‘Teachers show a willingness to discuss my child’s needs’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2618</th>
<th>Spanish n=633</th>
<th>Overall n=3251</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communication Issues**

Communication between parents and schools builds trust and is a critical component of parent involvement. If such a relationship is absent or lacking, those responsible for a student’s education are unlikely to find themselves in a position to offer the best education to the student. It is important to factor in the effectiveness of school communication, not just the frequency at which schools distribute documents, send emails, and schedule meetings. A school may provide numerous methods to communicate, but if parents are not involved, it is likely that the communication efforts have not been successful. Alternatively, a school may distribute documents that are not conducive to understanding or not provided in the native language of some parents. Ultimately, it is imperative to provide information in a manner that parents can receive and understand, giving them the belief that their feelings and opinions are important to the district. Communication is clearly a major concern of parents of students receiving special education services, as evident in the open-ended responses (see Chapter 6). In addition, the principal survey findings summarize the strategies used by schools and the principals’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of them (see Chapter 7).

The communication issues category included two questions involving how the school and teachers keep in contact with parents about their student’s IEP progress, and four questions about how
teachers communicate with parents. Table 15 lists the six questions that fell under the communication category. Four questions were Type 1, meaning they had an always, sometimes, never choice set, and two questions were Type 3, meaning the parents had a yes or no choice set.

**Table 15: Questions Pertaining to Communication Issues Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school communicates regularly with me regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I communicate with my child’s teacher(s) regularly regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School personnel provide information on parent organizations, community agencies, or trainings related to the needs of my child.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School personnel provide me information to help me assist in my child’s education.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school provides me information on my child’s disability.</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information is provided to me in my primary language.</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 presents the average ratings for the questions in this category and shows an overall positive response to communication issues. These results are marginally more positive than in last year’s survey, which had an average of 67.0 percent for an always response to these questions. Responses to the Type 3 questions showed a slightly more positive (.8 percent) response than in 2014.

**Table 16: Average Ratings Across Questions in Communication Issues Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Type 1 Scale</th>
<th>Type 3 Scale</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As observed in surveys from 2007–2014, the open-ended parent responses indicated that communication issues and regular reports to parents are important. Parents want to stay informed and suggested increasing the frequency of reports about the progress of their children, and many mentioned the need for more regular meetings to discuss the needs of their children.

Table 17 presents the distribution of responses on the extent to which the school communicated regularly with the parent regarding their child’s IEP progress and other important issues. As shown in the table, the responses to this question were fairly positive, with over three-quarters of parents (76 percent) reporting always. The responses from the Spanish-language surveys were more positive, with 78 percent responding always. Overall, approximately one-fifth of parents reported that the communication from the school occurred sometimes, while 3 percent reported never. As with the surveys conducted in the previous years, nearly one-quarter of the parents surveyed noted that the school communicated sometimes or never, which is an increase over 2014 and confirms that communication is an area that continually needs improvement.
Table 17: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.a.: ‘The school communicates regularly with me regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English (n=2631)</th>
<th>Spanish (n=637)</th>
<th>Overall (n=3268)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following question in the survey addresses the teacher’s communication about the child’s progress. As shown in Table 18, nearly 64 percent of the parents reported that teachers always communicated regularly with them about IEP progress and other important issues. This is almost the same as the proportion of parents who reported that the school communicated regularly with them about IEP progress and other important issues in last year’s survey. In comparing the 2014 survey results with the 2015 survey results, the Spanish-language survey and English-language survey show a very small amount of change of always responses. In addition, the English-language survey showed a minimally higher percentage of always responses than last year, while the Spanish-language survey showed a nearly one percent increase of always responses over last year.

Table 18: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.b.: ‘I communicate with my child’s teacher(s) regularly regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English (n=2618)</th>
<th>Spanish (n=627)</th>
<th>Overall (n=3245)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question inquires about the extent to which school personnel provided information to the parents on agencies or trainings geared towards their children’s needs. Table 19 shows that nearly 63 percent reported that the school personnel always provided this information, while approximately 11 percent reported that this information was never provided to them. Following the common trend in the findings of this survey, Spanish respondents were more positive, with 67 percent reporting that the school personnel always provided this information; only 10 percent reported the information was never provided.

Table 19: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.c.: ‘School personnel provide information on parent organizations, community agencies, or trainings related to the needs of my child’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English (n=2607)</th>
<th>Spanish (n=622)</th>
<th>Overall (n=3229)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next question in this category with a Type 1 rating asked about the extent to which school personnel provided information to parents to help them assist in their child's education. Table 20 presents the distribution of the responses and shows that, overall, 66 percent of parents reported that they always receive this type of information, while 26 percent only sometimes received it, and less than 8 percent never do. These responses are very similar to the results from the 2014 survey. The response to these questions indicates that parents feel they receive more information on what they can do to help their child than information on outside agencies or trainings. Also, the parents answering the Spanish-language survey gave a more positive response than the parents answering the English-language survey.

Table 20: Distribution of Responses to Q 4.d.: ‘School personnel provide me information to help me assist in my child’s education’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2601</th>
<th>Spanish n=618</th>
<th>Overall n=3219</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21 presents the distribution of responses to whether parents reported being provided with information on their child's disability. Overall, more than 81 percent reported yes, which is a 1.5 percent increase over the 2014 survey. The difference between the English and Spanish-language survey results is even more pronounced than in most other responses. Ninety percent of parents who took the Spanish-language survey reported yes, compared to only 79 percent of parents who took the English-language survey.

Table 21: Distribution of Responses to Q 5.a.: ‘The school provides me information on my child’s disability’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2577</th>
<th>Spanish n=608</th>
<th>Overall n=3185</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To further analyze the outcome of this question, Table 22 presents the response of parents by their child’s eligibility type. Parents of children with learning and speech impairments responded very positively, with 87 percent of each reporting yes. Fewer parents of children with other health impairments reported receiving information on their children’s disability, suggesting there may be a difference in the information received by these parents. These results are quite similar to those from the 2014 survey.
Table 22: Distribution of Responses by Eligibility Type to Q 5.a.: 'The school provides me information on my child’s disability'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Learning n=801</th>
<th>Speech n=760</th>
<th>Other Health n=398</th>
<th>All other n=1226</th>
<th>Overall n=3185</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23 presents the distribution of responses to whether the information was provided to the parents in their primary language. Nearly all parents (96 percent) reported that information was provided to them in their primary language. In addition, there was almost no difference between the proportion of parents who reported yes on the English and Spanish-language surveys. Overall, the results are nearly identical to the 2014 survey results.

Table 23: Distribution of Responses to Q 5.b.: 'Information is provided to me in my primary language'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2578</th>
<th>Spanish n=618</th>
<th>Overall n=3196</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admission Review, and Dismissal Issues/Individual Education Plan Participation

The questions included in the category ARD/IEP Participation are presented in Table 24. There are five Type 1 (always, sometimes, never) questions and five Type 3 (yes, no) questions. These questions are designed to inform TEA of the level of parent’s participation with their child’s ARD/IEP. This section focuses on ten different issues directly related to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee.

Table 24: Questions Pertaining to IEP and ARD Issues Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I participate in my child’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My concerns and recommendations are considered by the ARD committee in the development of my child’s IEP.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the ARD meeting, we discuss how my child will participate in state assessments (like the STAAR).</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the ARD meeting, we select accommodations that my child needs.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school provides my child with all the services documented on my child’s IEP.</td>
<td>Always, Sometimes, Never</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and administrators ensure that I fully understand the Procedural Safeguards</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child’s evaluation report is written in terms I understand.</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25 presents the average ratings for the questions in this category and shows that the Individual Education Plan, Admission Review, and Dismissal Issues category has the highest average Type 1 rating (86 percent) in the always category. This indicates that parents are relatively satisfied with their participation in the ARD process in the above areas, and is a 1.5 percent increase from the 2014 survey.

**Table 25: Average Ratings across Questions in IEP and ARD Issues Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school provides planning for life after high school, including services to help my child reach his or her goals.</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in planning for life after high school.</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school includes my child in the ARD meeting.</td>
<td>Yes, No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first question in this group pertains to the extent to which parents participated in their child’s ARD meetings. As shown in Table 26, an overwhelming majority (98.6 percent) of parents reported that they either sometimes or always participated. In contrast to most of the other findings in this study, the parents who filled out the English-language survey responded more positively than those who filled out the Spanish-language survey for this question. Ninety percent of the English-language survey respondents said always, while 77 percent of the Spanish-language survey respondents said always. This outcome is consistent with the 2014 survey.

**Table 26: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.a.: ‘I participate in my child’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2625</th>
<th>Spanish n=626</th>
<th>Overall n=3251</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 27 presents the distribution of responses on the extent to which the concerns and recommendations of parents were considered by the ARD committee in the development of their child’s IEP. Overall, more than 85 percent of parents reported that their concerns and recommendations were always considered by the ARD committee, and less than two percent reported they were never considered. As with the previous question, the parents who completed the English-language survey were more positive than those who completed the survey in Spanish, although the difference was much smaller for this question.
Table 27: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.b.:  
‘My concerns and recommendations are considered by the ARD committee in the development of my child’s IEP’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2616</th>
<th>Spanish n=631</th>
<th>Overall n=3247</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 28 shows the results of the next question, which specifically asks about statewide assessments, such as the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test, and how often they are discussed during ARD meetings. Given the importance of performance on statewide assessments for both the student and the school, this question relates to parents of students of all grade levels. Overall, four out of five parents (81 percent) reported that they always discussed the participation of their child in state assessments at the ARD meeting, which is consistent with the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 surveys. Less than 10 percent of the parents reported that they never discussed their child’s participation in state assessments at the ARD meeting, an increase in the percentage of never responses by about 6 percent from what was reported in 2014.

Table 28: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.c.:  
‘At the ARD meeting, we discuss how my child will participate in state assessments (like the STAAR)’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2608</th>
<th>Spanish n=625</th>
<th>Overall n=3233</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This next question addresses a more general opinion about the ARD meetings, and whether the selected accommodations were needed by their child. Table 29 shows that 88 percent of parents responded that they always selected accommodations needed by their children at the ARD meetings, while 10 percent responded they only did sometimes. The results from this question are consistent with previous surveys, including the slightly more positive response from the English-language survey compared to the Spanish-language survey, and a slight reduction in the never responses.

“While the special education coordinator at my child’s school is wonderful and advocates for us, frequently it is only when I email her with an issue. The co-teachers provided in my child’s mainstream classes are typically good, but again, I’m not sure they are always helping him with his specific challenges and making sure he is given the modifications that we worked out so diligently in each ARD. Could definitely be better at supporting my child by understanding his challenges and helping him in those specific areas.”

—Parent
Table 29: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.d.: ‘At the ARD meeting, we select accommodations that my child needs’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2618</th>
<th>Spanish n=625</th>
<th>Overall n=3243</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30 presents the distribution of responses of parents to the provision of services documented on their child’s IEP. Eighty-seven percent of the parents reported that the school always provided their child with all the services documented on their child’s IEP, while just under 12 percent reported that the school sometimes provided these services. As with many of the survey items, parents using the Spanish-language survey were more positive, with nearly 89 percent responding always. These results closely mirror the results from the 2014 survey.

Table 30: Distribution of Responses to Q 6.e.: ‘The school provides my child with all the services documented on my child’s IEP’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2611</th>
<th>Spanish n=623</th>
<th>Overall n=3234</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31 presents the distribution of responses to whether the teachers and administrators ensured that the parents fully understood the Procedural Safeguards (also known as the Rights Booklet). The table indicates that the majority of parents (93 percent) agreed that teachers and administrators ensured that parents understood the Procedural Safeguards. This large percentage is consistent with the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 surveys; it is also not surprising given the vast amount of information that is available from the schools directly, from resources such as TEA and ESC websites, and from several advocacy groups dedicated to special education issues. As noted earlier, postcards providing information on four free special education resources were inserted in the majority of the parent survey packets this year.

Table 31: Distribution of Responses to Q 7.a.: ‘Teachers and administrators ensure that I fully understand the Procedural Safeguards (also known as the Rights Booklet)’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2619</th>
<th>Spanish n=630</th>
<th>Overall n=3249</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of responses to whether the parents understood their child’s evaluation report is shown in Table 32. The table shows that nearly 95 percent of the parents understood their child’s evaluation report and only 5 percent of parents disagreed that the evaluation report was
understandable. There was very little difference in responses between parents who completed the English-language survey and those who took the Spanish-language survey. These results are almost identical to the 2014 survey results.

Table 32: Distribution of Responses to Q. 7.b.: 'My child’s evaluation report is written in terms I understand'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2616</th>
<th>Spanish n=635</th>
<th>Overall n=3251</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next three questions in this category relate to the provision of transition services. A note in bold precedes these questions stating: 'For students age 14 and up'. Due to the large amount of parents that responded N/A to these three question, NuStats included these responses in the analysis. As shown in Table 33, only 6 percent of parents that answered this question reported that the school did not provide transition services to help their child reach his/her goals after high school. As expected, responses from the Spanish-language survey were more positive, with 48 percent reporting yes.

Table 33: Distribution of Responses from Parents of High School Students to Q 7.c.: 'The school provides planning for life after high school, including services to help my child reach his or her goals'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2083</th>
<th>Spanish n=455</th>
<th>Overall n=2538</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of responses to the question about whether the school provided information on agencies that can assist their child in planning for life after high school is shown in Table 34. Slightly more than 32 percent of parents agreed that the school provided this information, while less than 8 percent answered they have not been provided this information from the school. Spanish-language respondents answered this question significantly more positively than English-language respondents.

Table 34: Distribution of Responses to Q 7.d.: 'The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in planning for life after high school'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response***</th>
<th>English n=2081</th>
<th>Spanish n=454</th>
<th>Overall n=2535</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***This question is specified to be answered only by parents of students age 14 and up.
The majority of parents that answered this question had a child in elementary school (1,202). Seven hundred ninety-seven parents reported they had a child in middle school, and 536 parents reported they had a child in high school. Looking only at parents of high school students, 75 percent of parents agreed with the statement that the school provides information on agencies that can assist their child in planning for life after high school.

Table 35: Distribution of Responses by Grade Level to Q 7.d.: ‘The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in planning for life after high school’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Grade Level***</th>
<th>Overall n=2535</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary n=1202</td>
<td>Middle n=797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***This question is specified to be answered only by parents of students age 14 and up.

This next question was new for the 2015 survey. This question was also specified to be answered only by parents of students age 14 and up. Overall, the positive responses to this question were almost seven times the amount of negative responses (36.4 percent vs 5.3 percent).

Table 36: Distribution of Responses to Q 7.e.: ‘The school includes my child in the ARD meeting’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English n=2087</th>
<th>Spanish n=443</th>
<th>Overall n=2530</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***This question is specified to be answered only by parents of students age 14 and up.

Results/Progress

Prior to 2014, these questions were included within the General School Issues category. The two questions in the category are Type 2 questions, and they are asked as the final questions in the survey. Table 37 provides the two questions in this category.

Table 37: Questions Pertaining to Results/Progress Issues Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child is making progress because of the services he/she is receiving.</td>
<td>Agree, Neutral, Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the progress my child is making.</td>
<td>Agree, Neutral, Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 38 focuses on the extent to which parents believed the services received by their children were enabling their progress and their level of satisfaction with their child’s progress. Overall, responses to the questions were very positive, where slightly more than three out of four parents agreed with both statements, while only 6 percent disagreed. These results are nearly identical to 2014.
Table 38: Average Ratings across Questions in Results/Progress Issues Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type 2 Scale</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As has been noted in many previous results in this report, respondents of Spanish-language surveys were also more positive about the progress their child is making as a result of the services provided, than respondents of English-language surveys. Eighty-three percent of respondents of Spanish-language surveys agreed with this statement. Table 39 presents the distribution of the responses to this statement. Overall, the results of this question are quite similar to those of the 2014 survey.

Table 39: Distribution of Responses to Q 8.a.: ‘My child is making progress because of the services he/she is receiving’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English (n=2628)</th>
<th>Spanish (n=632)</th>
<th>Overall (n=3260)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final question is a more general question about parents’ satisfaction with regard to their child’s progress, the results of which are presented in Table 40. Almost 74 percent of parents agreed that the special education services have helped with their child’s progress. This question had the most (7.5 percent) negative response of all Type 2 questions in this group, signaling the continuing need for improvement in this area. With limited resources within the school, outside support is critical to both the school and the continued well-being of students. Also apparent in Table 40 is the difference in responses between the English and Spanish-language surveys, with the Spanish-language respondents being almost 8 percent more pleased with their child’s progress than English-language respondents.

Table 40: Distribution of Responses to Q 8.b.: ‘I am satisfied with the progress my child is making’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>English (n=2611)</th>
<th>Spanish (n=634)</th>
<th>Overall (n=3245)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We can’t thank the teachers, counselors, and everyone involved with our son’s education enough. When we lived in Utah, we were told he would never make it to high school. But, because of the teams here, we are planning on college. They have worked with him and are succeeding. This was his first year without medication and he’s doing great. He is working hard to stay focused, because the teachers and counselors worked with him, as have my wife and I. They have gone above and beyond any and all expectations. I have tears in my eyes right now because you have never given up on him and helped him so much. I will personally hug each of his teachers and everyone else involved. Thank you for saving my son.”

—Parent
6. Findings from Parental Open-End Responses

Each parent receives a cover letter with their survey that contains two open ended questions on the back of the letter. The questions are specifically meant to gather information on the following topics:

1) Identify what is needed from the school to assist in child’s education.
2) Any additional comments on the special education services received.

For Question 1, a total of 1,975 parents took the time to provide responses. Of these, 1,594 were English-language responses and 381 were Spanish-language responses. Question 2 was answered by a total of 1,854 parents. Spanish-language responses were provided by 378 parents; English-language responses were provided by 1,476 parents. The open-ended responses are coded into categories by prevalent theme.

Prevalent Themes: Question 1

Satisfaction. English and Spanish speakers shared notable concern with all response categories (see Table 41 and Table 42 below). Eight of the top-coded responses were present in both of the tables, in different levels of priority. These findings suggest similar priorities/concerns exist within the two groups. Overall, Spanish speakers expressed more satisfaction in this question. It is interesting to note that the item showing the least satisfaction overall (The school provides me information on my child’s disability’ with an 18.8 percent dissatisfaction score) did not appear as a top-ten response in the English-language surveys, and was number ten on the Spanish-language surveys.

Table 41: English-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 1:
‘As a parent, what do you need to help assist your child in his/her education?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Nothing, school provides all that is needed, everything is good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Working/communicating with teachers, become more involved, participate more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Ways of gauging student’s progress (mtgs., progress reports); timely feedback; initial evaluation; defining goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Did not answer - no comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Time to listen to children, dedicate more time and attention, one-on-one time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Child needs to learn to read, write, and/or talk (more help with, and therapy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Knowledgeable/helpful/considerate teachers and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Follow through on ARD promises/IEP/ more ARD meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Additional services, specialists or psychiatrists, transportation, tape recorder, communication device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Patience (from teachers, discipline)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 42: Spanish-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 1:
‘As a parent, what do you need to help assist your child in his/her education?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Nothing, school provides all that is needed, everything is good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Child needs to learn to read, write, and/or talk (more help with, and therapy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Did not answer - no comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Working/communicating with teachers, become more involved, participate more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Knowledgeable/helpful/considerate teachers and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Patience (from teachers, discipline)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Time to listen to children, dedicate more time and attention, one-on-one time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ways of gauging student’s progress (mtgs., progress reports); timely feedback; initial evaluation; defining goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Parents help/support children, help with homework, motivate child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Information/materials/brochures on how to help child or on child’s disability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of What Is Needed to Assist in Child’s Education**

Parents were first asked about what they needed from the school in order to better assist their child with his or her education. Roughly one-fifth of respondents stated that they needed to work with teachers more or obtain additional information in order to become more involved in their child’s education. Parents who completed the survey in Spanish stated, more frequently than English-speaking respondents, that their child needs more help and or therapy with learning to read, write, and/or talk. Some typical responses include:

“Need better special ed teachers and better staff to better assist with special ed students... Concluding with homework sent home and have a better communication with the parent regarding their child needs.”

“The teachers need to make sure to review IEP on a routine basis to make sure they are providing enough modifications for my child’s learning experience.”

“She can hardly spell or read. She goes to math tutoring every morning before school and tutors 3 days after school. She feels stupid and says she wishes she was smart like the other kids. We don’t want her pushed through the system just so the school can get money from the state! I am not happy with the Texas education system or pushing the kids with the STARR test.”

“Disregard the "No Child Left Behind" law when evaluating the progress of "special needs" children. My child is on a first grade level of understanding in almost every subject, and yet has been promoted every year. He is now in third grade! By the time he reaches 5th grade, he will be left behind!”

Many parents also reported that they needed to supplement their child's education at home with more homework, educational materials (including Internet access), use of special education services provided by different agencies in the community, or the use of services provided by specialists or psychiatrists:

“Homework is never assigned even though I ask for it on a routine basis.”
“As a parent, I need from the school to be more care and concern in school bullying.”

“We routinely had to initiate contact in order to obtain any information on how our son was performing.”

“The school needs to develop IEP’s that are consistent with the special needs identified by the physicians who report them. We have wasted the past year on education that is not addressing my child’s needs. Communication is poor between the school and the family.”

Additional Comments on Special Education Services: Question 2

Compared to the first open-ended question, there are still eight prevalent themes that match between the English-language and Spanish-language surveys in Question 2. In terms of their gratitude and expressing that their child has improved, Spanish-language respondents were more positive than English-language respondents by a small margin; however this was the top response for both groups. In examining the remaining responses scrutinized across both groups, there is little difference overall between the two groups. In general dissatisfaction/partial satisfaction for the English-speaking parents is slightly greater than the Spanish speaking parents, and shows requests for more communication from teachers and more specialist help/attention devoted to their child. Table 43 and Table 44 present the top ten coded responses to Question 2 from English-speaking parents and Spanish-speaking parents, respectively.

**Table 43: English-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 2: ‘Is there anything you would like to share with us about the special education services your child receives?’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>Grateful, thank you, appreciative, services were helpful, happy with service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Child has improved/excelled, is now reading/writing/talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>None at this time, all great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Not completely satisfied with services, happy with some but not all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Need communication from teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>More therapy hours, additional services, specialist, transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Staff needs to be more educated/ friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Not happy with service, don’t agree with teachers, child has not improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Need more time/attention to work with my child, individual attention from teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 44: Spanish-Speaking Top-Ten Coded Responses, Question 2: ‘Is there anything you would like to share with us about the special education services your child receives?’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>Grateful, thank you, appreciative, services were helpful, happy with service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Child has improved/excelled, is now reading/writing/talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>None at this time, all great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Continuation of services, help, more time or services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Not happy with service, don’t agree with teachers, child has not improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>More Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Staff needs to be more educated/friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Need more time/attention to work with my child, individual attention from teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Need communication from teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than three-quarters of all responses expressed gratitude toward the school's teachers and staff, appreciation for the services their child receives, or they specifically stated that their child was improving and succeeding because of the services the schools provided. Some typical responses were:

“These teachers never let the fact their children had disabilities affect the will to teach. They set standards and expectations for their children in their classes. I saw these women fighting for our children to have field trips, field days, equal PE time in the gym, and computer programs. They made sure the kids in the class were not left out, put aside, or thought of last. They showed great patience, understanding, and compassion towards their children. They put in long hours, nights, and weekends preparing for the children’s academic day. They spent a lot of their own money to plan their class curricula activities. (classroom groups, circle time, and one-on-one time) It is women like these who are truly might superheroes.”

“The services my child receives as far as speech and occupational therapy are amazing. Therapists are always willing to help and they provide at home materials when I've asked. I do think the life skills class at [School] has a sweet caring teacher and aide.”

“Everyone that was part of the special education department group showed compassion, concern, and love. Not only that, they looked at my child as if he was one of their own kids. That's one of the things I like about the program, to see someone care about my son’s education just as I do. So to all that helped him go hard to reach his goals, and for the hard work and dedication that was there for him, I personally want to say thank you! Big ups to the special education department.”

“The school administrators, principal, and teachers have been very instrumental in the progress of my child. They exhibited a strong focus on individuality to ensure each child got what was needed in order to make improvements. They encouraged feedback and solicited parent participation to strengthen my child’s development. I am eternally grateful for the commitment and investment of time, resources, and selfless sacrifices of the staff.”
After positive feedback and gratitude, some parents expressed dissatisfaction with the teachers or staff, either that they needed to spend more time and attention with their child or that they were not qualified. The following quotes are a few examples:

“While the special education coordinator at my child’s school is wonderful and advocates for us, frequently it is only when I email her with an issue. The co-teachers provided in my child’s mainstream classes are typically good, but again, I’m not sure they are always helping him with his specific challenges and making sure he is given the modifications that we worked out so diligently in each ARD. Could definitely be better at supporting my child by understanding his challenges and helping him in those specific areas.”

“I am grateful my child was able to get into special education when she did and was helped. The district (central office) makes it very difficult for students to get served in special education now because they don’t want too many students in special education because it looks bad on their reports to the state to have too many kids identified as special education need students. So too bad for speech kids because the schools have to choose which student to refer. I guess it goes back to you, TEA, for making districts choose who needs the service more. You are to serve the child not yourselves! You forget, while you sit in Austin, why you are there. Shame on you! Don’t speak to the central office, get into the classrooms and see the students.”

“My child is Autistic. He is daily put into situations that are overstimulating. He regularly can’t function in these situations. When this happens, he receives demerits in school detention and is yelled at by staff. Staff has physically restrained and has dragged him to the office. Despite school assessment confirming his doctor’s diagnosis of autism. Multiple ARD and IEP meetings. No member of staff has assisted my son when he is having difficulty. Despite my constant requests for his need for his assistance. My son doesn’t feel safe and does not trust the people interested with his education. He is afraid of school. I blame the staff for his mistreatment and fear. They have failed my son and my family. I am removing my son from this destructive environment.”

“Special needs kids always work better with experienced teachers in the special education field. Special education should be more one on one basis. Every child is different so their needs are different. The teacher has to work hard with them so these kids can pass their grade.”
7. Principal Survey Findings

As in the previous years, a principal survey was distributed to schools that received a parent survey. In the spring 2009 survey, 1,453 principal surveys were distributed; of these, 484 surveys were returned, yielding a 33 percent return rate, the lowest return rate of all the years NuStats conducted the survey. At the high end for return rate, 2010 yielded a return rate of 43 percent. One thousand three hundred and thirty-four principal surveys were mailed, of which 567 were returned. This year, there were 2,498 principal surveys mailed, which yielded 916 completed surveys at a return rate of 37 percent. An image of the principal survey can be found in Appendix C.

The content of the 2015 principal survey did not differ from the 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 surveys. The principal survey provided supplemental information regarding approaches that schools use to communicate with parents. In particular, principals were asked what measures were taken to specifically reach out to parents of students served by the special education program. Principals were asked to respond to 15 questions regarding overall parental involvement. In addition, principals were asked to identify strategies and practices that are targeted specifically to encourage parents of students who receive special education services. The following general topics were addressed in the survey:

- Successful parent involvement strategies implemented by schools
- Successful parent involvement strategies implemented by teachers
- Information about written campus-level parent involvement plans
- Overall parent involvement in parent-teacher organizations (PTO/PTA)
- Methods used by schools to communicate with parents and receive parent input
- Services that are provided in school that help increase parent involvement
- Successful parent contributions made to schools
- Parent training/annual meeting opportunities
- Factors that impede parent involvement

Principals’ opinions regarding parent involvement strategies, communication, and other issues have not changed significantly from previous surveys.

Successful Parent Involvement Strategies Implemented by Schools

Principals were asked to list the two most successful efforts or approaches used in their schools to encourage parents to become actively involved in school activities. The most common responses included promoting participation in family oriented events, open house events, and parent-teacher organizations (PTA/PTO). For the second year in a row, some principals listed strategies that were not found in previous studies, such as establishing all-parent collaborations (“Parents in Power,” “Parent Pride Council,” and “Watchdog” groups). While principals listed a variety of approaches, overall, they continue to believe that their schools must take aggressive measures to keep parents involved in their child's education.

Effective Communication Strategies. Similar to previous studies, the most frequent response from principals was that an important component in encouraging parent involvement is for parents to have open communication with teachers and administrators, whether by phone, newsletter, email, written
letters, or in-person meetings. Some principals noted the importance of bilingual communication, with twenty-one responding that their schools provide online English lessons for Spanish-speaking parents. In general, the themes of responses mirrored those from the previous seven years’ surveys. Below is a sample of some of the strategies reported by principals:

- Family nights/events, academic nights
- Open house events
- Promoting participation in parent-teacher organizations (PTA/PTO)
- Volunteer programs, Extracurricular Activities
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Using multiple modes of communication (email, phone, letters, websites)
- Teachers communicating directly with parents
- Class website
- Open communication with teachers and administrators
- Letters or notes sent home with students; newsletters paper and email
- Making personal calls to the home

**Successful Parent Involvement Strategies Implemented by Schools for Parents of Special Education Students**

Principals were then asked if there were any additional efforts or activities made by their school to encourage parents of students who received special education services to be active in their child’s education. As in previous years, the majority of principals responded that the same methods were used for parents in general as for those with children served by special education. Some, however, stated that they sent personal invitations to parents of students receiving special education services to meet with teachers or to attend special workshops geared towards their student’s disability. In addition, many stressed the importance of having ARD meetings to encourage parents to stay involved in their child’s education.

Regarding events held specifically for students receiving special education services, responses were very similar to those listed above. However, similar to past surveys, there were a few activities that differed from those held for all students:

- ARD meetings to encourage parents to stay involved in their child’s education
- Teachers/case managers communicating directly with parents
- Send personal invitations to parents of students receiving special education services to meet with teachers/attend school events
- Send personal invitations to parents of students receiving special education services to attend special workshops geared towards their student’s disability
- Establishment of “Parent Pride Council,” “Parents in Power,” and other collaborations to boost involvement
Successful Parent Involvement Strategies Implemented by Teachers

In addition to overall school parent involvement strategies, the principals were asked to list successful practices that took place in the classroom and were used by teachers. The large majority of responses focused on an increased level of communication between teachers and parents, either by telephone calls, emails, newsletters, or meetings. Similar to previous surveys, the most common strategies noted by principals are listed below:

✓ Personal contact with parents through calls, email, home visits, and conferences
✓ Open house, family and meet the teacher nights, volunteer meetings, field day, student performances
✓ Parent volunteering, speakers and general involvement
✓ Class newsletters and websites, email blasts, text message system, invitations
✓ Required teacher-parent meetings, required parental contact logs
✓ Increased level of communication between teachers and parents (including bilingual accommodations and teacher trainings on communication)
✓ Teacher-created blogs, webpages, social media
✓ Incentives for successful teachers, students, classes
✓ Class parties at local restaurants and at school for holidays, birthdays, etc.
✓ Project-based projects with parents

Parent Involvement Plans

Principals were asked if their schools had a written parent involvement plan that was separate from an overall district-level plan. Figure 1 shows that less than half of principals, 49.6 percent, reported that their campus did have a parent involvement plan. This is a significant drop from previous year’s surveys. In 2014, 76 percent of principals reported their school has a written campus-level parent involvement plan. This is a 26.4 percent drop from 2014.

Figure 1: School Has Written Campus-Level Parent Involvement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No, 50.4%</th>
<th>Yes, 49.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Has Written Campus-Level Parent Involvement Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Input and Opinions

An important component of a successful program is to ensure that parents are allowed to provide input and opinions about the overall school, its staff, or other school-related issues, and to feel that their opinions count. Principals were asked to identify what their schools had in place to ensure that parents’ opinions were regularly incorporated into their child’s school’s activities or planning process. Similar to previous years, the most common strategy was conducting parent surveys for input. Principals referred to a number of different surveys, including “Title 1 Surveys,” “Annual Parent Surveys,” “On-line Surveys,” and even “Suggestion Boxes.” Prior to 2010, not many principals mentioned this strategy for parent involvement. Other common responses included site-based decision-making committee, and PTA/PTO participation. Below are some of the most common responses from the 2015 principal surveys:

- Parent surveys
- Site-based decision-making committee, Campus Improvement Planning
- PTA/PTO participation
- Participation in school committees, meetings and parent events
- Parent meetings over the phone or in-person
- Open communication (including use of social media, emails, letters and bilingual accommodations
- Parent Involvement Committee, Title I meetings, ARD meetings
- Open-door policy
- Focus groups, campus hotlines, complaint process, methods of gathering feedback
- Involvement in the campus based leadership team meeting
- Volunteering opportunities

Parent-Teacher Organizations and Volunteer Opportunities

All principals agreed that increasing the involvement of parents is beneficial to students and schools. The majority of principals said that an effective way to increase parent involvement is to support the school’s parent-teacher association or organization (PTA/PTO). Principals were asked to list the approximate percentage of parents that actively participated in the PTA or PTO at their school.

Compared to the 2014 survey, there was little change in the percentages reported this year by principals. As seen in Figure 2, 41 percent of principals reported that one-tenth of all parents or less participated in the PTA/PTO, which is almost exactly the same as in 2014. Ten percent of principals reported that over half of their students’ parents actively participate in parent organizations, which is a reduction of 2 percent to what was reported in 2014.
Figure 2: Percentage of Parents Who Actively Participate in Your School’s PTA/PTO

Figure 3 presents the percentage of parents of students receiving special education services who actively participated in the PTA/PTO. Similar to previous surveys, principals reported a lower percentage of parents of special education students participating than parents of all students. In comparison to last year’s results, the same percentage (just under 6 percent) of principals reported that half of the parents of special education students participated actively. Along with the results from Figure 2, the data suggests that continued efforts need to be made by schools to increase involvement of all parents, specifically those of students receiving special education services, in parent organizations.

Figure 3: Percentage of Parents of Students Receiving Special Education Services Who Actively Participate in Your School’s PTA/PTO
Communication Methods

Principals were asked to list the single most commonly used method their school employed to communicate with parents. Table 45 shows the trend that principals reported how the primary communication strategies have changed since 2010. The most common method, accounting for just under one-quarter of the responses, was telephone, which accounted for only 18 percent of responses in the 2015 survey. The next most common methods were email (19 percent), newsletters (17 percent), and notes given to students (16 percent). The other category (webpage, folders, monthly calendars) remained unchanged from 2014. It is interesting to see an increase in communication with parents via telephone calls (6 percent) especially given the mobile environment we are living in today.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes given to students</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (webpage, folders, monthly calendar, social media)</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Services Provided to Encourage Parental Involvement

Principals were also asked to list services that were provided for parents to encourage parent involvement, and, as in previous surveys, they could select as many that applied. Table 46 shows that holding meetings in the evenings was the most common service provided by schools, similar to all surveys since 2008. The next most common responses were providing opportunities for parents to be involved in site-based decision management, and interpreters or translators. Additionally, an increased percentage (from 9 percent in 2014 to 10% in 2015) reported offering parents transportation services. Principals reported having parent education courses, baby-sitting services, and books and videos at similar levels as in 2014. Figure 4 shows a graphic distribution of services provided by schools.

Table 46: Services Provided by Schools to Encourage Parental Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Percent*</td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Percent*</td>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>Percent*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings held in evenings</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1: Services Provided by Schools to Encourage Parent Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Support Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpreters/Translators</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent education courses</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby-sitting services</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books, videos</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,187</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,533</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,497</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,477</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,552</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages do not add up to 100.0 percent because of duplicate counts (multiple-response question).*

### Figure 4: Services Provided by Schools to Encourage Parent Involvement

*Percentages do not add up to 100 percent because of duplicate counts (multiple-response question).*

Other services that were provided to encourage parent involvement as noted by principals include: PTA, ESL classes, Parent Liaison, Transition meetings, volunteer programs, “coffee with the principal” events, community walks, food and refreshments during meetings, and technology training courses.
Parent Contributions

Principals were asked to list the two most important contributions made by parents in their school. Two responses were overwhelming favorites: volunteering their time in school activities or fundraising opportunities; and creating a positive environment for students to learn (via teacher communication, feedback, resources, etc.) These two contributions were also common in previous surveys.

Principals listed several examples of volunteering activities that were similar to those noted in 2014, including fundraising, mentoring, participation in parent organizations, and participation in the campus improvement team. Most principals stated that simply supporting the school, class, or teacher was the most important contribution parents can make. Examples of common contributions mentioned by principals are listed below:

- Volunteering their time/resources in school activities or fundraising opportunities
- Creating a positive environment for students to learn (via teacher communication, feedback, resources, etc.)
- Attending PTA/PTO meetings
- Supporting their students either at home or by participation in parent organizations
- Monetary donations, resource donations
- Encouraging their children to learn and helping with schoolwork
- Participating in the campus improvement team, site-based decision making committee
- Mentoring programs, tutoring programs
- Watchdog programs
- Helping with book fairs and reading events
- Assisting the school at sporting events

School-provided Parent Training Workshops

Principals were asked to indicate if the school provided parent training workshops to encourage parent involvement. A little more than one-half of principals responded to this question (496 out of 916), and 64 percent said that training was provided (see Figure 5). These results were similar to those from the 2014 survey, where 66 percent reported that training was provided, respectively.
The principals who reported that training was provided were then asked how often and when it occurred for parents of students receiving special education services. Similar to past surveys, responses ranged from bi-weekly to once per year. In 2015, principals noted that parent training opportunities were provided most frequently on a monthly basis for parents of students receiving special education services. The next most frequent response was once per year. Figure 6 provides the results of how often the parent trainings were held. There was also a wide range of reported times that these trainings were held. The majority said that meetings were held in the evenings (27 percent) though other time periods were also listed (e.g., during school, after school, at the beginning of the school year). Figure 7 presents a display of reported times when the parent trainings occurred.

**Figure 5: School-provided training workshops to encourage parent involvement?**

No, 35.6%
Yes, 64.4%

**Figure 6: Frequency of Parent Trainings**
School Holds Annual Meeting

Principals were also asked if their school held an annual meeting to inform parents of children receiving special education services about the school's special education program. In comparison to the 2014 survey, no responses in 2015 increased from 49.5 percent to 50.4 percent (see Figure 8). Principals who said that annual information sessions were held were then asked what percentage of parents of students receiving special education services attended those meetings. The responses ranged from 1 to 100 percent with a mean response of 48 percent. This is the same as the 2014 survey, which had a mean of 48 percent of parents attending those meetings. This year's responses did vary quite a bit, having a standard deviation of 36 percent (slightly higher than last year). Figure 9 shows the percentage range of parents reported to have attended the meetings. Similar to previous years, the participation rate varied greatly among schools in the state.
Primary Factors Preventing Parental Involvement

While principals acknowledged the important contribution that parents made to their schools, they were also aware that many parents faced difficult obstacles in becoming actively involved in their child’s education. The survey asked principals to indicate the most important factor that kept parents of students who receive special education services from getting more involved in the school. This year, and every year since the 2006 survey, the most frequently cited factor was parents’ work schedules and overall lack of free time. Principals noted that many parents have work obligations that do not allow them to participate in their child’s education as much as they would like. Many principals cited that most large families need both parents to work in order to maintain financial stability. Other factors that kept parents from participating in school activities included lack of transportation to the school or a lack of communication, either because they do not speak English or they do not make the attempt to talk with teachers or administrators. The most common responses, consistent with the 2014 survey, included:

- Parents’ work schedules and overall lack of free time
- Lack of transportation, childcare, financial resources
- Feeling intimidated or disconnected from the school
- Overwhelmed with other problems or commitments
- Lack of knowledge of the school system
- Apathy, prioritize other things over education
- Unsure about how to help their child
- Poor communication between parents and schools
- Language barrier between parents and teachers or staff
- Scheduling conflicts
8. Summary

With 3,298 surveys completed in English or Spanish, parents of students receiving special education services voiced their opinion regarding their involvement with their child’s school and to a variety of other topics central to a successful education program. Parents were selected based on a sampling matrix that considered the district’s size, demographics, and inclusion within a six-year cycle. Respondents to the survey were quite similar to the statewide percentages seen by student group, gender, and eligibility category. This distribution reflects those found in the fall 2006, spring 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 surveys. The overall rate of return was approximately 18 percent. A revised survey that more closely addresses SPP issues has been used since spring 2009. For the 2013 Parent Survey, the questions were rearranged to improve the flow. For the 2015 Parent Survey, the phrase “For students age 14 and up” was added to one question in the ARD/IEP Participation category about services provided for life after high school. Additionally, the option of “Less than high school” was added for Question 1: “Indicate the highest level of education you have completed”.

A total of 23 questions (not including Question 1) from the parent survey were divided into four topic-specific categories and examined. Grouping the three types of responses (Always-Never, Yes-No, and Agree-Disagree), Table 47 presents a summary of responses within these categories, and is the same as Table 1. It is repeated here for ease of reference. For each category, responses were overall positive. The percentages of responses in the least positive category were under 9 percent. The response patterns for this year’s survey were very similar to the findings from the previous years. This stability of responses argues for the reliability and validity of findings from the surveys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Environment Issues</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARD/IEP Participation</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results/Progress</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note that percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

In this survey, generally the participants responded more positively to questions regarding their interactions with the school (as seen in the summary ratings in Table 47). When compared to the 2014 results, School Environment Issues, Communication Issues, and ARD/IEP Participation showed improved positive ratings. The items for which the ratings were less positive were evaluated and included only those which do not pertain to parental actions. Below are selected areas for which the ratings fell into the Negative category (greater than 10%), as identified in Table 47.

The school provides me information on my child’s disability. (This issue was also identified in spring 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014.)
School personnel provide information on parent organizations, community agencies, or trainings related to the needs of my child. (This issue was also identified in spring 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014.)

The school provides information on agencies that assist my child in planning for life after high school. (This issue was also identified in spring 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014.)

The school includes my child in the ARD meeting. This year was the first year that this question was presented in the survey and was specified to be answered by parents of children age 14 and up.

The first two of these items center on communication issues and on the information available within the school system and through outside agencies and support. The item regarding information about a child’s disability likely reflects providing understandable and useful information.

The categories rated by respondents in the spring 2010, spring 2011, spring 2012, spring 2013, and spring 2014 survey were similar to 2015; however, there was a slight decrease in Negative responses. For the third year in a row, the communication issues category was ranked lowest.

Overall, parent open-ended responses paralleled the responses received in the structured survey. Parents who responded to the survey were overall satisfied with the services received by their child’s school. The following is a list of the overall findings from parent responses.

- **Overall satisfaction** – The majority of respondents expressed being satisfied with the special education services provided by schools.

- **Communication improvements** – While overall satisfied, parents noted concern with communication between parents and the special education staff (or communication between the special education setting and the general education setting). Parents want to be kept informed and want to know how to contribute to the academic progress of their child on a timely basis.

- **More information and training** – Parents noted that they need help understanding their child’s disability. They asked for the school to provide more specific and relevant information.

The principals who responded to the survey offered multiple examples of successful parent involvement strategies, but most responded similarly that improving communication between parents and schools, having “open door policies,” and providing opportunities to volunteer in school activities were most important. Principals also noted how significant parent involvement is to a school. They listed a variety of important parent participation activities, including attending PTA/PTO and Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings, assisting directly in the classroom, chaperoning field trips, and helping in many other special projects.

Overall, principals noted that parent contributions and involvement is a critical component for schools and children. Principals noted parents’ significance in the role of their child’s education, but also recognized how difficult it is for many parents to commit time and effort in helping their child succeed. Among many reasons, principals listed lack of time, transportation, and work schedules as the largest barriers to their involvement in their child’s education.
9. Appendices

Appendix A contains the parent survey and cover letters.
Appendix B contains the pre-notification letters sent to district superintendents and special education directors.
Appendix C contains the principal survey and cover letter.
Appendix D contains the campus coordinator and special education director letters.
Appendix A – Parent Survey and Cover Letters

**Texas Survey of Parents of Students Receiving Special Education Services**

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Use blue or black ink only. DO NOT USE PENCIL.
Fill in oval completely. If you make a mistake, cross out the incorrect oval and fill in the correct oval.

**1.** Indicate the highest level of education that you completed.
- [ ] Some High School
- [ ] GED
- [ ] High School Graduate
- [ ] Some College
- [ ] Less than High School
- [ ] College Graduate

**2.** Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Mark the best response)
- a. School personnel encourage me to be involved in my child’s education.
- b. I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).

**3.** Please indicate how you feel regarding the following statements. (Mark the best response)
- a. My child’s school is a positive and welcoming place for my family.
- b. Teachers understand my child’s needs.
- c. Teachers show a willingness to discuss my child’s needs.

**4.** Please indicate how you feel regarding the following statements. (Mark the best response)
- a. The school communicates regularly with me regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues.
- b. I communicate with my child’s teacher(s) regularly regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues.
- c. School personnel provide information on parent organizations, community agencies, or trainings related to the needs of my child.
- d. School personnel provide me information to help me assist in my child’s education.

**5.** Please mark your response, YES or NO, to the following questions.
- a. The school provides me information on my child’s disability.
- b. Information is provided to me in my primary language.

**6.** Please indicate how you feel regarding the following statements. (Mark the best response)
- a. I participate in my child’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings.
- b. My concerns and recommendations are considered by the ARD committee in the development of my child’s IEP.
- c. At the ARD meeting, we discuss how my child will participate in state assessments (like the STAAR).
- d. At the ARD meeting, we select accommodations and/or modifications that my child needs.
- e. The school provides my child with all the services documented on my child’s IEP.

**7.** Please mark your response, YES or NO, to the following questions.
- a. Teachers and administrators ensure that I fully understand the Procedural Safeguards (also known as the Rights Booklet).
- b. My child’s evaluation report is written in terms I understand.
- c. For students age 14 and up - The school provides planning for life after high school, including services to help my child reach his or her goals.
- d. For students age 14 and up - The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in planning for life after high school.
- e. For students age 14 and up - The school includes my child in the ARD meeting.

**8.** Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Mark the best response)
- a. My child is making progress because of the services he/she is receiving.
- b. I am satisfied with the progress my child is making.

**Thank You for Taking This Survey.**

---

**nustats**

**49**  Educational Service Center Region 9
**Encuesta de Tejas de los Padres de Estudiantes que Reciben Servicios de Educación Especial**

**INSTRUCCIONES**
- Sólo use tinta azul o negra.
- NO USE LÁPIZ.
- Rellene el óvalo completamente.
- Si se equivoca, marque el óvalo incorrecto con una cruz y luego el óvalo correcto.

1. Indique el nivel más alto de educación que usted completó.
   - ○ Parte de la secundaria
   - ○ GED
   - ○ Graduado de secundaria (Bachillerato)
   - ○ Parte de la universidad
   - ○ Graduado de la universidad

2. Por favor indique si está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las declaraciones siguientes.  
   *(Marque la mejor respuesta)*
   - a. El personal de la escuela me anima a estar más involucrado en la educación de mi hijo/ha.
   - b. Soy considerado un socio igual con los maestros y otros profesionales en la planificación del Programa Educativo Individualizado (IEP) de mi hijo/ha.

3. Por favor indique lo que siente sobre las declaraciones siguientes.  
   *(Marque la mejor respuesta)*
   - a. La escuela de mi hijo/ha es un lugar positivo y acogedor para mi familia.
   - b. Los maestros entienden las necesidades de mi hijo/ha.
   - c. Los maestros demuestran buena voluntad para discutir las necesidades de mi hijo/ha.

4. Por favor indique lo que siente sobre las declaraciones siguientes.  
   *(Marque la mejor respuesta)*
   - a. La escuela se comunica regularmente conmigo respecto al progreso del IEP de mi hijo/ha y otros temas importantes.
   - b. Yo me comunico regularmente con los maestros de mi hijo/ha con respecto al progreso del IEP de mi hijo/ha y otros asuntos importantes.
   - c. El personal de la escuela proporciona información sobre organizaciones de padres, agencias de la comunidad, o encuentros relacionados con las necesidades de mi hijo/ha.
   - d. El personal de la escuela me proporciona información para ayudarme a participar en la educación de mi hijo/ha.

5. Por favor marque su respuesta, SÍ o NO, para las preguntas siguientes.
   - a. La escuela me proporciona información sobre la discapacidad de mi hijo/ha.
   - b. Se me proporciona información en mi idioma principal.

6. Por favor indique lo que siente sobre las declaraciones siguientes.  
   *(Marque la mejor respuesta)*
   - a. Yo participo en las juntas de ingreso, Resumen y Despido (ARD) de mi hijo/ha.
   - b. El comité de ARD toma en cuenta mis inquietudes y sugerencias en el desarrollo del IEP de mi hijo/ha.
   - c. En la junta de ARD, hablamos sobre cómo participaré en el IEP de mi hijo/ha en las evaluaciones del estado (al otro el STAR).  
   - d. En la junta de ARD, seleccionamos adaptaciones o modificaciones que necesitará mi hijo/ha.
   - e. La escuela le proporciona a mi hijo/ha y a todos los servicios documentados en el IEP de mi hijo/ha.

7. Por favor marque su respuesta, SÍ o NO, para las preguntas siguientes.
   - a. Los maestros y administradores aseguran que yo entiendo completamente los Procedimientos de Protección (también conocido como el folleto de Derechos).
   - b. El reporte de evaluación de mi hijo/ha está escrito en términos que yo entiendo.
   - c. Para estudiantes que tienen 14 años o más - La escuela ofrece planificación para la vida después de la secundaria, incluyendo servicios para ayudar a mi hijo o hija a alcanzar sus metas.
   - d. Para estudiantes que tienen 14 años o más - La escuela proporciona información sobre las agencias que pueden ayudar a mi hijo/ha en la planificación para la vida después de la secundaria.
   - e. Para estudiantes que tienen 14 años o más - La escuela incluye a mi hijo/ha en la reunión de ARD.

8. Por favor indique si está de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las declaraciones siguientes.  
   *(Marque la mejor respuesta)*
   - a. Mi hijo/ha está progresando a causa de los servicios que está recibiendo.
   - b. Estoy satisfecho/a con el progreso de mi hijo/ha.

**Gracias por Completar Esta Encuesta.**

**nustats**
April 3, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Texas Education Agency and Region 9 Education Service Center are conducting a survey regarding the special education services your child receives. Texas educators are interested in your level of satisfaction with the amount of involvement you have with your child’s education. The information you provide will assist educators and policy makers in improving the quality of special education for all children in Texas schools. Your responses to this survey and your child’s identity will remain confidential.

Choose how you want to participate:

ONLINE
1) Gather your survey materials and go to www.surveys.nustats.com/esc9
2) Click “Start Here” and follow the instructions.
3) Please complete the survey online before June 5, 2016.

OR

BY MAIL
1) Answer the questions on the other side of this letter.
2) Complete the enclosed survey.
3) Put the survey and this letter into the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope and mail it before June 5, 2015. If you do not have the postage-paid envelope, please mail the survey to:

   NuStats
   PO Box 19304
   Austin, TX 78760-9304

If you need help or have questions regarding this survey, please contact:

Vivian Daigler, NuStats, (512) 279-4143, vdaigler@nustats.com
Espanol: George Urbe, NuStats, (512) 279-4173, gunibe@nustats.com
Sarah Coons, Education Service Center Region 9, (940) 322-6928, sarah.coons@esc9.net
Michelle Rosales, Texas Education Agency, (512) 463-9414, michelle.rosales@tea.texas.gov

The postage-paid return envelope is for the return of the survey only. Please do not include any material in addition to the survey in the envelope. Any material received will be destroyed. If you need instructions on how to file a written complaint to the Texas Education Agency, please see the website:
http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=2147497560 or contact the special education information line at 1-855-SPEDTEX (1-855-773-3839) or inquire@spedtex.org.

Sincerely,

Gene Lenz
Director
Division of Federal and State Education Policy
1. As a parent, what do you need from the school to help assist your child in his/her education?

2. Is there anything you would like to share with us about the special education services your child receives?
3 de abril de 2015

Estimado Padre de Familia:

La Agencia de Educación del Estado de Texas y el Centro No. 9 de Servicios Educativos (Texas Education Agency and Education Service Center 9) están llevando a cabo una encuesta sobre los servicios del programa de educación especial que su hijo recibe. Los maestros y líderes dedicados a la educación pública de Texas quieren saber el grado de satisfacción en cuanto a su participación en la educación de su hijo(a). La información que usted nos dé ayudará a aquellos dedicados a estos servicios educativos a mejorar la calidad de la educación especial para todos los niños en las escuelas de Texas. Sus respuestas a esta encuesta y la identidad de su hijo(a) permanecerán confidenciales.

**Selezione una de las siguientes maneras para participar:**

**POR INTERNET**
1) Vaya al sitio de Internet de la encuesta: [www.surveys.nustats.com/esc9](http://www.surveys.nustats.com/esc9)
2) Presione “Empiece Aquí” y siga las instrucciones.
3) Por favor complete la encuesta por Internet antes del **5 de junio de 2015**.

**POR CORREO**
1) Conteste las preguntas que se encuentran al otro lado de esta carta.
2) Complete la encuesta que viene incluida.
3) Ponga la encuesta y esta carta adentro del sobre con franqueo prepago y envío antes del **5 de junio de 2015**.

NuStats
PO Box 19304
Austin, TX 78760-9304

Si necesita ayuda o tiene cualquier pregunta sobre esta encuesta, por favor comuníquese con:

Vivian Daigler, NuStats, (512) 279-4163, vdaigler@nustats.com
**Español**: George Uribe, NuStats, (512) 279-4173, guribe@nustats.com
Sarah Coons, Education Service Center Region 9, (940) 322-6928, sarah.coons@esc9.net
Michelle Rosales, Texas Education Agency, (512) 463-9414, michelle.rosales@tea.texas.gov

El sobre de retorno con franqueo prepago se debe de usar solamente para regresar la encuesta. Por favor no incluya ningún otro material en el sobre. Cualquier material que se reciba será destruido. Si necesita instrucciones sobre cómo presentar una queja por escrito a la Agencia de Educación de Texas, por favor visite el sitio de Internet: [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147497600](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147497600) o llame a la línea de información de educación especial al 1-855-SPEDTEX (1-855-773-3839) o envíenos un correo electrónico a inquire@spedtx.org.

Atentamente,

[Signature]
Gena Lonz
Director
División de Políticas Educativas Federales y Estatales

GL-MR
1. Como padre, ¿qué necesita de la escuela para ayudarle con la educación de su hijo/hija?

2. ¿Hay algo que usted quisiera compartir con nosotros sobre los servicios de educación especial que recibe su hijo/hija?
Appendix B – Pre-Notification Letters
March 6, 2015

To: District Parent Survey Contact:

Subject: Parent Involvement Survey

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), Section 618(b)(2)(B), requires states to collect data from districts and charter schools in order to respond to many of the State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators on an annual basis. SPP Indicator 8 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to collect parent involvement information for students receiving special education services. Since 2006, the TEA and Region 9 Education Service Center have distributed parent involvement surveys to a sample of districts and charter schools based on student demographics reflected in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) fall snapshot data submission.

The survey includes most districts only once within the six-year SPP timeframe. However, larger districts with average daily membership of over 50,000 students must respond each year, though not all campuses in those districts will participate. The materials you will receive in April will include a list of campuses. Please note that, under federal requirements, TEA will post the results from the survey on the agency website. For more information about the SPP, visit the TEA website at: http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=2147497591.

Each parent will receive an envelope with the child’s name, a letter of instruction, the survey, and a return envelope. The survey is formatted with English on one side and Spanish on the other. This year, parents may also complete the survey online. A complete set of survey materials will be mailed to your district the first week in April. Please ensure that an appropriate district or charter school coordinator is selected to facilitate the survey administration.

Please identify a campus contact person to receive and distribute the surveys. This person must distribute the survey packets to the parents of each of the students identified to participate in this study. The most efficient way will vary by campus, but please ensure that the surveys are distributed to parents as soon as possible. The TEA encourages some “promotion” of the survey and its importance to the state’s continuous improvement efforts.

Surveys should be sent to parents by the second week in April. The parents need to return the survey by May 22, 2015, to meet reporting deadlines. Questions regarding the survey may be directed to:

Vivian Daigler, NuStats, (512) 279-4153, vdaigler@nustats.com
Sarah Coons, Region 9 ESC, (940) 322-6928, sarah.coons@esc9.net
Michelle Rosales, Texas Education Agency, (512) 463-9414, michelle_rosales@tea.texas.gov

In addition, you may contact your regional education service center for technical assistance and training concerning parent involvement in the special education process.

Thank you for your time and continued support of students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Gene Lenz
Director
Division of Federal and State Education Policy

GL:MR
Appendix C – Principal Survey and Cover Letter
PRINCIPAL SURVEY
Special Education Programs/Parent Involvement

Region 9 is conducting a principal survey to collect information about the special education program in your school. Information gathered through the survey will assist the state in identifying best practices in facilitating parent involvement for students receiving special education services. Completion of this survey is voluntary.

Provide county–district–campus number: (will be used for analysis purposes only) __________ - __________ - ________

1. List the two most successful efforts/approaches used in your school to encourage parents to become actively involved in school activities.

   Successful Effort/Approach 1: ____________________________

   Successful Effort/Approach 2: ____________________________

2. List the two most successful efforts/activities made in your school to encourage parents of students who receive special education services to become actively involved in school activities.
   (If different from Question #1)

   Successful Effort/Activity 1: ____________________________

   Successful Effort/Activity 2: ____________________________

3. List two specific efforts/activities that encourage teachers to increase parent involvement in their classrooms.

   Specific Effort/Activity 1: ____________________________

   Specific Effort/Activity 2: ____________________________

4. Does your school have a written campus-level (not just district-level) parent involvement plan?
   - Yes
   - No

5. List two strategies in your school that have worked best to ensure that parent input and opinions are regularly incorporated into your activities.

   Strategy 1: ____________________________

   Strategy 2: ____________________________

6. Approximately what percentage of parents actively participates in your school’s PTA/PTO? (fill in one bubble only)
   - 10% or less
   - 11% to 25%
   - 26% to 50%
   - Over 50%

7. Approximately what percentage of parents of students receiving special education services actively participates in your school’s PTA/PTO? (fill in one bubble only)
   - 10% or less
   - 11% to 25%
   - 26% to 50%
   - Over 50%
Principal Special Education Services Survey

8. What is the most commonly used method that your school uses to communicate with parents? (fill in one bubble only)
   - Letter
   - Email
   - Telephone
   - Notes given to student
   - Newsletter
   - Other (specify): ________________

9. Are any of the following services provided for parents to encourage parental involvement? (mark all that apply)
   - Transportation provided for parents
   - Meetings held in evenings
   - Interpreters/Translators
   - Opportunities to be involved in site-based management
   - Baby-sitting services
   - Parent education courses (parenting, literacy, etc.)
   - Books, videos
   - Other (specify): ________________

10. List the two most important contributions made by parents in this school.

    Contribution 1: ____________________________________________
    Contribution 2: ____________________________________________

11. Does the school provide parent training workshops to encourage parent involvement?
   - Yes
   - No

12. If YES to Question #11, approximately how many parent trainings were held last school year specifically for parents of students receiving special education services?

    _____ #

    a. How often are those meetings held? __________________________

    b. When are they most likely to occur? __________________________

13. Does your school hold an annual meeting to inform parents of children receiving special education services about the special education program and services in your school?
   - Yes
   - No

14. If YES to Question #13, approximately what percentage of parents with students receiving special education services attend the annual meeting?

    _____ %

15. What do you think is the most important factor that keeps parents of students who receive special education services from getting more involved in the school?

    ___________________________________________________________

Thank You for Completing This Survey!

Please Return Survey in the Postage-Paid Envelope by June 5, 2015
Or Mail to: NuStats, 4115 Freidrich Lane, Ste 200, Austin, TX 78744-9907
April 3, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Principal Addressed
FROM: Cindy Moses, Director of Student Support
SUBJECT: Principal Survey of Parent Involvement Practices

The United States Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to collect information from parents of students receiving special education services. TEA and Region 9 Education Service Center are distributing parent involvement surveys to your campus in April with assistance from NuStats, the contractor. The spring survey data will be included in the next federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Annual Performance Report (APR). Thank you for your support in disseminating the survey to your parents. Due to the sensitive nature of the collected data, please ensure parents are instructed to return the completed surveys directly to NuStats using the envelope provided, or to complete the survey online.

In addition to the parent involvement survey, Region 9 ESC is conducting a principal survey to collect information regarding your perspectives on how your campus facilitates parental involvement. Information gathered through this survey will assist the state in identifying best practices in facilitating parent involvement for students receiving special education services. Completion of this survey is voluntary.

We ask that you please complete one of the following options by June 5, 2015:

- Complete the attached survey and return it to NuStats in the postage-paid envelope provided
- Complete the web version of this survey at http://surveys.nustats.com/principal, or;
- Complete with your smartphone; scan the QR code to begin

Thank you for your support. Questions regarding the survey can be directed to:
Vivian Daigler, NuStats, (512) 279-4153, or vdaigler@nustats.com
Sarah Coons, Region 9 ESC, (940) 322-6928, sarah.coons@esc9.net
Appendix D – Campus Coordinator and District Contact Letters

April 4, 2015

To the Campus Parent Survey Coordinator Addressed:

Subject: Parent Involvement Survey

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Region 9 Education Service Center are conducting a survey of parent opinions related to how schools facilitate their involvement to improve services and results for children with disabilities. This information fulfills federal requirements under the State Performance Plan (SPP). The survey includes most districts only once within the six-year SPP timeframe (2013-2018). However, larger districts with average daily membership over 50,000 students must be included each year, though not all campuses in those districts will participate. Please note that under federal requirements, the TEA will post the results from the survey on the agency website. For more information about the SPP/APR visit the TEA website at: http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=2147497591

The study identifies parents of students in special education on your campus to participate in this survey based on the child’s information in the TEA Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) database. Students were randomly selected using a sampling framework that considers disability, geographic region, and other student demographics.

Please distribute the surveys to be completed by the parent or guardian of each of the students listed on the “peel and strip” label on the back side of each return envelope. Each envelope includes a parent letter and a survey. The survey is formatted with English on one side and Spanish on the other. Parents also have the option of completing the survey online. The parents need to mail back the survey or complete it online by June 5, 2015.

To ensure maximum participation and quality of information collected please:

1. distribute the survey information appropriately
2. send back to NuStats any surveys that cannot be delivered to the parent or guardian of the student identified on the envelopes with a note explaining the reason
3. do not distribute the surveys to parents of students not included in the sample.
4. forward to the appropriate campus if the student is not enrolled on your campus, but is enrolled in the district
5. distribute the surveys to parents as soon as possible

The most efficient way to distribute these surveys will vary by campus; some suggested approaches include:

- send home with students
- distribute or notify at PTA/PTO meetings
- mail notice to parents for pickup at school
- mail directly to parent’s address (the TEA does not have parent home addresses)

TEA appreciates your help in promoting the importance of completing and returning the surveys on time.
If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact any of the contacts listed below:

Vivian Daigler, NuStats, (512) 279-4153, vdaigler@nustats.com
Sarah Coons, Region 9 ESC, (940) 322-6928, sarah.coons@esc9.net
Michelle Rosales, Texas Education Agency, (512) 463-9414, michelle.rosales@tea.texas.gov

You may also contact NuStats at:
NuStats
PO Box 19304
Austin, TX 78760-9304
(512) 306-9065 or (800) 447-8287

Thank you for your time and continued support.

Sincerely,

Gene Lenz
Director
Division of Federal and State Education Policy

GL:MR

For more information about the SPPIAPR, go to http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=214749759
April 3, 2015

To: District Parent Survey Contact

Subject: Parent Involvement Survey

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), Section 616(b)(2)(B), requires states to collect data from districts and charter schools in order to respond to many of the State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators on an annual basis. SPP Indicator 8 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to collect parent involvement information for students receiving special education services. Since 2006, the TEA and Region 9 Education Service Center have distributed parent involvement surveys to a sample of districts and charter schools based on student demographics reflected in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) fall snapshot data submission.

The survey includes most districts only once within the six-year SPP timeframe. However, larger districts with average daily membership of over 50,000 students must respond each year, though not all campuses in those districts will participate. The materials you will receive in April will include a list of campuses. Please note that, under federal requirements, TEA will post the results from the survey on the agency website. For more information about the SPP, visit the TEA website at: http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?idz2147497591.

Each parent will receive an envelope with the child’s name, a letter of Instruction, the survey, and a return envelope. The survey is formatted with English on one side and Spanish on the other. This year, parents may also complete the survey online. A complete set of survey materials will be mailed to your district the first week in April. Please ensure that an appropriate district or charter school coordinator is selected to facilitate the survey administration.

Please identify a campus contact person to receive and distribute the surveys. This person must distribute the survey packets to the parents of each of the students identified to participate in this study. The most efficient way will vary by campus, but please ensure that the surveys are distributed to parents as soon as possible. The TEA encourages some “promotion” of the survey and its importance to the state’s continuous improvement efforts.

Surveys should be sent to parents by the second week in April. The parents need to return the survey by June 5, 2015, to meet reporting deadlines. Questions regarding the survey may be directed to:

Vivian Daigler, NuStats, (512) 279-4153, vdaigler@nustats.com
Sarah Coons, Region 9 ESC, (940) 322-6928, saratJ.coons@esc9.net
Michelle Rosales, Texas Education Agency, (512) 463-9414, michelle.rosales@tea.texas.gov

In addition, you may contact your regional education service center for technical assistance and training concerning parent involvement in the special education process.

Thank you for your time and continued support of students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Gene Lenz
Director
Division of Federal and State Education Policy