

# WI State Performance Plan (SPP), Indicator #8: Parent Involvement

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Parent Survey Data Collection

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### General Information

**Question 1:** How do we know if our LEA (district) is required to conduct a parent survey to collect the data for Indicator 8?

**For the 2015-16 School Year:** LEAs are required to conduct the survey in the same year in which they complete the procedural compliance self-assessment. Please see the list found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/xls/selfassmt-cycle-2012-2016.xls> to determine when your LEA is required to conduct the parent survey to collect data for Indicator 8.

**For the 2016-17 School Year:** A cohort of LEAs (districts) will be required to conduct the Indicator 8 parent survey, as well as Indicator 11 (Timely Initial Evaluations) and Indicator 14 (Post School Outcomes survey). Districts selected for conducting the survey in 2016-17 will be notified of their participation by mail and the complete list of districts conducting the survey will be posted to the DPI web site. Contact Daniel Parker, [daniel.parker@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:daniel.parker@dpi.wi.gov) if you have questions about your participation in the 2016-17 school year.

**Question 2:** When is the Parent Survey window?

The parent survey window runs from February 1 to June 30. Directors of Special Education / Pupil Services will receive instructions by email on how to access the Survey Manager application and download their Student List spreadsheet when the survey window opens.

**Question 3:** What is the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager application?

Beginning in 2015-16, a new web based survey management tool, The Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager, was created for LEAs (school districts) to access and monitor the Indicator 8 survey and response rate data. LEAs must activate the survey for their parents by entering the application, providing at least one district contact and reviewing the October 1 Child Count list for your LEA (students can be added if needed). Once the survey is activated by LEAs, the LEA is able to download the spreadsheet of student names used to create mailings, add students, add a link for district level optional survey, download paper surveys, and view real time response rate data.

**Question 4:** How do I access the Indicator 8: Parent Survey Manager application?

The Indicator 8: Parent Survey Manager application can only be accessed through [Special Education Web Portal](#). Within the first table on the Main Menu of the Special Education Web Portal, select the “Setup Survey” or “Collect Responses” link in the “Required Action” column for the “Indicator 8: Parent Survey Manager” application. Both the “Setup Survey” and “Collect Responses” links will bring you into the Parent Survey Manager application.

Note: This Special Education Web Portal may have permissions for administrators and administrative staff. However, only the Pupil Services / Special Education Director has initial access to the Indicator 8 Survey Manager until she/he grants access to other users through the Special Education Web Portal. Thus, the Indicator 8: Parent Survey Manager application will not appear for anyone except the Special Education / Pupil Services Director until that person grants access to the application to other users in the district.

**Question 5:** Who can access the Indicator 8 Survey Manager?

The Indicator 8 Survey Manager was developed for LEA (district) Pupil Services / Special Education Directors and/or their designees to use for survey management. The Pupil Services / Special Education Director can grant access to a designee through the Special Education Web Portal. For questions on accessing the Survey Manager, please contact Yvette Johanson ([dpspeddata@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:dpspeddata@dpi.wi.gov)) or refer to the [Indicator 8: Parent Survey Manager User Guide](#).

## Who Should Receive the Parent Survey?

**Question 6:** For LEAs (districts) required to conduct the parent survey, what qualifies a student to be on the list for the Indicator 8 Parent Survey?

The spreadsheet of student names used to create mailing lists to parents for the survey is based on the October 1 Child Count data the LEA (district) submits to DPI. The survey is intended for parents of students with IEPs aged 3 through 17 enrolled in public school to report how well schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. Thus, parentally placed private school students and students who are 18 prior to Feb 1 (legally adult) are not included in the list of students imported into the Survey Manager application by DPI. If a student was a parentally placed private student during the October 1 Child Count, but is now enrolled in public school, the LEA has the option to manually add the student to the Student List by entering the student's Wisconsin Student Number (WSN).

**Question 7:** What if a student is missing from the survey spreadsheet AND/OR the LEA (district) wants to add students so additional families can take the survey?

It is up to the LEA if they wish to add a student manually to the student list through the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager. It is recommended that the LEA adds students to the list prior to activating the survey. For eligible students, the Survey Manager will generate two survey code (Username and Password) for the student. The student must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible to be added:

- The student associated with the WSN is currently enrolled at a school in your LEA in WSLs;
- The student is aged 17 or younger as of 2/1/2016; and
- The student has not already been added to the list.

**Question 8:** Can a student be excluded from the spreadsheet by the LEA (district)?

Students can be excluded from the survey prior to survey activation. A reason must be provided. Questions 9 through 13 below provide guidance on situations when a student can and can NOT be excluded from the spreadsheet. Most common situations when a student can be excluded include parentally placed private school students, students dismissed from special education in previous school year, and students who left the district and the LEA does not have a forwarding address.

**Question 9:** What if a student on the list moved out of the district, was an out of district placement by the IEP team, or graduated?

If the student moved or was placed in an out of district placement by the IEP team during this school year and you have the parent's current address, send the letter.

If the student graduated or moved out of the district before this school year, do NOT send the letter to the parent. Keep a record of parents who were deleted from the mailing so that you will not follow up with those parents when given unused codes/usernames. If you review your student list prior to activating the survey, you can exclude the student from the survey (write "graduated" or "moved and no address" as the reason which must be provided).

**Question 10:** What if the student is a parentally placed private school student?

Parentally placed private school students should be reported in your October 1 Child Count, but are not imported into the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager. If a parent re-enrolls in public school after October 1, then the LEA may add that student manually to the student list through the Indicator 8 Survey Manager and the Survey Manager will generate two survey codes (Username and Password) for the student.

The purpose of the survey is to get feedback of parents who receive special education services in public schools. If an LEA (district) would like to add a student to the survey roster who is parentally placed, this is an LEA decision.

**Question 11:** What if the child was dismissed from special education?

If the child was dismissed during this school year, send the letter to the parent. If the child was dismissed prior to this school year, the child should not be on the enrollment list from Oct 1 child count which the sample was generated. If she/he is, do not send the letter but keep a record so that you will not follow up later. If you review your student list prior to activating the survey, you can exclude the student from the survey (write "dismissed previous school year" as the reason which must be provided).

**Question 12:** If a student was already 18 at the beginning of the school year, should we send the letter to the student?

No. The survey is written for parents. These students will not be imported into the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager application from the October 1 Child Count and cannot be manually added.

**Question 13:** What if the student is open enrolled into the LEA (district)?

Students are assigned to LEAs (districts) based on Oct 1 Child Count. Students who have been open enrolled into the district prior to Oct 1 will be included on the Student List page of the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager. Students open enrolled into the district after Oct 1 will be included on the student list of the resident district. In both situations, LEAs should send the parent letter for open enrolled students on the spreadsheet.

If an LEA is conducting the survey and a newly open enrolled family asks to take the survey, then the LEA may add that student manually to the student list through the Indicator 8 Survey Manager and the Survey Manager will generate two survey codes (Username and Password) for the student.

**Question 14:** If our list of students includes siblings, should the parent receive a letter for each of them?

Yes. Each letter will include a different student name and a different username/password. Parents may have different experiences/perspectives for different children. LEAs (districts) may enclose multiple letters in one envelope but response rates are based on each student code used (not based on number of families).

**Question 15:** To which parent should we send the letter if there are two parents who are divorced, both with educational rights?

Send a letter to each parent. There is now a Username1 and a Username2 field in the spreadsheet that is downloaded from the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager. The single family [form letter](#) can be used to send letters to the first parent (using Username1) and the second parent [form letter](#) can be used to send letters to the second parent. The downloadable Student List spreadsheet only has space for one parent name, so save a second copy of the spreadsheet or add another column to the spreadsheet for the second parent's name.

**Question 16:** Should the letter be sent to a foster parent, who is typically most involved with the child's education on a day-to-day basis?

The letter should be sent to the person who meets the legal definition of "parent" in Chapter 115.76 (12)(a).

## Generating the Letters

**Question 17:** How do parents find out about the survey?

Each LEA (district) in the current procedural compliance self-assessment cycle who is responsible for conducting the survey must send a letter to the parent(s) of each student eligible to take the survey. DPI provides each LEA with a [sample form letter](#) and a spreadsheet with student names which are merged for parent mailings. The Student List spreadsheet is available through the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager.

**Question 18:** Can the LEA (district) email parents their username and passwords for the survey?

LEAs may email the parent, however, each parent must use the assigned username/password to be able to take the survey. Thus, the LEA would have to ensure each parent received their own individual username/password to be able to take the parent survey (e.g. by using Microsoft Word Mail Merge for email messages). In addition, LEAs would need to ensure student confidentiality for any electronic communications. If parents request a letter explaining the survey and including their username and password, this should be provided to the parent.

**Question 19:** Where can I find the downloadable spreadsheet sent by DPI containing student information used to merge the letters to families letting them know that they are participating in the parent survey?

The Indicator 8 Student List spreadsheet is available through the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager. You must activate the survey for your LEA before you are able to download the spreadsheet. If you are unable to locate the spreadsheet in the Parent Survey Manager application, please contact Yvette Johanson ([dpispedd@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:dpispedd@dpi.wi.gov)) or refer to the [Indicator 8: Parent Survey Manager User Guide](#).

**Question 20:** What should be the Username and Password and/or how do I get the Username and Password for the Parent Letter?

The username and password are generated by DPI and are included in the Student List spreadsheet which is located in the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager application. When the school completes the mail merge between the spreadsheet and sample letter, the Username and Password will be automatically filled into each letter from the spreadsheet. The Username is a unique code for each parent. The Password is the four digit LEA number. When the parent goes to the Parent Survey site, she/he will be prompted to choose a language to take the survey in and is then prompted to enter the Username and Password (spaces do not need to be entered for the Username, the spaces are added to make the Username easier to read).

**Question 21:** Must we fill in all of the telephone contact numbers on the letter to parents?

Your district may select what supports you wish to provide to parents who are asked to complete the survey. You may use all of them if you wish. WSPEI and WI FACETS personnel are familiar with the survey and are prepared to assist districts. If you wish to use a local family resource center, district staff, or cultural liaison, you will need to familiarize them with the survey (scripts for [preschool](#) or [6-21](#) surveys) and how to provide assistance. If you will not use a resource, you may remove it from the letter before generating the mail merge.

**Question 22:** The mail merge is not working.

Differences in versions of Word and other factors can cause difficulties, including moving the merge fields on the letter. Print the form letter before you begin as a reference for where the merge fields should be. Download both the form letter and the completed Excel data file into the same folder. After you “select recipients” (Excel file), check the merge fields to see if they moved. If they did, clicking “undo” should move them back without affecting the step in the merge process. Be sure that only the rows on the Excel file that contain student names are selected (checked) before you merge. You may need to “insert merge fields” in place of those on the form letter in order to connect the letter with the current data file.

## **After Parents Receive the Letter**

**Question 23:** What should we do if a parent calls and says s/he does not want to complete the survey?

If a parent states that she does not want to complete the survey, you can go into the online survey and enter the parent's Username and Password. There is a Welcome screen and then a Consent screen, in which you can check the "No" box next to consent. The survey will then close and the status of the Survey Code will change to "Declined".

**Question 24:** A parent called because his Username and Password is not working. We tried it and get the message "Invalid username or password."

1. Ensure you have activated the survey for your district. The Required Action column in the Special Education Web Portal should display "Collect Responses" and the Survey Collection Status box on the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager home page should be set to "Survey Open".
2. If the survey is active, ask the parent if she/he is willing to complete the survey over the phone with you or to mail in a paper survey that you will send. If the parents want to take the survey over the phone, try the Username and Password yourself. If none of these options work, call or email DPI ([dpispedata@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:dpispedata@dpi.wi.gov)) and report the problem.

**Question 25:** Where are the paper surveys for the school to send to the parent upon request?

Paper surveys must be generated individually within the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager application. Pupil Services / Special Education Directors have access to the Survey Manager by default and they can designate access to others within the Special Education Web Portal. A new feature of the Survey Manager automatically puts the survey username and password onto the bottom of each page of the survey to ensure it is properly entered.

**Question 26:** Can we read the survey to parents or help them with understanding questions?

Yes, scripts to help parents better understand the parent survey are on the DPI Indicator 8 Parent Survey Guidance page. To ensure consistency, anyone assisting a parent with

taking the survey should read the questions on the survey or alternate question formats (included in the scripts) as closely as possible.

**Question 27:** What are different ways that parents can take the survey?

Parents may complete a survey using one of the methods below:

1. **Computer** - If a computer is available to parents, please instruct them to go to the Special Education Parent Survey page (<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/families/parent-survey>) and complete the online survey by **June 30**. They will enter the Username and Password given to them in the letter you have mailed.
2. **Phone** – Parents may call the school district, a WSPEI CESA Family Engagement Coordinator or WI FACETS and a staff member will read the questions to the parent and type their answers into a computer. To identify your WSPEI CESA Family Engagement Coordinator and find their contact information go to <http://wspei.org/contact/>. You can contact a WI FACETS staff member at (877) 374-0511.
3. **Paper survey** – Parents may call their School District before **June 15** and ask for a paper copy to be mailed to them. Paper surveys must be generated and printed by the District through the Indicator 8 Survey Manager application.

Schools may also invite parents to complete the survey in a computer lab at a school, ask parents to complete the survey after IEP meetings, or invite parents to take the survey after other school events (parent nights, report card pickup, etc).

**Question 28:** Can the LEA (district) enter the paper surveys for the family into the online survey web portal?

Districts may enter in paper surveys ONLY if they have provided the family with the option to send their survey directly to DPI to be entered and the district ensures that the student's teachers or those directly working with the family as part of the IEP are not the same people entering in the survey information. Possible data entry staff may include district office staff who do not have direct interactions with the family. In addition, WSPEI CESA family engagement coordinators may be available to help support data entry for the parent survey.

## Following Up

**Question 29:** May we use WI FACETS staff or contracted help to call parents (disclosing parent names and phone numbers to non-employees)?

Yes, if you draw up a contract that is signed by a district representative and the helper who is not an employee of the district or CESA. The contract should include confidentiality language. WSPEI staff are CESA employees that are able to assist with the parent survey.

**Question 30:** What are some options for improving response rates?

The LEA can access the Indicator 8 Parent Survey Manager and view real-time response rates at any time. LEAs can also navigate to the Student List page of the Parent Survey Manager and filter their student list to only those codes that are Unused. LEAs may send out reminder letters to parents, call parents, or request the help of a [WSPEI Family Engagement Coordinator](#) to contact parents. Someone at the LEA should be assigned to monitor survey response rates to ensure high response rates (minimum of 20% and at least 6 respondents). LEAs should plan on multiple methods for follow up and include at least two attempts.

**Question 31:** If we send a letter to both parents who live at separate addresses, and only one completes the survey, must we include the other parent in our follow-up?

No. You have given the opportunity to both parents. Status of the survey on the Student List page will be set to "Submitted".

**Question 32:** How does an LEA (district) know if their survey response rate met the required minimum? If the LEA reaches the minimum but would like to keep trying to increase its response rate, would it have access to the information needed to continue?

The new Survey Manager allows districts to view real time access to response rate data. Keep in mind that there will always be extra time involved for DPI to receive and enter paper survey results. Once the LEA activates the survey, there is a Response Summary section added to the bottom of the home page. The Response Rate Met column will be a red x until the minimum number of responses has been received. At that time, the Response Rate Met column will change to a green checkmark. At the end of the survey window, any LEA that

did not have at least 20% of its sample returned, or six surveys, whichever is greater (the number in the Required Responses column of the Response Summary section of the home page), must follow up with the parents who have Usernames and Passwords that were not returned through the end of the survey window. In the Survey Manager, parent Usernames and Passwords that were not returned will be available to LEAs so they can follow up with additional letters, phone calls, or electronic communication.

LEAs are encouraged to continue their follow-up even if they have reached the minimum response rate requirement. LEAs that have no surveys returned in the final weeks of the survey window may be contacted individually by DPI.

## **Data, Samples, and Reports**

**Question 33:** How is the Required Responses figure that appears in the Parent Survey Manager home page calculated?

The Survey Manager application calculates the number of Required Responses based on the total number of students on the Student List page that haven't been excluded at the time the LEA activates the survey. A statistical formula is applied to this figure (confidence level of 95 and confidence interval of 10) which is the Response Rate Sample. The Required Responses figure is 20% of the Response Rate Sample or 6 respondents, whichever is higher.

**Question 34:** When will the data from our LEA (district) parent survey be reported to the federal Office of Special Education Programs?

DPI submits statewide data on Indicator 8 in the Annual Performance Report by February 1 of the year following the collection of the data. Data collected in one year will be submitted the following year.

**Question 35:** What data from our LEA (district) will be reported back to the LEA?

DPI provides question by question reports to each LEA who has at least 6 responses to the survey. The question by question reports are available for both preschool and school age surveys. Each report includes the number of parents that responded to the survey for that age group and the percent of parents who agreed with each item on the survey. If there are fewer than 6 responses for either age group, the LEA does not get a detailed report for that age group because parents are promised confidentiality of responses.

Starting in 2015-2016, parents can also submit comments at the end of the survey and can choose whether those comments are sent to their Director of Special Education / Pupil Services Director. If you had a parent that chose to share comments, a report of those comments will be available in the Parent Survey Manager after the close of the survey.

**Question 36:** How and when will LEAs receive their individual reports and how does the public get information about individual district parent survey reports?

Reports are made available in the [Special Education Web Portal](#) as well as the public web link to [Special Education District Profile](#). LEAs will be notified by e-mail that their reports are available through the Special Education Web Portal and when the public profiles are posted. To access public indicator 8 district question by question reports, click on the special education district profiles link above, choose your district (LEA), and scroll down to Indicator 8. If you do not see a report listed, you can contact DPI. Some districts may not have reports available if they had fewer than 6 respondents to the survey.

**Question 37:** What if an LEA (district) does not meet the response rate requirement?

LEAs not meeting response rate requirements may be required to conduct the parent survey in the following year until they meet the minimum response rate requirements.

**Question 38:** How is the single percentage calculated for each Special Education District Profile?

**Starting in the 2014-15 school year, ALL questions on both preschool and school age surveys are used to calculate individual LEA and statewide Indicator 8 scores.** The new LEA and statewide Indicator 8 calculation is made by calculating agreement percentage for ALL items on completed preschool and school age surveys submitted during the survey window.

**Question 39:** Who should we contact at DPI for help?

*For questions about this information, contact [Daniel Parker](#) (608) 266-5194*