

# **Statewide Survey of Parents of Students Receiving Special Education Services**

**July 2007**

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**A Collaborative Effort Among  
Education Service Center Region 9  
Texas Education Agency  
Parent Coordination Network**



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**Acknowledgement**

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*Parents.* Our deepest gratitude goes to the 1,500 parents who completed and returned the survey to researchers. Approximately 759 parents provided comments, suggestions, and observations in the open-ended section of the survey. Of these, 646 comments were provided in English, and 113 were provided in Spanish. The information provided will be instrumental in the continued efforts of this project to provide insightful information to special education administrators, policymakers and teachers. We are also grateful to parents who helped develop the survey by participating in the pilot efforts to improve and finalize the survey.

*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.

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*Staff from the Education Service Center Region 9 and the Texas Education Agency staff.* Staff in these two organizations provided overall guidance and support during spring and summer 2007. We hope that you will have the opportunity to use the information 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 Academic Information Management and do not necessarily reflect positions of the Texas Education Agency, ESC 9, or other organizations and entities associated with or participating in this survey.

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Special Education Parent Survey**

July 2007

Based on the State Performance Plan'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 Academic Information Management (AIM) to help develop the survey, distribute, and analyze the fall 2006 and spring 2007 surveys. The fall parent and principals survey was distributed in October 2006. The second survey was distributed in spring 2007. This report summarizes information collected from the surveys, principals and parent, distributed in fall 2006 was prepared in December 2006. The first survey was used to meet the APR requirements under the SPP for school year 2005-06. This report summarizes the second, larger, survey distributed in spring 2007. Also included is a summary of the principal survey distributed to school principals in spring 2007.

For any student, including those receiving Special Education services, success is derived from many elements including understanding of the educational process and student's rights by the parents and guardians. Complex Special Education regulations from both the state and federal governments may render the processes for identification, providing services, and transition to life after high school very confusing and time consuming. While procedures and rules were developed to protect the rights and education of special needs children, these safeguards may confound parents who are not familiar with educational "jargon" often seen in the documents.

During the spring of 2002, OSEP monitored the state of Texas. In 2003, the TEA received the OSEP Monitoring Report, which specified areas of noncompliance, highlighted strengths, and suggested areas of improvement. The Parent Training Committee (PTC), an Improvement Planning Committee, discussed further actions needed by the state to achieve the desired result. One of the activities included in the Parent Involvement Plan was to develop and disseminate a statewide parent survey. The Education Service Center (ESC) parent network, led by Region 9 ([www.esc9.net](http://www.esc9.net)) in Wichita Falls, Texas, had also discussed the need to gather information from parents and spearheaded the survey development process. When designing this study, given the extensive history of providing information to parents and the findings of the OSEP Monitoring Report, it was deemed appropriate to ask whether these efforts were indeed providing parents what they want and need. A survey approach, although not without drawbacks and limitations, was selected to solicit parents' opinions.

This survey was developed to obtain information regarding parental involvement with their children's school. The survey is 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 Participation (percent of parents with a child receiving special

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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 parental involvement.

The sampling approach used was similar to the sampling approach previously used. The spring 2007 parent survey included approximately 12,000 parents. 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.

As in previous cycles, a letter was sent to all district superintendents and Special Education directors, notifying them about the survey and providing information about its purpose. In addition, announcements were made on TETN (the Texas Education Network), at meetings of Special Education directors, and at TCASE (the Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education conferences). Surveys were sent to districts bundled by campus with individual student packages to be distributed to parents. Student's whose home language survey indicated Spanish had surveys in both English and Spanish included. Packets to parents included a self-addressed, postage paid return envelope. Parents were asked to not provide student identifiable information.

Although a total of 12,000 surveys were mailed, several factors affecting whether parents received or returned surveys. These include the following:

- Student mobility across districts (over 20 percent annual according to TEA reports)
- Leaving school (graduation, dropout, moving out of state or country)
- Intra-district movement (changing campuses)
- Never distributed by school
- Not taken home
- Parent apathy or suspicion regarding survey use
- Doubt survey will impact their child
- Loss, mailing errors, other

A total of 1,515 parent surveys were returned. Of these, 1,278 English and 159 Spanish surveys were returned in time to be included in the quantitative analyses (n=1,437). This number is well within the desired bounds of +/- 3% bounds at the 95% confidence level. The overall return rate for parent surveys was approximately 13 percent. Of the 1,515 returned surveys, 756 parents also answered the open-ended questions. Of these, 643 provided feedback in English, and 113 responded in Spanish. Of the 620 principal surveys that were distributed, 214 were returned, representing a 35 percent return rate.

## **Findings**

Table 1 presents demographic information of students whose parents returned surveys. The state data were obtained from the Education Service Center 11 Supplemental Special

Education Report.<sup>1</sup> In general, the percentages returned mirror the sample distributions with one notable exception. The percentage of returns from the Learning Disability category were lower than expected, but of sufficient numbers (over 300) to be representative. As noted earlier, deliberate over and under sampling was utilized to try and match return percentages to over state distributions based on previous surveys. Of the 181 districts that received surveys, 122 were included in the analyses. Surveys from the remaining districts may have been received after the processing date (approximately one month after the survey return due date).

**Table 1: Student Demographics: Surveys Returned, Initial Sample, State**

Categories	Surveys Returned	Initial Sample	State Special Education*
Ethnicity			
African American	17.8%	22.6%	17.7%
Hispanic	34.9%	40.2%	40.0%
White	44.3%	34.9%	40.8%
Other	3.0%	2.4%	1.5%
Gender			
Male	67.7%	67.0%	66.8%
Female	32.3%	33.0%	33.2%
Disability Category			
Learning Disability	22.1%	31.2%	50.0%
Speech	21.6%	16.5%	20.2%
Other Health Impaired	13.5%	13.0%	10.0%
Other	42.8%	39.3%	19.8%
Grade Span			
Elementary (Include PK/K)	44.1%	36.5%	39.7%
Middle (5-8)	25.7%	24.1%	28.0%
High (9-12)	30.2%	39.4%	32.4%
Economic Disadvantaged			
Yes	48.8%	60.9	59.2%
No	51.2%	39.1%	40.8%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys, Initial Sample, ESC 11 SESR

\*The data presented for the state special education population is the most recently available (2004)

A key element to a successful partnership between the school and the parent is the school environment. The first question in this category relates to the school being a positive and welcoming place for the child. In Table 2 less than one percent of parents felt that the school is “never” a positive and welcoming place for their child. As will be seen in the majority of items within the survey, parents who responded using the Spanish version of the survey were slightly more positive than those using the English version. Given the larger number of English surveys, the combined rating (adding Spanish to English) will strongly resemble the English version alone. With about 73 percent of parents saying that

<sup>1</sup> Published state report by Education Service Center 11, 2004.

the school is *Always* a positive and welcoming place, this is an encouraging finding. On the other hand, about one-fourth of parents said school was only sometimes a positive place. This is a slightly lower rating than given in the fall 2006 survey where almost 80 percent of parents said that the schools was always a positive and welcoming place.

**Table 2: The school is a positive and welcoming place for my child**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	72.8%	72.1%	78.0%
Sometimes	26.4%	27.0%	22.0%
Never	0.8%	0.9%	0.0%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

This finding was also observed in the parent open ended responses, where a large number of parents reportedly feel positive about school and the services they receive. There were few parents, however, that expressed discomfort in the school setting.

Central to issues surrounding parental involvement is the relationship between the school staff and parents (Table 3). In this case, about 70 percent of parents believe that they are an equal partner – a very similar finding to the fall 2006 survey. Also notable is the smaller relative difference between parents reporting with the English and Spanish surveys. While, overall 70 percent of parents agreed, almost one-quarter of parents were *Neutral* with regard to this question. As found in the 2006 survey, Hispanic parents were generally more positive than African American and White parents. Almost 73 percent of Hispanic parents consider themselves an equal partner compared to 67 percent of African American parents. While about two percent more White parents *Agreed* with this question compared to African American parents, almost three percent more indicated *Disagree* with a smaller percentage of White parents in the *Neutral* range.

**Table 3: I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child's program**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	69.6%	69.6%	69.7%
Neutral	23.1%	22.8%	25.7%
Disagree	7.3%	7.5%	4.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

The next question is specific to high school transition services. The majority of parents who responded to this question had a child in the high school grades. Only a few parents whose child was not listed in the high school grades responded to this question. It may be that these latter parents had experience with other children or have older children than the one selected for the survey. In any cases, removing these parents (who did not have high school children) did not change the patterns. Table 4 is restricted to only those parents with a student in high school. It shows that about 20 percent of parents said that these services were not provided. While this question does not address directly parental involvement, transition services would normally be a parent / school / outside agency partnership. If a noticeable percentage of parents report no transition services, meaningful

involvement of parents at the high school level may be suspect. It must be noted that this is one of the few questions to show a change from the fall 2006 survey where about one-third of parents reported *No*. This may be an improvement in this area or reflect more intense activities in the spring of the year as compared to the fall.

**Table 4: The school provides transition services to help my child reach his or her goals after high school**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Yes	78.2%	78.5%	*
No	21.8%	21.5%	*

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

\* Too few respondents in this category for stable response (n<30)

Table 5 shows that almost 70 percent of parents agree that the school communicates regularly regarding IEP progress and other important issues. As with most other areas, the responses from the Spanish surveys are more positive. Overall one-fourth of parents said that only *Sometimes* does this communication occurs and about five percent reported *Never*. Communication is one of the key points in establishing trust and partnerships. Almost one-third of parents noted that the school communicates *Sometimes* or *Never*, indicating that communication is an area that should be improved. These results mirror those found in the fall 2006 survey.

“We need better communication between the special education department and classroom. The special education department has experts in dealing with children with learning disabilities; however, expert advice does not seem to make it into the classroom.”—Parent survey

**Table 5: The school communicates regularly with me regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	68.8%	67.0%	83.4%
Sometimes	25.8%	27.3%	14.0%
Never	5.4%	5.7%	2.5%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Other questions regarding communication indicate that it is an important area that should be addressed. Without communication, continued progress for the child and partnerships between school and parent, would seem to be in jeopardy.

Table 6 shows that almost 60 percent of parents said that teachers *Always* understand their child’s needs,

**Table 27: Teachers understand my child’s needs**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	58.5%	55.9%	77.9%
Sometimes	39.8%	42.0%	22.1%
Never	1.7%	2.1%	0.0%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

As seen in Table 7, almost 80 percent of parents say that their concerns and recommendations are considered *Always*. While a very small percent say *Never*, there remains almost one in five parents who chose the *Sometimes* category. Even if the parents concerns do not lead directly to actions, it should be that the parent's concerns and recommendations are at least considered. Part of parental involvement is that their concerns should be considered and the parent should believe that, in fact, this is being done in an honest fashion. The responses from the English and Spanish surveys are very similar for this item.

**Table 7: My concerns and recommendations are considered by the ARD committee in the development of the IEP**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Combined</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
Always	79.2%	79.3%	78.3%
Sometimes	18.8%	18.7%	19.1%
Never	2.0%	2.0%	2.6%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

In addition to the structures survey, parents were asked to respond to five open-ended questions. A total of 759 surveys containing open-ended questions were received. Of these, 646 were in English and 113 were in Spanish. Unless there are important differences, English and Spanish open-ended responses will be combined. Parent open-ended surveys were analyzed by question and responses clustered into several themes. As these are open ended questions, responses are distinct and unique to parents' needs. When there was a commonality of response theme, critical elements will be highlighted. Not all parents answered each question.

Parents of students who receive special education services were asked to share their experience on the following aspects: (1) the overall improvements needed in special education services; (2) how to improve or enhance parental participation in their children's education; (3) how to improve their relationship with teachers; (4) to identify the major roadblocks to participate in their children's education, and (5) to give additional comments on special education services received.

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## Introduction

### 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.

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.*<sup>2</sup>

Since 2000, Texas has been following the OSEP Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) that 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 youth with disabilities.

During the spring of 2002, OSEP monitored the state of Texas. In 2003, the 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).

Region 9 Education Service Center (Region 9) is the statewide lead for Parent Coordination. Through its efforts, it has established a statewide Parent Coordination network, 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

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<sup>2</sup> Texas Education Agency. Division of IDEA Coordination. State Performance Plan / 2005 – 2010. <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/spp...> page 31.

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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 at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us.special.ed/cimp/>.

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 parental understanding of special education issues. The surveys were distributed to 32,000 parents and the results were posted on the Region 9 website at [www.esc9.net/survey/](http://www.esc9.net/survey/).

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 Academic Information Management (AIM) to help develop the survey, distribute, and analyze the fall 2006 and spring 2007 surveys. The fall parent and principals survey was distributed in October 2006. The second survey was distributed in spring 2007. This report summarizes information collected from the surveys, principals and parent, distributed in fall 2006 was prepared in December 2006. The first survey was used to meet the APR requirements under the SPP for school year 2005-06. This report summarizes the second, larger, survey distributed in spring 2007. Also included is a summary of the principal survey distributed to school principals in spring 2007.

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## Survey Approach and Development

### Parent Survey

*Survey purpose.* This survey was developed to obtain information regarding parental involvement with their children's school. The survey is 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 Participation (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 parental involvement.

*Survey development and production.* The survey distributed in the spring 2007 is the same survey that was used in the fall 2006. It is also anticipated that this will be the same survey that will be used in 2008. 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 resource from the Federal Resource Center website ([www.dssc.org](http://www.dssc.org)) and information provided by Joyce Epstein's Parent Involvement Survey. Lastly, committee members reviewed finding from the Statewide Survey of Parents of Students with Disabilities Receiving Special Education Services.

A one-page, two-sided, scannable questionnaire was then developed. The committee selected questions from both 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 understating of information, services and information provided, school climate, teacher role, and parent participation in training. The survey was distributed on scannable forms. English and Spanish surveys were sent when the child's TEA home language survey indicated that Spanish was spoken in the home. Samples of the parent surveys are included in Appendix A.

*Sampling.* The spring 2007 parent survey included approximately 12,000 parents. 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.

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To select districts and campuses, a sampling matrix that considered geographic area, district size, and student demographics was developed. The sample for the spring 2007 and samples for annual surveys that will be distributed through 2011-12 were derived from this matrix. In large districts (districts 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 2007 survey, 620 campuses within 181 districts were included in the sample.

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. AIM entered into a confidentiality agreement with TEA to protect the identity of students. Following all analyses, datasets containing personally identifiable data were destroyed and / or overwritten. The final database includes information regarding student grade level, gender, ethnicity, and disability category. Students were then selected according to a sampling framework that considered these variables in a proportionate manner from the various campuses / districts. From this process, 11,640 students were selected to be included in the spring sample. Not all districts reported serving students with special education services. To increase the return rates for smaller incidence disability categories, over and under sampling was used. For example, while student with a learning disability constitute about 50 percent of the state population, they were included at about 35 percent in the sampling framework.

The information available to select students was scheduled to be from the 2006-07 school year to ensure the most recent data for identifying students' campuses. TEA instead supplied data from the 2005-06 school year and was, thus, more than one-year old. This resulted in approximately 25 percent of the sample having incorrect campus information or students who had graduated or left the public school system in Texas.

*Survey Distribution.* Letters were sent to district superintendents and special education directors informing them of the purpose of the survey. Approximately two weeks after the letter was distributed, surveys were sent bundled by campus to the districts included in the survey (distribution in February 2007). 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. For parents of students where the TEA Home Language Survey indicated that Spanish is spoken, both English and a Spanish version were included. Additional surveys in English and Spanish were made available by request.

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Each parent received an envelope with the child's name, a letter of instruction, the survey and a return, postage-paid envelope. For questions, phone numbers were provided for the Region 9, TEA, and AIM. Survey assistance was available in both English and Spanish. Parents were asked to return the surveys by the end of April 2007. Surveys received by the end of May 2007 were included in the analyses.

### **Principal Survey**

In addition to the parent survey, 620 surveys were mailed separately to principals of campuses included in the spring survey sample. These surveys were distributed in February and principals were asked to return the survey by April 2007. Postage paid, self-addressed envelopes were also provided.

The principal's survey questions focused on items that parallel the parent survey. A copy of the principal survey is included in Appendix B. Principals were asked to respond to 15 questions regarding parental involvement. 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, receive parental input, services provided in school that help increase parental involvement, successful parental contributions made to schools, parent training / annual meeting opportunities, and factors that impede parental involvement.

### **Database construction and analysis**

Surveys were returned in a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope. Each survey was examined—surveys that were not scannable (torn, smudged) were separated recoded onto new sheets. All primary data analysis was conducted using proprietary AIM software with some supplemental analysis using Microsoft Excel.

Open-ended comments received by parents and principals were coded and summarized by an experienced evaluation contractor. 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, some of the very largest districts had information from a sufficient number of parents to be representative. Another limitation to this report is the data used to select the sample of students were from a prior school year rather than the 2006-07 school year as requested from TEA. In addition, 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 return envelope.

## Surveys return rates and demographics

Table 1 presents demographic information of students whose parents returned surveys. The state data were obtained from the Education Service Center 11 Supplemental Special Education Report.<sup>3</sup> In general, the percentages returned mirror the sample distributions with one notable exception. The percentage of returns from the Learning Disability category were lower than expected, but of sufficient numbers (over 300) to be representative. As noted earlier, deliberate over and under sampling was utilized to try and match return percentages to over state distributions based on previous surveys. Of the 181 districts that received surveys, 122 were included in the analyses. Surveys from the remaining districts may have been received after the processing date (approximately one month after the survey return due date).

**Table 1: Student Demographics: Surveys Returned, Initial Sample, State**

Categories	Surveys Returned	Initial Sample	State Special Education*
Ethnicity			
African American	17.8%	22.6%	17.7%
Hispanic	34.9%	40.2%	40.0%
White	44.3%	34.9%	40.8%
Other	3.0%	2.4%	1.5%
Gender			
Male	67.7%	67.0%	66.8%
Female	32.3%	33.0%	33.2%
Disability Category			
Learning Disability	22.1%	31.2%	50.0%
Speech	21.6%	16.5%	20.2%
Other Health Impaired	13.5%	13.0%	10.0%
Other	42.8%	39.3%	19.8%
Grade Span			
Elementary (Include PK/K)	44.1%	36.5%	39.7%
Middle (5-8)	25.7%	24.1%	28.0%
High (9-12)	30.2%	39.4%	32.4%
Economic Disadvantaged			
Yes	48.8%	60.9	59.2%
No	51.2%	39.1%	40.8%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys, Initial Sample, ESC 11 SESR*

*\*The data presented for the state special education population is the most recently available (2004)*

### Parent demographics

Parents were asked to provide personal information. This information is not otherwise available. Table 2 contains this information for the Spanish and English surveys combined. Note that these are self-reported data not subject to verification. The

<sup>3</sup> Published state report by Education Service Center 11, 2004

information contained in this table is similar (percentage wise) to the data reported in the fall 2006 survey.

**Table 2: Parent Reported Demographic Information**

Level of Education				
Some HS	GED	High School Grad	Some College	College Grad
14.0%	6.5%	17.9%	26.1%	33.8%
Adults in household				
One	Two	More than 2		
17.1%	61.6%	21.3%		
Primary Transportation				
Public	Other	Car		
6.5%	2.7%	90.8%		

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

About four percent more parents reported that they were high school graduates as reported “some high school”. Less than five percent reported having a GED. The largest percentage of parents (33.8%) reported being college graduates. Only a small percentage of respondents to the Spanish survey (6%) reported being college graduates with the majority reporting “some high school” (53%)

Slightly more parents reported having more than 2 adults (21.3%) in the household than reported only one adult (17.1%) About equal percentages (17%) of survey respondents reported having only one or more than two adults living in the household. The remaining 66 percent of parents reported that there are two adults in the household. There were a higher percentage of parents reporting two or more adults on the Spanish survey (39.2%) as opposed to the English survey (19.1%). The overwhelming percentage (90.8%) of parents reports using a car as their primary means of transportation.

### Survey return rates

A total of 1,515 parent surveys were returned. Of these, 1,278 English and 159 Spanish surveys were returned in time to be included in the quantitative analyses (n=1,437). This number is well within the desired bounds of +/- 3% bounds at the 95% confidence level. The overall return rate for parent surveys was approximately 13 percent. Of the 1,515 returned surveys, 756 parents also answered the open-ended questions. Of these, 643 provided feedback in English, and 113 responded in Spanish. Of the 620 principal surveys that were distributed, 214 were returned, representing a 35 percent return rate.

### Factors Affecting Whether Parents Receive Survey Packets

*Mobility.* Mobility is defined as student movement from one district to another during a school year. According to previous TEA Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report, there is about a 22 percent mobility rate among Texas students. 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. Although schools were asked to forward survey packets to a transferring student’s new district, the likelihood of this actually happening was assumed to be low, based on AIM’s prior experience. For some students, the new school may not have been known, or more than

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one district may have been involved. In any case, this mobility rate means that, in all likelihood, more than 20 percent of surveys never reached parents due to mobility alone. The issues of mobility will not be as large a problem in subsequent years when sampling data will be derived from the current school year.

*Leaving school.* For a variety of reasons – graduation, dropout, or withdrawal from home school, among others – some students leave the school system altogether. According to the AEIS reports, about 5 percent of students receiving special education services graduate each year, and there is a 1.1 percent *annual* dropout rate. Thus another six percent of surveys probably never found their way to parents. Again, this issue will be smaller in subsequent years.

*Grade level and intra-district mobility.* Because survey materials were packaged according to campus, based on student grade level during the previous year (the most recent available), approximately 17 percent of students would have moved to another campus (e.g., elementary to middle). As noted, while campuses were asked to forward packets to students at their new schools, there is no assurance that this was done. It is impossible to determine how many surveys were not distributed due to such matriculation. However, we conservatively estimate this to be about 8 percent (or half of the percentage who will have moved to another campus). As in the previous two categories, given current year data, this issue should not be much of a factor in subsequent surveys.

*Not distributed by school.* It is possible that some districts or campus decided 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 them home with students. Nonetheless, it is very likely that many survey packets did not make it home. For example, some questionnaires seem to have been completed by students, based on statements on the surveys.

In summary, AIM estimates that at about 40 percent of survey packets never reached the parents for one or more of the reasons listed above. A technical manual has been developed that outlines strategies to increase both the number of surveys that reach parents and to increase the return percentages.

### **Factors important after parents receive survey packets**

*Lack of Time.* While many parents would like to complete the survey, many feel that they don't have enough time and given other pressing responsibilities, choose not to complete the survey.

*Apathy.* Some parents, unfortunately, do not care to fill out a questionnaire. It is likely that this is a relatively small percentage.

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*Suspicion.* Other parents may have been suspicious of the intent of the survey. Although reassurances were given that the unique code number did not identify the child or the school, the unique number may have influenced some parents to not complete the survey.

*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.

*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.

## Findings

Three components are presented in the findings section—findings from the structured parent survey, open-ended parent responses, and findings from the principal survey. While each of these is presented separately, pertinent information from each component is presented as is relevant.

### Parent Survey

For the parent survey, seven categories of information were established. These seven categories are contained in Table 3. These groupings were selected to organize information to better understand patterns within the parents’ responses. This will help provide some context within which to interpret findings. Findings for the parent survey will be presented according to the categories listed in Table 3.

**Table 3: Structured Survey Reporting Components**

Categories	Description
General School	Centered on school actions and behaviors and perceptions of school climate
Communication	Communication between the school, teachers, and parents
Information & Understanding	The amount and quality of information provided and the level of understanding of the information by the parent
Teachers	General and Special Education teacher issues
IEP and ARD	Issues specific to IEP and ARD
Parental Interactions	Interactions between the parent and child and family issues
Parental Actions	Parent instigated actions relating to special education resources and training

### General School Issues

The first category of questions, *General School Issues* include questions with prompt containing phrases such as “the school . . .” or “the principal...” Naturally there are overlaps among the other categories. Responses from eight questions were averaged and are presented in Table 4. Only one item within this category has a yes/no response and is not included in this table.

For this report, a Type 1 Rating uses an *Always to Never* dimension; a Type 2, *Agree to Disagree*; and a Type 3, *Yes or No*.

**Table 4: Average Ratings across Items in General School Issues**

Type 1 Ratings			Type 2 Ratings		
Always	Sometimes	Never	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
73.1%	21.9%	5.0%	53.6%	28.5%	17.8%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

Within the ratings ranging from *Always to Never*, there were four items ranging from a high of 78.6 percent in the *Always* range to a low of 63.5 percent in the *Always* range. This later item was about 10 points lower in the *Always* category as compared to the other

items. The three items in the *Agree to Disagree* category ranged from a high of almost 70 percent in the *Agree* category to a low of 34 percent in this range for the lowest rated. The remaining item was about at the average for this category in the *Agree* category.

A key element to a successful partnership between the school and the parent is the school environment. The first question in this category relates to the school being a positive and welcoming place for the child. In Table 5 less than one percent of parents felt that the school is “*never*” a positive and welcoming place for their child. As will be seen in the majority of items within the survey, parents who responded using the Spanish version of the survey were slightly more positive than those using the English version. Given the larger number of English surveys, the combined rating (adding Spanish to English) will strongly resemble the English version alone. With about 73 percent of parents saying that the school is *Always* a positive and welcoming place, this is an encouraging finding. On the other hand, about one-fourth of parents said school was only sometimes a positive place. This is a slightly lower rating than given in the fall 2006 survey where almost 80 percent of parents said that the schools was always a positive and welcoming place.

**Table 5: The school is a positive and welcoming place for my child**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Combined</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
Always	72.8%	72.1%	78.0%
Sometimes	26.4%	27.0%	22.0%
Never	0.8%	0.9%	0.0%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

While it is not possible to examine each question by each of the available demographics (such as student ethnicity, parent education, etc.), in some cases issues that might be reasonably associated with these variables will be examined in more depth. Table 6 focuses on the same question found in Table 5 (school positive and welcoming), but restricted to the English survey only. Some interesting patterns are evident. Parents of students classified as Other Health Impaired were more positive (percentage reporting *Always*) than for the other categories. One exception is that parents of African American students’ ratings of *Always* were about the same as for L.D. and Speech.

When considering the reported level of education, regardless of other variables, there was almost no difference in the percentage of parents reporting *Always* (around 80%) except for those reporting being a college graduate with about 74 percent reporting *Always*. Generally, parents of students in the All Other category were less pleased than for the other categories. Parents of students in the White category were less positive than the other Ethnic groups except for the Other Health Impaired category. It must be noted that the All Other disability category covers a wide range of disability categories with relatively small numbers of parents within each specific category. These findings are quite similar in pattern to those found in the fall 2006 survey. Based on these two surveys, there appears to be special concern for parents of White students receiving Speech services. Based on our past experience, it is not uncommon for parents of students receiving Speech services to be unaware that these services are classified as Special Education.

Although the difference were not great among the various education levels reported by parents for this question, parents reporting having a G.E.D. had the lowest satisfaction (as measured by reporting *Always* to this question), followed by parents reporting being a high school graduate. Parents reporting some high school and those reporting being a college graduate had almost the same level of satisfaction (about 10 points higher than those with some high school. Parents who reported having some college were intermediate in their ratings.

**Table 6: “The school is a positive place;”  
Responses by disability and ethnic categories**

Reported Disability	Ethnicity			
	African American	Hispanic	White	Overall
L.D.	76.7%	78.0%	66.9%	71.9%
Speech	75.9%	71.4%	56.6%	66.2%
O.H.I.	75.7%	77.9%	85.8%	82.0%
All Other	47.2%	60.0%	71.0%	63.9%

Source. English Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

This finding was also observed in the parent open ended responses, where a large number of parents reportedly feel positive about school and the services they receive. There were few parents, however, that expressed discomfort in the school setting.

Responses to the second item in this category are reported in Table 7. Only 20 percent of parents responded *Sometimes*, while almost 80 percent responded *Always*. The combined 2.2 percent of parents who respond *Never* represents 30 parents out of almost 1,500 respondents. As with many of the items, respondents using the Spanish survey were more positive.

**Table 7: The school provides my child with all the services documented on my child’s IEP**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	77.4%	76.4%	85.7%
Sometimes	20.4%	21.5%	11.7%
Never	2.2%	2.1%	2.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Table 8 is specific to the principal as compared to the overall school. Within the context of “school”, general education teachers, special education teachers, support staff and administrators are included. For this question, the principal, who is the instruction leader and holds overall responsibility for the school, is the focus of whether he or she supports special education services for their child. The responses to this question mirror those reported in Table 7 where the question related to the school providing IEP documented services. Almost 80 percent of parents responded that the principal *Always* supports special education services. One distinction however is the percentage of parents who report that the principals *Never* support the special education services. For this item,

twice as many parents (4.4%) answered *Never* compared to the percentage that reported *Never* reported in Table 7 (2.2%.)

**Table 8: The principal supports special education services for my child**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	78.6%	77.1%	90.4%
Sometimes	17.0%	18.3%	6.4%
Never	4.4%	4.6%	3.2%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Central to issues surrounding parental involvement is the relationship between the school staff and parents (Table 9). In this case, about 70 percent of parents believe that they are an equal partner – a very similar finding to the fall 2006 survey. Also notable is the smaller relative difference between parents reporting with the English and Spanish surveys. While, overall 70 percent of parents agreed, almost one-quarter of parents were *Neutral* with regard to this question. As found in the 2006 survey, Hispanic parents were generally more positive than African American and White parents. Almost 73 percent of Hispanic parents consider themselves an equal partner compared to 67 percent of African American parents. While about two percent more White parents *Agreed* with this question compared to African American parents, almost three percent more indicated *Disagree* with a smaller percentage of White parents in the *Neutral* range.

**Table 9: I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child's program**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	69.6%	69.6%	69.7%
Neutral	23.1%	22.8%	25.7%
Disagree	7.3%	7.5%	4.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

The next question is specific to high school transition services. The majority of parents who responded to this question had a child in the high school grades. Only a few parents whose child was not listed in the high school grades responded to this question. It may be that these latter parents had experience with other children or have older children than the one selected for the survey. In any cases, removing these parents (who did not have high school children) did not change the patterns. Table 10 is restricted to only those parents with a student in high school. It shows that about 20 percent of parents said that these services were not provided. While this question does not address directly parental involvement, transition services would normally be a parent / school / outside agency partnership. If a noticeable percentage of parents report no transition services, meaningful involvement of parents at the high school level may be suspect. It must be noted that this is one of the few questions to show a change from the fall 2006 survey where about one-third of parents reported *No*. This may be an improvement in this area or reflect more intense activities in the spring of the year as compared to the fall.

**Table 10: The school provides transition services to help my child reach his or her goals after high school**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Yes	78.2%	78.5%	*
No	21.8%	21.5%	*

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

\* Too few respondents in this category for stable response (n<30)

Similar to Table 10, Table 11 asks whether the school provides information on agencies that assist in the transition from high school. Just over half of parents indicated *Agree*. About 16 percent of parents *Disagree* while about 25 percent are *Neutral*. Taken together with the previous table, the patterns of response indicate that this is an area of concern for parents at the high school level that should be addressed. Findings here are similar to the fall 2006 survey.

**Table 11: The school provides information on agencies that can assist my child in the transition from high school.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	57.4%	57.1%	*
Neutral	26.2%	25.9%	*
Disagree	16.4%	17.0%	*

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

\* Too few respondents in this category for stable response (n<30)

A more general question asked about services outside of school (Table 12). This question is applicable to all grade levels as opposed to the previous two tables. Fully 30 percent of parents *Disagree* with this item. This repeats the findings from fall 2006. With the lowest rated question in this category, this area needs attention. With limited resources within the school, outside support is critical to both the school and the continued well-being of students. Again, for students in a transition period, outside support is critical as they transition from school into their post-school years. For this question, parents of students receiving speech services were much less likely to *Agree* than parents of the other disability categories. The difference between the English and Spanish survey findings is pronounced. Open-ended responses also indicate that parents want more information about services, both provided by the school and by outside agencies.

“Let us know about various programs that would enhance our child’s education, whether it is at the school or somewhere else.”—Parent survey

**Table 12: Special education services have helped my family and I get the services that my child needs outside of school.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	33.9%	32.1%	48.7%
Neutral	36.3%	37.2%	28.7%
Disagree	29.8%	30.7%	22.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

One item within the *General Issues* category relates to after-school and extracurricular activities is included in Table 13. There were lower percentages of parents reporting *Always*, but more importantly, there were over 10 percent of parents reporting that after-school and extracurricular activities were *Never* available. Issues relating to transportation may be a factor in this response. Special transportation services are often provided for students receiving special education services. After-school transportation services may not be available for these students, or for general education students. Although the majority of parents reported that a car was their primary means of transportation, this does not mean that the car, or the parent, is available to pick up their child from after-school activities or take them to school in the morning.

**Table 13: The school ensures that after-school and extracurricular activities are accessible to my child**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	63.5%	62.7%	70.2%
Sometimes	23.9%	24.1%	21.9%
Never	12.6%	13.2%	7.9%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

### Communication Issues

The communication category includes six items and involves the school, school staff, and parents. There was only one question where parents could response *Agree* or *Disagree*. Communication with the school is an important component of parental involvement. Without effective communication, trust is an unlikely component of interactions. Lacking trust, those responsible for the education of a child are probably not in a position to offer the best education for a child. While most schools routinely communicate with parents by providing documents, sending e-mails, and arranging meetings, these activities do not necessarily mean that effective communication has taken place. 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 provide documents that are not conducive to understandable information. Ultimately, it is imperative to provide information in a manner that parents receive, understand, and believe that district feels that they believe they are important. It is important to assess both what districts and campuses report they are providing, as well as parents' beliefs regarding these communication efforts. The principal survey findings summarized principals perceptions regarding the communications efforts put forth by schools and lists communications strategies listed by principals. Table 14 contains the average ratings for the questions in this area.

“Teacher and school could communicate more often of my child’s advancement and how we could assist at home with assignments with books not copies... Teachers need to communicate or write in the journal weekly....” —Parent survey

**Table 14: Average Ratings in the Communications Area**

Type 1 Ratings			Type 3 Ratings	
Always	Sometimes	Never	Yes	No
63.0%	32.4%	4.6%	85.1%	14.9%

Source. *English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

“Train the teachers to have open communication with the parents. This is the key to success.”—Parent survey

Like in the fall 2006, the open-ended parent responses indicate that communication issues and regular reports to parents are important. Respondents were concerned with communication issues between parents and the special education staff. Parents were also concerned about the communication between the special education setting and the general education setting for the purposes of coordinating services for students. Parents want to stay informed and suggested increasing the frequency of reports to them about the progress of their children.

Table 15 shows that almost 70 percent of parents agree that the school communicates regularly regarding IEP progress and other important issues. As with most other areas, the responses from the Spanish surveys are more positive. Overall one-fourth of parents said that only *Sometimes* does this communication occurs and about five percent reported *Never*. Communication is one of the key points in establishing trust and partnerships. Almost one-third of parents noted that the school communicates *Sometimes* or *Never*, indicating that communication is an area that should be improved. These results mirror those found in the fall 2006 survey.

**Table 15: The school communicates regularly with me regarding my child’s IEP progress and other important issues**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	68.8%	67.0%	83.4%
Sometimes	25.8%	27.3%	14.0%
Never	5.4%	5.7%	2.5%

Source. *English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

Table 15 involved the school communicating with the parent. In Table 16, the issue is the parent communicating with the teachers. An even smaller percentage of parents say that they communicate regularly about important issues as compared to Table 15. While still more positive than the English survey respondents, those using the Spanish version are notably closer to their English counterparts compared to most other items. Other indicators of school involvement, like participation in school activities and organizations, are discussed in the section summarizing the principal survey.

“We need better communication between the special education department and classroom. The special education department has experts in dealing with children with learning disabilities; however, expert advice does not seem to make it into the classroom.”—Parent survey

Taken together, Tables 15 and 16 indicate that communication is an important area that should be addressed. Without communication, continued progress for the child and partnerships between school and parent, would seem to be in jeopardy.

**Table 16: I communicate with my child’s teacher regularly about my child’s IEP progress and other important issues**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	57.2%	56.7%	61.3%
Sometimes	39.0%	39.5%	34.8%
Never	3.8%	3.8%	3.9%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Further exploring the area of communication, the findings in Table 17 reflect communication between the parent and others who work with their child. This is a more general statement than in the two prior tables and reflects on the efforts of Special Education Services to facilitate this communication. About the same percentage of parents *Agree* (59 %) that this is taking place. Fully one in eight *Disagree* that this is happening and a little less than 30 percent are *Neutral* in this area. Of special concern is the response pattern by ethnic group. While Hispanic parents continue to be more positive (68% *Agree*), only 60 percent of African American parents respond in this category and for White parents, only about half *Agree*.

**Table 17: Special Education Services have helped my family and I communicate more effectively with the people who work with my child and family.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	59.4%	58.1%	70.5%
Neutral	27.2%	27.7%	23.5%
Disagree	13.4%	14.2%	6.0%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Another aspect of effective communication is not just that it occurs, but that the communication conveys important, useful information. Table 18 addresses this aspect. About 70 percent of parents believe that the school proved them with information about their child’s disability and about 30 percent noted that the school does not provide this information. The difference between the English and Spanish survey results are dramatic and mirror what was reported in the fall 2006 survey. While it is likely that schools are providing important information, and this is noted in findings from the principal survey, there are still a meaningful percentage of parents who responded that the school did not provide this relevant information. It is possible that the information provided overwhelms many parents or is of a nature that the parent does not find it useful.

**Table 18: The school provides me with information about my child’s disability**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Yes	71.7%	69.6%	88.7%
No	28.3%	30.4%	11.3%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Because the provision of information is such an important area, other questions were included on the surveys to further explore this area. The specific aspect examined in the question reported in Table 16 centers on *written* information. In this case, there does not

appear to be a major issue with 88 percent of parents responding *Yes*. While there is a percentage (12%) of parents who report *No*, it must be remembered that language contained in written communication is often dictated by federal and state requirements and can be quite difficult to understand (even for a sophisticated parent). Together the information reported in Table 18 and 19 seem to argue for the relevance or usefulness of the information rather than the difficulty of the information. The same conflicting results (Table 18 versus Table 19) were seen in the fall survey.

**Table 19: Written information I receive from school is easy to understand**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Yes	90.3%	90.7%	87.5%
No	9.7%	9.3%	12.5%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

One final aspect of this area asks about information provided in the native language. In this case, parents responding using the Spanish language survey do have a less positive response than in almost other areas. Seventeen percent of parents using the Spanish survey report that they did not receive information in their native language. This would seem to be an area that can be relatively easily addressed. The evaluation team did contact several districts with all responding that they did provide information in Spanish. An examination of the TEA web site finds important information in many different languages. Still, this does appear to be an issue that can be addressed. Note that about five percent of parents using the English survey also said that they did not receive information in their native language. In Texas, there are at least 100 distinct language groups – findings such as this might be expected.

**Table 20: Information is provided to me in my native language**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Yes	93.2%	94.5%	82.8%
No	6.8%	5.5%	17.2%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

### Information and Understanding

While closely related to the prior section, we believe that this area is slightly different in directionality and specificity of the question. Moving from communication to understanding, the four items in this section are shown in Table 21 averaged over the two questions within each of the reporting dimensions.

“Que tengan más información en folletos o en persona, unas pláticas personales con sus maestros para que ellos me digan como hacer yo en casa para poder ayudarlo.”  
 [Please have more brochures or personal contact with the teachers so that I can learn how to help my child] Parent survey

**Table 21: Average Ratings in the Information and Understanding Area**

Type 2 Ratings			Type 3 Ratings	
Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Yes	No
69.2%	20.8%	10.1%	90.3%	9.7%

Source. *English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

As seen in Table 22, the large majority of parents *Agree* that teachers and administrators ensure that parents understand the Procedural Safeguards. This large percentage is not surprising given the vast amount of information that is available from the schools directly as well as resources such as TEA and ESC websites in addition to several advocacy groups dedicated to special education issues.

**Table 22: Teachers and administrators ensure that I fully understand the Procedural Safeguards (also know as the Rights booklet).**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Yes	89.2%	89.5%	86.7%
No	10.8%	10.5%	13.3%

Source. *Analysis of English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Surveys*

Also with high ratings, and a relatively small difference between English and Spanish surveys, parents report that the evaluation report is written in a manner that the parent can understand. Understanding a student’s progress and situation is important if the parent is to be actively involved in the student’s education.

**Table 23: My child’s evaluation report is written in terms I understand**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Yes	91.4%	91.9%	87.5%
No	8.6%	8.1%	12.5%

Source. *English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

Paralleling information covered earlier in Table 18, there is about 12 percent of parents who *Disagree* that special education services have helped understand a child’s disability and a little more than 20 percent who were neutral in response to this question. The earlier question asked whether the school had provided information regarding the child’s disability. Although the response categories are different, the pattern is about the same for each question. This might be expected that if the school didn’t provide information, it would follow that special education services would also have low or neutral ratings.

**Table 24: Special Education Services have helped my family and I understand my child’s disabilities.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	65.8%	64.4%	77.3%
Neutral	22.0%	23.0%	14.0%
Disagree	12.2%	12.6%	8.7%

Source. *English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

Although rated somewhat higher, as seen in Table 25, still over 25 percent of parents were either *Neutral* or *Disagree* with special education services helping to evaluate how much progress the child is making. The lower rating given to this question compared to the earlier question about whether the evaluation report is written in understandable perhaps indicates that although the evaluation report is understandable, it does not provide the information needed to evaluate progress. Again, the results from the Spanish survey are considerably more positive.

**Table 25: Special Education Services have helped my family and me be able to evaluate how much progress my child is making.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	72.6%	71.3%	84.7%
Neutral	19.5%	20.3%	12.7%
Disagree	7.9%	8.4%	2.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

### Teacher Issues

The next six questions are grouped in an area that relates to teacher issues. There are some interesting findings in this area with a summary over the six questions included in Table 23. Only Type 1 ratings were used for these questions. While Table 26 contains the averages, the actual range of responses in the *Always* range went from a low of about 59 percent to a high of about 77 percent.

**Table 26: Average Ratings for Teacher Issues**

Average Type 1 Ratings		
Always	Sometimes	Never
68.7%	28.6%	2.7%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Tables 25 and 26 focus on teachers understanding of a child’s needs and their willingness to discuss the needs with parents. Both of these questions pertain to a teacher’s attitude and

“Our relationship is incredible. They love and teach my child as if their own.”—Parent survey

caring for a child – not necessarily to the teacher’s skill in instruction. Of all six items in this area, the question represented in Table 24 was the lowest rated with only about 60 percent of parents agreeing that teachers (in general) understand my child’s needs. The difference between the English and Spanish survey was the greatest for this question. Although almost 40 percent of parents also said that teachers understand a child’s needs *Sometimes*, almost no parent responded with a *never* rating. As with other questions, Hispanic parents (70%, *Always*) were much more positive than African American (53%, *always*) or White parents (53%, *Always*).

While almost 60 percent of parents said that teachers *always* understand their child’s needs, the results seen in Table 28 indicate that 76 percent of the teachers were *always*

willing to discuss issues and less than 3 percent of parents said that a teacher is *never* willing. In other words, even if there was a perception that 40 percent of teachers sometimes did not understand a child’s need, most of them were *always* or *sometimes* willing to discuss these needs.

**Table 27: Teachers understand my child’s needs**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	58.5%	55.9%	77.9%
Sometimes	39.8%	42.0%	22.1%
Never	1.7%	2.1%	0.0%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

**Table 28: Teachers show a willingness to discuss my child’s needs**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	75.9%	75.7%	77.8%
Sometimes	21.5%	21.7%	20.3%
Never	2.6%	2.6%	1.9%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

As before, there were very few parents saying that teachers would *Never* work together. Interestingly, over 25 percent said that teachers were only *Sometimes* willing to work together. While not an overly large percentage, if the perception of this many parents is that teachers are only *Sometimes* willing to work together, this may reflect indirectly on the willingness of teachers (taken together) to work with the parents as well. Note the considerable difference between results from the English and Spanish surveys.

**Table 29: Teachers work together to set appropriate expectations for my child**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	69.9%	68.5%	81.4%
Sometimes	26.6%	27.7%	17.3%
Never	3.5%	3.8%	1.3%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

As shown in Table 30, about 67 percent of parents report that teachers *Always* understand their roles in implementing IEPs. As with all questions in this area, only a small percentage (2.0%) report that teachers *Never* understand their role regarding implementing an IEP. There is an even larger difference between the English and Spanish surveys compared to the previous table (Table 29). As with most of the items, results from the fall 2006 and spring 2007 survey are very similar.

**Table 30: Teachers understand their roles in implementing my child’s IEP**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	66.8%	64.9%	82.6%
Sometimes	31.1%	33.0%	16.1%
Never	2.0	2.1%	1.3%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Tables 31 and 32 are considered together with the same questions differentiated between general education and special education teachers. As might be expected, special education teachers had a higher rating of *Always* implementing accommodations and modifications as indicated on the IEP. Few parents reported that either general or special education teachers *Never* implemented the IEP appropriately. Still there were issues for some parents with over 30 percent of general education and 21 percent reporting that special education teachers only *Sometimes* implement accommodations and modifications. While these are clearly parental perceptions, with one parent in five reporting that special education teachers only *Sometimes* implement IEPs, this is an area of concern.

The district implemented mainstreaming but the teachers did not have the training in special education. My son was not helped at all. He was just placed in regular classrooms and expected to absorb something. ... there was just the lack of knowledge of how to..." —Parent survey

**Table 31: General education teachers implement accommodations and modifications as indicated on my child's IEP**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	64.2%	62.7%	76.5%
Sometimes	31.6%	32.9%	20.9%
Never	4.2%	4.4%	2.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

**Table 32: Special education teachers implement accommodations and modifications as indicated on my child's IEP**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	76.9%	77.0%	76.6%
Sometimes	20.8%	20.8%	21.4%
Never	2.3%	2.3%	2.0%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

### Individual Education Plan Admission, Review and Dismissal

This section of the report focuses on issues directly related to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee. This particular area has the highest average rating of 81% in the *Always* category. However, the percentage in the *Never* category is higher than other areas; but this is driven primarily by one question. There were three questions included in this area.

**Table 33: Average Ratings for IEP and ARD Issues**

Average Type 1 Ratings		
Always	Sometimes	Never
80.9%	15.2%	3.9%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

As seen in Table 34, almost 80 percent of parents say that their concerns and recommendations are considered *Always*. While a very small percent say *Never*, there remains almost one in five parents who chose the *Sometimes* category. Even if the parents concerns do not lead directly to actions, it should be that the parent's concerns and recommendations are at least considered. Part of parental involvement is that their concerns should be considered and the parent should believe that, in fact, this is being done in an honest fashion. The responses from the English and Spanish surveys are very similar for this item.

**Table 34: My concerns and recommendations are considered by the ARD committee in the development of the IEP**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	79.2%	79.3%	78.3%
Sometimes	18.8%	18.7%	19.1%
Never	2.0%	2.0%	2.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Leading from Table 34, information in Table 35 is the next step. If the parent's concerns and recommendations are considered by the ARD committee, do these concerns lead to joint selection by committee members and parents of accommodations and modifications? Table 35 shows that 86 percent of parents responded "*Always*." For this question the difference between the English and Spanish surveys was small, but different from most other items in that the responses from the Spanish survey were less positive than from the English survey.

**Table 35: At the ARD meeting, we select accommodations and modifications that my child needs.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	85.9%	86.4%	82.1%
Sometimes	12.1%	11.7%	15.4%
Never	2.0%	1.8%	2.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

A singular aspect of the ARD meeting was the target of the next question (Table 36). The question asked specifically about participation in statewide assessments. The state is transitioning from TAKS I and SDAA II to regular TAKS and the new assessments for students receiving special education services (TAKS Accommodated and TAKS Modified). The implications for students and parents should be a topic of concern for all involved. A subsequent analysis of this question that restricted the analysis to parents with students in grade 3-11 (where TAKS and SDAA II were given) found little difference to the values contained in Table 33.

**Table 36: At the ARD meeting, we discuss how my child will participate in statewide assessments (like the TAKS)**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	77.6%	78.2%	72.7%
Sometimes	14.6%	14.4%	16.2%
Never	7.8%	7.4%	11.1%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

### Parental Interactions with Child

In this section, three questions were included that examined issues surrounding parental interactions with their child. Included in Table 37 are the two questions with a Type 1 rating. In this case, there was very little difference between the two questions. There were few parents who responded in the *Never* category.

**Table 37: Average Ratings for Parental Interactions with Child**

Average Type 1 Ratings		
Always	Sometimes	Never
75.2%	23.6%	1.3%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Slightly less than 75 percent of parents did respond that they *Always* engage in learning activities with their child. Less than one percent of parents said that they *Never* engaged in these activities. No meaningful difference was found from the values in Table 38 when the analysis was restricted to parents of students in grades before high school where it might be more common for direct learning activities to occur.

**Table 38: I engage in learning activities with my child at home**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	73.5%	72.6%	80.8%
Sometimes	25.7%	26.8%	16.7%
Never	0.8%	0.6%	2.6%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

As seen in Table 39, a slightly higher percentage of parents reported talking to their child about what they are learning in school with only a few parents responding with *Never*. In this case, the responses were lower from the Spanish survey as compared to the English survey.

**Table 39: I ask my child to talk about what he or she is learning in school**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	76.9%	77.7%	70.4%
Sometimes	21.4%	20.8%	26.3%
Never	1.7%	1.5%	3.3%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

With one of the higher *Never* (6.2 %) response rates, Table 40 contains responses regarding whether special education services have helped their family. The differences here are notable between the English and Spanish Surveys in the *Disagree* category. While still a relatively low percentage in the *Never* category, nevertheless, this is an area that should be addressed. If a parent does not believe that special education services are helping, the likelihood of effective parental involvement and partnerships to increase instructional effectiveness is low.

**Table 40: Special Education Services have helped my family and me feel that my efforts are helping my child.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Agree	79.2%	78.9%	81.5%
Neutral	20.0%	20.5%	16.6%
Disagree	6.2%	6.7%	2.0%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

### Other Parental Actions

There were four questions that we have grouped together in a category labeled Other Parental Actions. The average rating for the three Type 1 response items are included in Table 41. It is cautioned that these average ratings are derived from questions with very different response patterns. The responses to two of these questions are very different from the remainder of questions in any of the other categories.

**Table 41: Average Ratings for Parental Actions**

Average Type 1 Ratings		
Always	Sometimes	Never
32.7%	28.6%	38.7%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Combined, about 70 percent of parents respond that they are comfortable making suggestions to benefit their child. However, also see in Table 42, there is a very large difference for respondents to this question between those using the English survey compared to the Spanish one. Less than 50 percent of those using the Spanish survey responded *Always* compared to over 70 percent of the English survey parents. In the *Never* area, about four times the percentage of Spanish survey respondents was seen compared to the English survey. These findings do not seem to indicate that the parent feels an equal partner with the school, especially for those using the Spanish survey. This is an area that certainly seems to call for actions on the part of districts, especially for Spanish speakers. This response pattern is similar to the fall 2006 survey, but more pronounced in the differences between the English and Spanish surveys.

**Table 42: I feel comfortable in making suggestions that I think would benefit my child and other children with disabilities.**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	70.1%	72.7%	48.3%
Sometimes	26.2%	24.5%	40.9%
Never	3.7%	2.8%	10.7%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Although no comparable data were available for parents of general education students, the findings contained in Table 43 do not speak for participation in support organizations. In fact, a comparison to other organizations for general education, e.g., PTAs or PTOs, may not be a good comparison given different agendas. The question remains “what is a good finding” as far as this percentage is concerned. The answer from the organizations might be close to 100 percent and from schools a much lower percent. The reported information, however, speaks quite clearly that parents are not involved in these organizations to any extent (only about 15 percent say they *Always* participate). Only 1 in 5 of those using the Spanish survey said that they *Always* or even *Sometimes* participated. Whether they do not know of these organizations, do not see a need to be involved, or some other reason was not part of this study. This result has changed little from the fall 2006 survey.

**Table 43: I participate in an organization for parents of children with disabilities**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	15.2%	16.3%	5.4%
Sometimes	28.8%	30.4%	15.5%
Never	56.0%	53.3%	79.1%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

Similar response patterns to Table 43 are seen in Table 44 where the question centered on attending training sessions. Training sessions can be provided by special interest organizations, local districts, education services centers, universities or others. Still, even with a multitude of trainings offered, only a small percentage report attending these trainings. As noted in the previous table, the percentage of Spanish speaking parents actively involved is considerably lower than for the English survey parents. Note that this question is not organization specific. It refers to any training. Again, whether parents do not know of these trainings, do not see them as helpful, difficult to attend, or some other reason was not assessed in this survey. In our opinion, trying to identify the locus of the decision not to participate would be quite difficult.

**Table 44: I attend training sessions relating to the needs of children with disabilities and their families**

Response	Combined	English	Spanish
Always	12.9%	13.6%	7.3%
Sometimes	30.7%	32.2%	17.9%
Never	56.4%	54.2%	74.8%

Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.

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One final question in the structured area of the survey is represented in Table 45. Less than 50 percent of parents (combined over both surveys) responded that special education services have helped make changes in family routines that will benefit their child. As with some of the other questions in this area, it is not clear whether the changes were needed or welcomed. If changes in family routines, such as a more structured environment, might be helpful, from these data, it does not appear that there is strong support that special education services are a strong component of changes in family routines. For families with one or more than two adults, about 50 percent indicated that they *Agree* with the statement. For families with two adults, only 43 percent indicated *Agree*.

**Table 45: Special Education Services have helped my family and I make changes in my family routines that will benefit my child with special needs.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Combined</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
Agree	46.9%	45.6%	58.0%
Neutral	33.9%	34.7%	27.3%
Disagree	19.2%	19.8%	14.7%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

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## Parent Open-Ended Responses

In addition to the structures survey, parents were asked to respond to five open-ended questions. A total of 759 surveys containing open-ended questions were received. Of these, 646 were in English and 113 were in Spanish. Unless there are important differences, English and Spanish open-ended responses will be combined. Parent open-ended surveys were analyzed by question and responses clustered into several themes. As these are open ended questions, responses are distinct and unique to parents' needs. When there was a commonality of response theme, critical elements will be highlighted. Not all parents answered each question.

Parents of students who receive special education services were asked to share their experience on the following aspects: (1) the overall improvements needed in special education services; (2) how to improve or enhance parental participation in their children's education; (3) how to improve their relationship with teachers; (4) to identify the major roadblocks to participate in their children's education, and (5) to give additional comments on special education services received.

This section summarizes overall findings with regards to parents' opinions and perceptions reflected in the open-ended surveys. Open-ended surveys were analyzed by question and responses clustered into various emergent themes. Each response is unique and thus the themes under which these responses have been categorized describe the issues in broad strokes. For example, communication covers many potential issues that obstruct an open communication with teachers, or communication between special education and regular education teachers, and so forth. Sometimes one response may cover more than one theme.

Following is a discussion of the prevalent themes across all questions and a summary of responses by each of the five questions.

### Prevalent themes

Two prevalent findings across all responses involve overall program satisfaction and communication. Overall, parents of students who receive special education services who responded to the open-ended questions are satisfied with the special education services. While parents seem overall satisfied, parents also indicate that they want improved communication and more information regarding their children's disability and overall progress in school.

*Satisfaction*—respondents indicate satisfaction with the special education services their children receive. Even when asked to identify major roadblocks, the most prevalent response was that the school and or the teachers were appreciated for their good work.

*Communication*—across all questions, communication comes forth as a predominant area of concern identified by respondents. When asked about the most important change to improve the relationship with teachers and to improve parental participation, communication emerged as a prevalent theme. In general, parents want to stay informed

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and asked for progress reports and contact with teachers. Some asked for training and workshops to understand and help with homework at home.

**What could be done to improve the special education services that your child receives?**

Many parents noted that the services they receive are already successful as they are. Some sample quotes include:

*“The PPCD program at this Elementary is first rate. Their inclusion program with regular ed/ special needs is the key to its success.”*

*“Mi opinión es que los servicios de el programa están muy bien por que nuestro hijo si ha mejorado.” [...the services from this program are good because our son has improved...]*

*“Hasta ahora creo que lo están haciendo bien ya que he visto demasiado avance en mi hija.” [Up until now, I think they are doing a good job because I see a lot of improvement in my daughter.]*

While parents were overall satisfied with the services they receive, several parents noted things that could be done to improve the education of their children. Improvement in communication was a prevalent theme. Of those things that parents considered needed improvement were:

- ✓ More communication or information provided to parents such as progress reports, and about the disability to learn more about it.
- ✓ Spanish respondents wanted Spanish speakers. *“Que haya maestros que hablen español para ayudar a los padres.”* (...teachers that speak Spanish to help the parents)

While parents report that they are overall satisfied, they still would like more effective communication between the school, the classroom, and the home. Example of parent opinions includes:

*“Teacher and school could communicate more often of my child’s advancement and how we could assist at home with assignments with books not copies. Copies are ineffective; we need more substantial resources to assist him. Teachers need to communicate or write in the journal weekly what progress is made and how to assist our son at home with homework.”*

*“More weekly contact regarding progress or lack of progress...”*

Another set of issues involves improvement with regards to “teachers” or services that teachers provide. This is also a reflection on the school administrators. Issues such as enforcing IEP’s or offering extended hours were listed as needs by parents. Other issues regarding staff include:

- ✓ teachers need more training on student disabilities;

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- ✓ better prepared staff
  - ✓ better assessment of disabilities
  - ✓ enforce IEPs
  - ✓ improve teacher retention
  - ✓ involve parents
  - ✓ more teachers (reduce ratios)
  - ✓ More student-teacher time or more one on one time with the teachers
  - ✓ extend hours – have flexible hours to involve parents
  - ✓ more funding

*“We need more qualified teachers and TAs. We need principals that are accepting of our kids. We need to follow the IEP for each child. We need to continue to teach Academics to our kids. We need to allow them to be included with typically developing peers so they will learn how to fit into society.”*

*“I am not sure, really. My child moves at his own pace and has his moods. He learns when he lets himself learn. More one on one time would serve him best.”*

### **What can the school do to increase your involvement in your child’s education?**

When asked what schools could do to increase parent involvement, parent responses mostly revolved around communication issues. Regarding teachers, parents said that they want more meetings with teachers, they want to be invited into the classroom, and some asked for teachers to be more sensitive and accessible. Parent involvement issues include:

- ✓ Communication with teacher in general
- ✓ More meetings teacher-parent
- ✓ Invite parents to class to observe and or learn
- ✓ Have bilingual staff or interpreters available
- ✓ Need help with homework
- ✓ Parent training in disability or special ed

*“Let us know about various programs that would enhance our child’s education, whether it is there or somewhere else.”*

*“More parenting classes; visit the classes more; offer more PTA/PTO meetings.”*

*“Stop having negative teachers that won’t let a parent participate!”*

The second most prevalent theme regarding overall parent involvement reported by parents regards an overall sense of satisfaction with their own level of participation. For example, one parent noted, *“I am very involved already; great communication at the school.”*

Some parents noted that they would like to be more involved in ways to help their children at home. Another area of concern emerged around helping parents understand how they can help students at home:

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*“Que tengan más información en folletos o en persona, unas pláticas personales con sus maestros para que ellos me digan como hacer yo en casa para poder ayudarlo.”* [That they have more information whether in brochures or in person, personal conversations with teachers so that they tell me what I can do at home to help him.]

A few parents noted that the school could increase parental involvement by offering more during off hours—during times when parents would be more able to attend functions and activities:

- ✓ Offer more extracurricular activities
- ✓ Need after school hours, flexibility of schedule

*“Que en las escuelas tengan horarios mas flexibles.”* (That in the schools they have more flexible hours.)

*“Tener horarios por las tardes y fines de semana.”* (Have more schedules in the afternoons or in weekends.)

### **What could be done to improve your relationship with your child’s teachers?**

The majority of parents noted that nothing needs to be done to improve the relationship with their child’s teacher. Parents expressed that they are satisfied with things as they are, or expressed their gratitude and adulation for a specific teacher.

*“Our relationship is incredible. They love and teach my child as if their own.”*

*“Todo está bien.”* [Everything is good]

However, parents want to improve communication and contact with teachers. The next more numerous responses asked for better communication; but parents also asked for more meetings with teachers, would like teachers to improve communication or their attitudes, accessibility, and to invite parents to the classroom. A list of suggestions was:

- ✓ Parent teacher meetings
- ✓ Weekly reports
- ✓ Listen or be more responsive to parent’s suggestions
- ✓ Invite parents into the classroom
- ✓ Need support with homework
- ✓ Parent training on disability and learning at home
- ✓ Availability of bilingual staff or interpreters.
- ✓ Improve transportation services
- ✓ More opportunities for extra-curricular activities

Following are sample parent quotes that exemplify these suggestions.

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*“If the teachers responded to my e-mails and phone calls without me having to contact the principal after months of no response, would help any delays.”*

***“COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY WHEN A SPECIAL ED KID FAILS”***

*“Train the teachers to have open communication with the parents.”*

*“No hay nada mejor que la comunicación.”* [Nothing is better than communication.]

*“Que yo aprenda más el idioma.”* [That I learn the language more.]

*“Tener un intérprete.”* [Have an interpreter.]

**What is the biggest roadblock to participating in your child’s education?**

The most prevalent roadblock identified by parents regarding their lack of participation in their child’s education is a lack of personal time because they are at work, or busy with other children, or have other personal time constraints. This was more marked for Spanish speaking respondents.

*“Working extremely long hours on the job prohibits participation during the week.”*

In identifying roadblocks for participation in their child’s education, the next most prevalent response expressed a sense that everything was okay with their children’s education or that reasonable efforts by the school and staff were taking place.

*“Ninguno, por que son muy atentos tanto la maestra como el personal de la escuela por que cuando no puedo asistir lo usamos por teléfono y me lo traducen al español para que lo entienda bien.”* (Nothing, because they are very attentive whether the teacher or the school staff... because when I cannot attend we use the phone and they translate for me so that I understand well.)

The next most numerous responses were concerning communication with teacher or staff. A few expressed a sense of being overwhelmed by the nature of the special education guidelines.

*“Better communication between the special education department and classroom. The special education department has experts in dealing with children with learning disabilities; however, expert advice does not seem to make it into the classroom.”*

*“Special Ed Services and guidelines are very confusing. It is difficult for me to understand and I am a teacher with a master’s degree. I feel sorry for students whose parents are not educated. I cannot imagine how those parents feel.”*

When Spanish speakers were asked about roadblocks (obstáculos) they mentioned the need for bilingual interpreters more than in any other questions.

*“El idioma”* (The language)

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Another salient theme among were parents who view as a roadblock their own lack of skills, training or understanding of the disability of their child. Thus they ask for help and training on these matters. A few mentioned their own health as problematic. A few wanted homework to be able to help students at home.

Transportation was relatively a more visible issue when parents were specifically asked to identify roadblocks to their participation.

A few miscellaneous responses touched on various issues such as focus on TAKS, the building itself or the vulnerability with bullies and a sense of improper security measures for their children:

- ✓ Space problems with building, overcrowding, lacking adequate rooms
- ✓ Over-emphasis on tests
- ✓ Bullies, security issues in school
- ✓ Proper medical care

**Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the special education services your child receives?**

There is consistency between English and Spanish speakers and across all respondents' regarding the appreciation for the school and teacher efforts. Several parents were pleased with services. This appreciation is similar across all questions but is more visible when parents were asked specifically about how to improve the relationship with teachers or with this question, which asks what else they can add to their comments to improve special education services.

*“All EC/PPCD programs should be a team between teachers, assistants, speech, OT/PT and adaptive services. Their support and teamwork is what makes my child’s experience successful and fun. Yes they all have a great time at school! They do not even realize how much they are learning, sharing, talking, etc. It is one big family.”*

*“Que la atención que le dan los maestros es buena y el programa de educación especial es un servicio muy bueno por que a nuestro hijo lo ha ayudado a aprender más cosas.”*  
(That the attention the teachers give is good and the special education program is a very good service because it has helped our child in doing more things.)

*“Nada más agradecerles por el apoyo y ayuda que ha recibido de parte de ustedes. Muchas gracias.”* [Just to thank for the support and help we have received from you. Thank you very much.]

Parents also listed other areas that were a concern to them. These general categories include:

- ✓ Communication (between regular and special education teachers or with parents, progress reports, etc.)

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- ✓ Teacher training
  - ✓ Emphasis or Fear of TAKS
  - ✓ More one-on one or more teachers for the special ed students

Some of the parents who felt that the special education program needs improvement offered suggestions such as more training for teachers or asked that teachers be more attentive, others asked they listen to parents, or that they be more patient.

*“In regards to my child’s learning difficulty, I feel the teachers need to be aware of the signs if there are any areas of concern..... I feel very strongly in testing a student that is in speech therapy for a learning disability if the parent has concerns or wishes so...”*

*“I am very disappointed in the services that my child received while in the public school system. There is such a lack of knowledge among the teachers working with these students. Our son had teachers that wanted to help but did not have the training. The district implemented mainstreaming but the teachers did not have the training in special ed. My son was not helped at all. He was just placed in regular classrooms and expected to absorb something. I do believe that the majority of those involved wanted to meet his needs, there was just the lack of knowledge of how to. Also I have been so disappointed at the lack of resources or training or guidance that the school provided our family. Everything that we have found for help has been found by us the parents. Also, there should be as many opportunities for these children to participate in extracurricular activities that would be skill-appropriate. It is so important that our state starts o realize that people with disabilities have the very same rights that the rest of us have. They are humans just like us. And there needs to be more educating on this. So that there is no ignorance among us, but instead understanding so as to start to bridge the gap between the two worlds; Not to lower our standard, but to teach to help and serve the weaker-and in so doing we begin to learn much more form this special group of citizens than we could ever possibly teach them.”*

*“Que tengan más beneficios y más terapeutas [sic.] para que aprendan mucho más y sepan como salir adelante.”* (That you have more benefits and more therapists so that they can learn more and learn how to overcome.)

Finally, with regards to this open commentary section, some parents focused on their specific needs. Some of these miscellaneous points touched on issues such as:

- ✓ School bullies needs to improve security
- ✓ Schools or staff can’t handle mental problems
- ✓ Train regular staff to decrease spec ed stigma
- ✓ Concerns of students being promoted without really learning
- ✓ Better counselors
- ✓ Bilingual staff needs

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## Principal Survey

As in 2006, a principal survey was distributed to schools that received a parent survey. For spring 2007, the principal survey was distributed to 620 principals whose schools were included in the spring 2007 parent survey. Of these, 214 principals responded to the survey, yielding a 35 percent return rate. A copy of the principal survey is included in Appendix C.

No changes were made to the spring 2007 principal survey. It was the same survey that was distributed in fall 2006. The principal survey provides supplemental information regarding approaches that schools use to communicate with parents. Specifically, principals were asked what measures are taken to specifically reach out to parents of students served by the special education program. Principals were asked to respond to 14 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 addresses in the survey:

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

While researchers obtained and summarized more surveys in spring 2007 than in fall 2006, similar responses were obtained. Principals' opinions regarding parent involvement strategies, communication, and other issues were the same as in fall 2006.

### **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. A wide variety of responses were listed, primarily involving improved communication strategies, promoting the participation in parent/teacher organizations (PTA/PTO), offering parent information and training sessions, and organizing fundraisers and other school festivities. While principals listed many approaches, principals overall believe that schools must take aggressive measure to continuously invite and bring parents into the school. Overall principals agree that the Parent / Teacher organizations help increase parent involvement. Also, principals agreed that classroom teachers need to take an active role in communicating with parents.

*Effective communication Strategies.* Principals, overall, said that an important component in encouraging parental involvement is to first “try to get to know the student’s parent.”

One principal noted that there should be “an open house with special programs.” Another principal said success occurs when there is open communication with parents. One principal noted his/her school’s “Standout Student Recognition” program, when every student is recognized as a standout student before the year is over. Principals listed several strategies that encourage parents to become more active in school activities. These strategies ensure that parents are informed of school events. The strategies listed below indicate that school staff needs to take an active role in communicating with parents. Also, schools are using several avenues (voice mail, newsletters) to increase parent communication. Following is a sample of some strategies used by Principals:

- ✓ Family Nights
- ✓ Career days
- ✓ Open house / Meet the Teacher
- ✓ Meeting held at times that are convenient for parents
- ✓ Involvement in campus advisory teams
- ✓ Making personal call to the home
- ✓ Sending weekly newsletters to the home
- ✓ Easy caller computerized system
- ✓ Use of parents to call other parents
- ✓ Teachers communicating directly with parents
- ✓ Newsletters, Internet, Notes, bulletins
- ✓ Parent Teacher conferences
- ✓ Provide grade level meetings
- ✓ Develop personal relationships
- ✓ Develop a strong parent volunteer program

With regard specifically to parents of students who received special education services, principals said that they use the same strategies for all parents. Principals, however, indicated that ARD committees can serve to establish positive strong relationships with parents. Some principals also note parent involvement opportunities are offered through meetings held specifically regarding the special education program.

In addition to requesting successful communications strategies, principals were asked to list the most commonly used method that their school uses to communicate with parents. Table 46 shows the number of principals that indicated the type of communications most frequently used. Principals were asked to list only one response; however, several principals noted more than one communication method.

**Table 46: Type of Communication: School to Home**

Type of Communication	Number of Responses*	Percent
Letter	51	24%
Telephone	72	34%
Email	20	9.5%
Notes given to students	58	28%
Newsletter	65	31%
Other: web page, student agenda, home visits	28	13%

Source. Spring 2007 Principal Survey.

\* Does not add to 100 due to duplicate counts.

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The two most frequently cited forms of communications are newsletters and telephone, followed by letters and notes given to students. The least used method of communication reported is email. Thirteen percent of principals reported that other methods that include student agendas, websites, home visits, etc. Principals reported that they communicate with parents of children that received special education services in the same way that they communicate with children enrolled in the regular education program.

*Family/ Parent Events, Training, Workshops.* As in previous years, principals said that offering information sessions, workshops and school events are successful practices that involve parents. Principals listed various social, academic and fundraising activities that are implemented in schools. While these events are overall similar, social and fundraising activities are customized and sponsored by each school, therefore creating a wide variety of unique strategies. Some strategies involve parents only, while many involve both parents and students alike. Some of these events are listed below.

- ✓ Family nights for math and reading or other academic areas
- ✓ Student fairs and competitions
- ✓ Parent conferences after every grading period
- ✓ Inclusion Banquet
- ✓ Breakfast with the Principal (Or Math and Muffins, Dads and Donuts)
- ✓ Curriculum forums
- ✓ Night outs
- ✓ Fall Festival, Nigh Outs, Book Fairs, Open Houses,
- ✓ Day of the Dolphin
- ✓ Easter Weekend
- ✓ Walk / jog Wednesdays
- ✓ Fast Feet Fridays
- ✓ One Saturday per year

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One principal noted that it is important to organize events that are important or “relevant” to parents. Examples of these include honor roll assemblies and celebration events of Black History month or Hispanic Heritage Day. Events that involve children, for example, having children perform in music programs or special events, including students in parent conferences, or back to school nights were listed as examples of activities that are relevant to parents. One school created the “Inclusion Banquet”; special education teachers prepare a feast for families of students who receive special education services. Several principals noted that they work closely to coordinate training activities to ensure that training events are not duplicated and to allow for as many training opportunities as possible. Several principals indicated that successful training opportunities are held at hours that are convenient to parents and provide baby-sitting services. One principal notes that “in my experience as a principal for 11 years, the special education parents in our district are much more involved than regular education parents.”

Principals were asked to indicate if the school provides parent training workshops to encourage parent involvement. Two hundred and three principals responded to this question. Of these, 114 (56 percent) said that training is provided and 89 (44 percent) said that training is not provided. Principals were also asked how often training is provided. Responses ranged from weekly training / meetings to two times per year. On average, principals noted that parent training opportunities are offered four to six times per year for parents of students receiving special education services. The percentage is slightly higher than the average percentage reported in fall 2006 (2.5.) Some principals indicate that all or most of the training is provided at the district level, and a few principals reported that while training is provided, training is not specifically targeted for parents of students receiving special education services. Principals noted that these sessions are held at different times throughout the year, most typically once per semester. The majority said that meetings are held in the evenings, though other time periods were also listed (lunch, Saturdays, during school, or in the morning.)

Principals were asked if their school holds an annual meeting to inform parents of children receiving special education services about the school’s special education program. Two-hundred and two principals responded. Of these, 104 (51 percent) said that annual meetings are provided, while 98 (49 percent) noted that special annual meetings are not provided. Several principals said that these information sessions take place during the ARD meeting. Also, several principals noted that information sessions are provided at the district level. Of those principals who said that information sessions are provided, they noted that the parent participation rate in those sessions ranges from 2 to 100 percent. Averaging over all of the responses, 43.9 percent of parents of students receiving special education services attend these information sessions. This is a higher percentage than what principals reported in fall 2006 (23 percent.)

**Services.** Principals were also asked to list services that are provided for parents to encourage parental involvement. Principals were instructed to select as many services as apply to their particular school. Table 47 shows that holding meetings in the evening and providing opportunities for parents to be involved in site-based decision management are the two services provided listed by the majority of principals. As was reported in 2006, a small number (38) of schools listed transportation as a service that is provided to parents. A majority (168) provide

interpreters and/or translators and parent education courses. Seventy-four principals noted that books and videos are also made available to parents.

**Table 47: Services Provided by Schools**

Service Provided	Number of Responses*
Transportation	38
Interpreters / Translators	168
Books videos	74
Baby-sitting services	182
Meetings held in evenings	182
Opportunities to be involved in site-based management	187
Parent education courses	113

*Source Spring 2007 Principal Parent Involvement Surveys.*

Other services listed by principals that are provided to encourage parental involvement include: toy lending library, leadership classes, nutrition classes, literacy and English as Second Language classes, and technology.

**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 parental involvement is to support the schools parent teacher organization or association (PTA/PTO.) Principals said that schools should provide ample opportunities for parents to join these organizations and should support the many PTA/PTO functions, fund raisers and events. Likewise, principals said that the schools should provide parents the opportunity to be school volunteers. One principal noted that is important to “solicit parent volunteer for all activities through monthly newsletters and notes from teachers.” More specific information regarding volunteering ad the PTA are provided in other sections below.

Principals listed the approximate percentage of overall parents and parents of students who receive special education services that actively participate in the PTA/PTO. The table below summarizes the results. Forty percent of principals said that ten percent or less of parents in their schools actively participate in the PTA or PTO. Fifty-nine percent of principals said that 10 percent or less of parents of students receiving special education services participate in these organizations. For parents overall, 13% of principals reported that over 50% of parents in their schools actively participate in these organizations, compared to seven percent reporting that over 50 percent of parents of students receiving special education services participating in parent organizations. Approximately 7% of principals said that 50 percent of parents of students receiving special education services actively participate. These data indicate that overall, a large percentage of parents are not active participants in the schools PTA.

**Table 48: Services Provided by Schools**

<b>Parent Participation in the PTA / PTO</b>		
	<b>Overall Parents</b>	<b>Parents of students receiving special education services</b>
	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
10 % or Less	76 (40%)	113 (59%)
11% to 25%	54 (27%)	40 (21%)
26% to 50%	38 (20%)	24 (13%)
Over 50%	24 (13%)	14 (7%)

*Source. Spring 2007 Principal Parent Involvement Surveys.*

### **Successful Strategies specific to parents of students who receive special education services**

In addition to providing a list of overall parent involvement successful practices, principals were asked to list strategies that are used that are specifically tailored for parents of students who receive special education services. The majority of principals noted that the strategies used to involve these parents are the same strategies used to involve parents of all students. A few principals, however, listed specific strategies for parents of students receiving special education services. One principal noted that a successful strategy for improved communication is to ensure that parents and school staff effectively communicate at ARD meetings. Another principal noted that personal contact with parents is an important communication tool.

In one school that is a member of a special education cooperative, the cooperative has yearly parent information meetings. Teachers are encouraged to attend these meetings to assist and get to know parents.

### **Successful parent involvement strategies implemented by teachers.**

In addition to overall school parent involvement strategies, the survey asked principals to list successful practices that take place in the classroom or by teachers. While the majority of responses overlapped with the general strategies listed for the school overall, several strategies were listed that are specific to teachers. These strategies involve specific teacher activities or classroom management techniques that principals believe are successful in supporting parental involvement. To increase parental involvement, teachers are encouraged to invite parents to assist or volunteer in the classroom in a wide variety of activities. Also useful, teachers implement classroom rules that ensure that communication between the classroom and the home is maximized. Some of the strategies listed by principals are listed below:

- ✓ Emphasize communication
- ✓ Parent contact logs that are checked periodically
- ✓ Develop product for specific units of study
- ✓ Parent conferences
- ✓ Daily contacts and conduct charts and folders
- ✓ Monthly classroom book days
- ✓ Encourage teachers to think of parents as classroom partners
- ✓ E-mails, classroom newsletter, phone calls, daily parent folders
- ✓ Reward and recognition programs at the classroom level
- ✓ Phone calls to parents prior to a referral

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Principals listed a variety of classroom volunteer opportunities. Below is a list of the most frequently listed activities believed to improve overall parental involvement:

### **Parent Involvement Plans**

Principals were asked if their schools have a parent involvement plan that is separate from an overall district-level plan. The majority (26) indicated that their campus has a parent involvement plan. Several said that the plan is imbedded in the overall campus improvement plan. Eight principals noted that their schools do not have a campus-level parent involvement plan.

### **Parent Input and Opinions**

An important component of a successful program is to ensure that parents are allowed to provide input and provide opinions about the overall school, school staff, or other school-related issues. Principals were asked to identify way in which their schools ensures that parent opinions are regularly incorporated into the school's activities or planning process.

Two main avenues for parents to provide input were identified by principals: meetings and participating in school committees. Several meeting formats were listed: monthly meetings, small group meeting, one-on-one meetings, grade level meetings, and informal meetings/chats. Parent participation in school committees was also listed by the majority of principals. Committees include: site based management committees, strategic planning committees, parent leadership committees, campus educational improvement committee, and grade level committees, etc. One principal noted that allowing parents to participate in various summer workshops gives parents the opportunity to provide feedback.

One principal noted that he has an "open door policy with the principal" for parents to visit and provide input. Another principal noted that there needs to be "frequent and continuous dialogue" between the school and parents.

### **Parent Contributions**

Principals were asked to list the two most important contributions made by parents in their school. As in the fall of 2006, the majority of principals listed volunteering and participating in school-level committees and in the PTA/PTO as the two most significant parent contributions.

Principals listed several examples of volunteering activities; these are primarily the same activities that principals listed in previous surveys. Activities include: fundraising, assistance with tutoring, being actively involved with their children's education, gifts to school that benefit all students, cooperating and supporting the work of the school and of the classroom teacher, helping the librarian and the school nurse, partite in filed trips, helping struggling students, organizing school activities (athletics, band, FFA, bakes sales, fairs, sponsoring a grade level, etc.), prepping materials for teachers, room parents or tutors, and helping put together the yearbook.

Principals also noted many examples of how PTA/PTO activities have benefited schools. PTA/PTO's help organize fundraisers, organize large events like fall or spring festivals, are involved in make school level decisions and update school property (buying property, obtaining playground equipment).

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Participating in school-level committees was also listed as an important parent contribution. School-level committees include participation in the site-based management decision process, serving as parent leaders, and attending school events (open houses, meeting with staff and principals.)

One other important parent contribution listed by principals involves parent involvement in their own child's education and in the overall support for the school. Examples of these contributions are listed below:

- ✓ Keeping track of their own children's education
- ✓ Supporting high standards of education
- ✓ Helping the school improve student attendance by ensuring that their children come to school and arrive on time.
- ✓ Supporting the school's academic programs
- ✓ Encouraging of the student to do their best
- ✓ Being academically involved

*Parental obstacles to school involvement.*

While principals acknowledge the important contribution that parents make to their schools, they also are aware that many parents face difficult obstacles to becoming actively involved in their children's education. The survey asked principals to indicate the most important factor that keeps parents of students who receive special education services from getting more involved in the school. The most frequently cited factor involves parents' work schedules. Principals noted that many parents work full time and participating in school activities often means that it will take time away from a parent's work. Three principals noted that many parents work full time and are also single parents. Four principals noted that distance to the school and/or transportation is an important factor that keeps parents from participating in school activities. Other factors were also identified: inability to read or write, lack of education, limited knowledge of the English language, overburdened by meeting basic needs, lack of understanding of the importance of parent participation, and little interest and/or apathy. Lastly, three principals noted that some parents have had bad experiences with school staff or had bad personal experiences during their own schooling, and many parents do not feel welcome by the school. These principals also noted that some parents perceive the special education program as a negative service and a permanent label on their children that they do not like.

## Summary

Through over 1,500 surveys returned in English or Spanish, parents of students receiving special education services voiced their opinion to a set of questions that examined various aspects of parental involvement. The distribution of demographics is reasonably similar to the statewide percentages by student group and disability category and is also similar to those found in the fall 2006 survey. Another extensive survey is planned for spring 2008 and subsequent years.

A total of 24 questions from the parent survey were examined divided into seven topic specific categories. Grouping the three types of responses (Always-Never, Yes-No, and Agree-Disagree), Table 49 contains a summary of responses within these categories. In general, with one notable exception, the responses were overall positive. The percentage of responses in the least positive category, again with one exception, was also small. This category (Parental Actions) included participation in PTA/PTO, attending training sessions, and whether special education services had helped make changes in family routines. It is not clear, nor can be determined from these data, whether responses from parents with students in general education would be different.

**Table 49: Summary by Category**

Category	Positive	Neutral	Negative
	Always Agree Yes	Sometimes Neutral	Never Disagree No
General School Issues	66.4%	24.8%	11.9%
Communication Issues	73.4%	30.7%	11.2%
Information and Understanding	79.8%	20.8%	9.9%
Teacher Issues	68.7%	28.6%	2.7%
IEP and ARD	80.9%	15.2%	3.9%
Parental Interactions	76.5%	22.4%	2.9%
Parental Actions	36.3%	29.9%	33.8%

*Source. English and Spanish Spring 2007 Parent Involvement Surveys.*

Although the respondents were generally positive about the questions regarding their interactions with the school (as seen in the summary ratings in Table 49), there were areas where the ratings were lower.

*The school provides information on agencies that assist my child in the transition from high school.*

*Special education services have helped my family and I get the services that my child needs outside of school.*

Just over half of parents agreed with the first statement and about one in six disagreed. And just one-third agreed with the second item. The responses to these two statements indicate that more effort is needed to establish linkages between schools and outside agencies – of all types. With schools seemingly overwhelmed with challenges, it would seem that establishing helping partners would be reasonable and productive.

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The area of communication was also lower rated than some other areas. For example a little less than 60 percent of parents agreed that there is regular interaction with the teacher on IEP progress. Of course, it takes both teachers and parents to make this communication happen and to be effective.

While almost 40 percent of parents said that teachers understand their child's needs, over three-quarters said that the teachers were willing to discuss these needs *Always*.

Parents did note that general education teachers implemented IEPs at a lower rate than special education teachers.

As in earlier surveys, parents of students receiving special education services were unlikely to attend training sessions or to participate in activities such as PTA.

Overall, parent open ended survey parallels the responses received in the structures survey. Parents that responded to the survey are overall satisfied with the services received by their children's' school. Following is a list of the overall findings from parent responses.

Overall satisfaction—the majority of respondents in expressed being satisfied with the special education services provided by schools.

Communication improvements, regular reports to parents—while overall satisfied, parents also 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 help the academic progress of their children.

Teachers and student monitoring—though relatively few criticisms were offered with respect to teachers in the parent open-ended survey, many parents wanted more contact with teachers through progress reports, information pamphlets, and more classroom activities.

More resources—Parents noted that students with disabilities need intensive services. Respondents want more resources like more student-teacher time or services outside the school day.

The principals that responded to the survey offered multiple examples of successful parental involvement strategies. Most strategies involve improving communications, having “open door policies,” and providing opportunities to participate in making decisions and in volunteering.

Despite and overall low percentage of parents reportedly being actively involved with the PTA/PTO, principals noted how significant parent involvement is to a school. They listed numerous important examples of parent participation activities. Parents have assisted in the classroom as tutors, mentors and overall classroom aides. They have contributed in many school events, like festivals, field trips, fund raising, and many other special projects. Parents have become actively involved in the site-based management process and other school organizations.

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Overall, principals noted that parent contributions and involvement is a critical component for schools and for children. Principals noted their significance, they also noted the many obstacles and barriers parents face to become more active in their children's education. Among many reasons, principals listed lack of time, transportation, and work schedules.

### **Future Actions**

As covered earlier, under the SPP, additional parent surveys will be conducted each year covering the largest districts as well as a sample of other districts. Although technical difficulties resulted in identifying parents of students receiving special education services from a prior year, upcoming survey procedures will help ensure the most recent data. It is expected that this will result in a much higher rate of return. This, in turn, will enable posting of information at the district level that can be considered representative. As a preview of this process, data from this survey where there were at least 25 surveys returned were used to perform some preliminary analyses.

*Rate of Return.* There were 15 districts that had at least 25 surveys returned in time for processing. The number of surveys returned ranged from 27 to 100. The rate of return ranges from 4.0 percent to 27.0 percent based on the initial number of surveys sent. For this purpose, only English surveys were included in the analyses. The actual rate of return was somewhat higher. The point is the wide variance in the rate of return. This information can be used by TEA to determine if a district is perhaps not making a reasonable effort to distribute surveys and encourage their return. Consideration will have to be given to the district mobility rate when making these determinations, but if more recent data are made available for the sampling procedures, mobility should be less of an issue.

*Student Performance.* While it is not argued that parental satisfaction leads directly to student performance, an analysis was made to informally examine this relationship. For this purpose, three questions were selected from the overall parent survey.

The school is a positive and welcoming place for my child (Always, Sometimes, and Never)  
Teachers work together to set appropriate expectations for my child (Always, Sometimes, Never)  
I am considered an equal partner with teachers and other professionals in planning my child's program. (Agree, Neutral, Disagree)

A composite value across these questions was computed for each of the 15 districts noted above. This value was then correlated with performance on TAKS Reading, all grade levels (accountability) for students receiving special education services. The correlation was 0.48 – a fairly strong relationship. This composite was also correlated to performance on TAKSI Reading. The correlation was 0.82, a very strong relationship. Again, no claim is made to causality and these correlations are based on few data points. Still, this illustrates the type of analyses that might be considered in the future. If these relationships are found in subsequent studies, parental involvement actions and parental satisfaction considerations are appropriate for districts to undertake.



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**Appendix A**  
English survey

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**Spanish survey**

**Appendix B**

**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 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.

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?
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
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)
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
3. List two specific efforts/activities that encourage teachers to increase parent involvement in their classrooms?
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
4. Does your school have a written campus level (not just a district-level) parent involvement plan? **YES**    **NO**
  
5. List two strategies in your school have worked best to ensure that parent input and opinions are regularly incorporated into your school's activities?
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
6. Approximately what percentage of parents actively participates in your school's PTA/PTO? (circle one)  

<b>10% or Less</b>	<b>11% to 25%</b>	<b>26% to 50%</b>	<b>Over 50%</b>
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7. Approximately what percentage of parents of students receiving special education services actively participates in your school's PTA/PTO? (circle one)  

<b>10% or Less</b>	<b>11% to 25%</b>	<b>26% to 50%</b>	<b>Over 50%</b>
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**Principal Special Education Services Survey**

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8. What is the most commonly used method that your school uses to communicate with parents? (circle one)

a. Letter

c. Email

e. Newsletter

b. Telephone

d. Notes given to student

f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are any of the following services provided for parents to encourage parental involvement? (circle as many as apply)

\_\_\_\_ Transportation provided for parents

\_\_\_\_ Interpreters / translators

\_\_\_\_ Baby-sitting services

\_\_\_\_ Books, videos

\_\_\_\_ Meetings held in evenings

\_\_\_\_ Opportunities to be involved in site-based

management

\_\_\_\_ Parent education courses (parenting, literary, etc.)

Other (Please list)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Principal Special Education Services Survey**

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

a.

b.

11. Does the school provide parent training workshops to encourage parent involvement?      **YES**  
**NO**

12. If YES (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 these 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 (question 13), approximately what percentage of parents with students receiving special education services attend the annual meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

a. How often are these meetings held?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. When are they most likely to occur?

\_\_\_\_\_

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.**