



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY REPORT 2022-23

REPORT

Analysis of Wisconsin's Indicator 8 Family Engagement Survey Data for the 2022-2023 School Year.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WI DPI) surveys families of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) being educated in public schools, as part of a federally required data collection (Indicator 8) to identify the “percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.” In addition to several specific questions, the survey allows open ended comments. This report describes results on the Family Engagement Survey for the 2022-2023 school year, on both the survey questions and themes in written feedback informing two key questions: 1) What are the areas that families feel are working well in their child's education? and 2) What are the areas where families feel they need more support? Quantitative results were calculated for average percentage agreement across all survey questions, and for each question, as well as for specific ages (preschool / school age), races / ethnicities, primary impairment areas, and regions. Qualitative results of themes and subthemes relevant to these questions are listed below, and summarized in the report.

- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): Identification; IEP Meeting Scheduling; IEP Meeting Experiences; IEP Content; IEP Implementation
- Staff: Response to Family; Concerns Addressed; Professionalism & Effort; Experience & Knowledge; Additional Training; Awareness of IEP; Staffing & Turnover
- Communication: Tone & Openness of Communication; Progress Updates; Frequency of Communication; Format; Proactive Initiation of Communication; Inter-staff Communication
- Progress: Academic Progress; Social / Emotional & Area of Impairment Progress; Graduating from Services
- Accommodations: Effectiveness; Amount; Missing; Explanations When Not Provided; Details
- Educational Environment & Culture: Classroom; Courses, Curriculum, & Grading; Culture; Bullying; Expectations; Integration & Extracurriculars; Legal Issues
- Behavior: Behavior Due to Lack of Accommodations; Disproportionate Discipline & Manifestation, General Discipline; Behavioral Issues Receiving More Support; Behavior Management
- Child: Self-Advocacy; Relationship with Staff; Effort, Resistance, & Cooperation, Mental Health
- Transitions to New Schools & Future Preparation: Future Preparation; Higher Education; High School Tour; Continuity of Services
- Home, Community, & Non-School Services: Community Services; External Resources & Services; Home Support; Changing Districts

SURVEY BACKGROUND

Families play a valuable role in their child's education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that parents and guardians with a child in public school have the opportunity to participate on Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams for their child. As outlined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/about/state-performance-plan/indicators/8-parent-involvement>), rights and procedural safeguards should be explained to parents and guardians throughout the special education process, and parents and guardians can participate in any meetings about their child's identification as a child with a disability, their child's evaluation, and their child's educational placement, as well as any meetings about the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to their child. More details about families' rights in the special education process can be found here: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/families/rights>.

Each year, states must measure how well schools are facilitating engagement among families with children receiving special education services. The results of this assessment are one of sixteen indicators reported to the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in each state's Annual Performance Report (see <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/about/state-performance-plan/apr> for more information about Wisconsin's Annual Performance Report to OSEP). Indicator 8 assesses the percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. Wisconsin's Family Engagement Survey gathers feedback from families of both school age and preschool age children.

The state is divided into 5 groups of Local Educational Agencies (LEAs, commonly known as school districts), designed to be representative of the state as a whole, and each year one of these 5 groups is surveyed. The survey can be completed either online or on paper, and a representative can complete it on behalf of a family member as well. Survey questions for both preschool and school age children can be seen on page 8 and in the results tables shown in Appendix B. Respondents rate their level of agreement with each survey question, and can skip any question they choose. Respondents can also provide optional written comments on the survey, and choose whether their comments will be shared with the Special Education Director of their child's school district. Not all survey respondents provide written feedback. This report summarizes the average percentage agreement on survey questions, and the themes and subthemes in families' comments that inform the two key evaluation questions of analysis: areas working well for families in their child's education, and areas where families feel they could use more support.

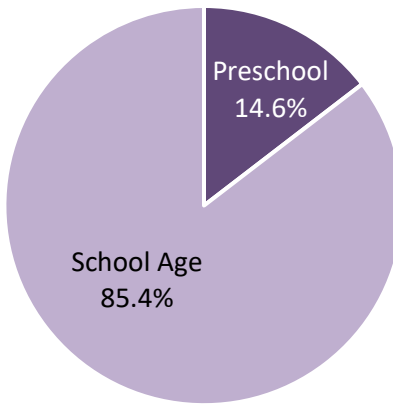
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Survey Responses

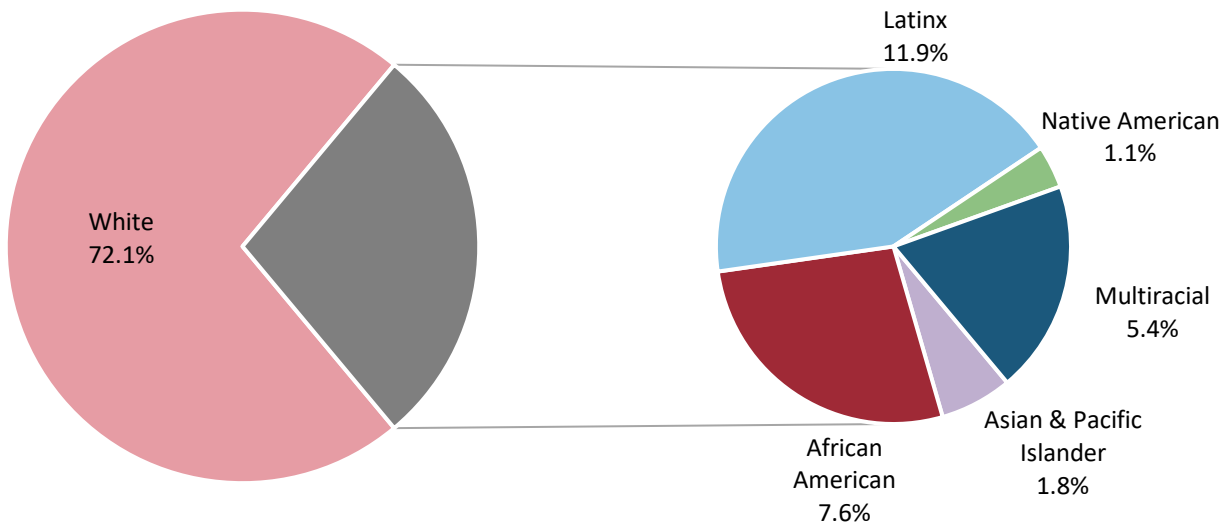
A total of 4,513 survey responses were provided for quantitative analysis. Tables of the number of responses from each school district and regional Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) are included in Appendix A. Survey questions can be seen on page 8 and in Appendix B.

Respondent Demographics

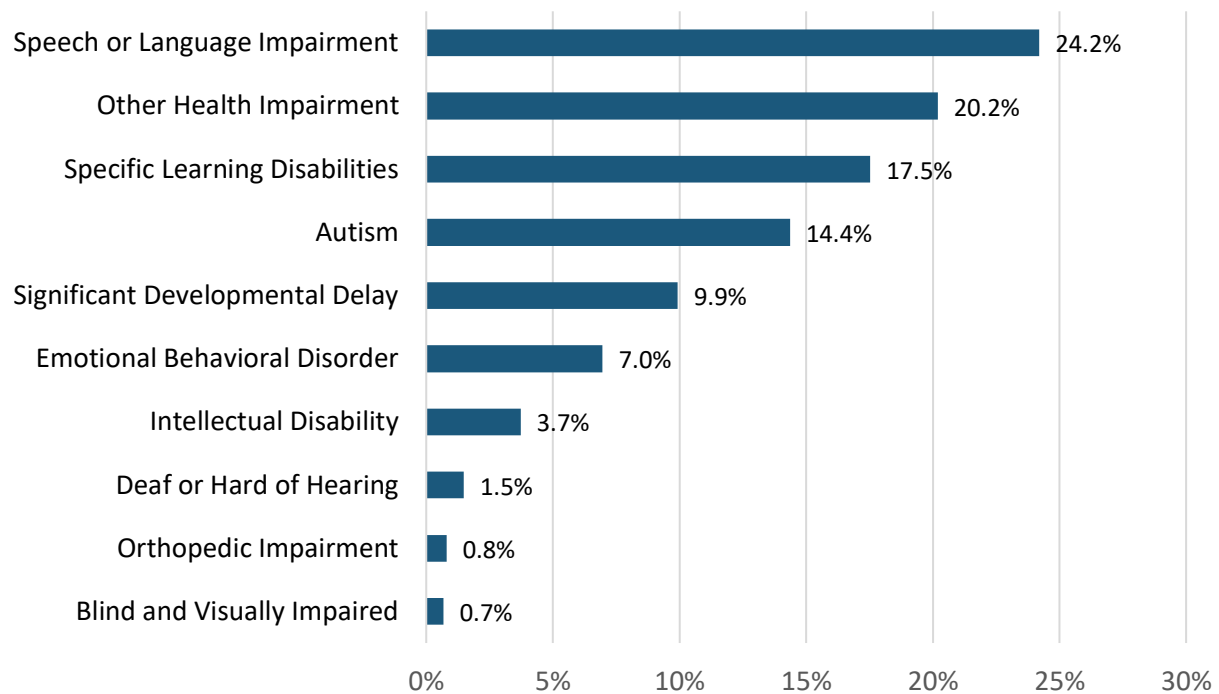
The majority of survey respondents' children were school age (3,855) rather than preschool age (658).



About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the children were White (3,256, 72.1%), and about $\frac{1}{4}$ were children of Color (1,257, 27.9%).



Responses were largely from families of children with the primary impairment areas of Speech or Language Impairment (1,090), Other Health Impairment (911), Specific Learning Disabilities (791), Autism (648), Significant Developmental Delay (448), and Emotional Behavioral Disability (314). Families with children with the primary impairment areas of Intellectual Disability (168), Deaf or Hard of Hearing (67), Orthopedic Impairment (36), and Blind and Visually Impaired (31) also responded. Responses were rare from families of children with the primary impairment areas of Traumatic Brain Injury and Deafblind, therefore these data are not listed in the chart below (totals in the chart do not add to 100%).



Quantitative Methodology

Quantitative results described in this report may differ from statewide results reported by DPI elsewhere, specifically for the APR, due to the weighting methodology used by DPI for that report. This weighting methodology is used as a strategy to address potential underrepresentation in survey response rates among some groups. Results calculated with this weighting methodology are used in the averages across all survey questions together (not individual question averages), and are intended to better reflect the demographics of the state, to provide a more accurate representation of the opinions of all Wisconsin's families with children receiving Special Education services. In situations where there are low response rates from certain groups compared to the demographics of our state, these participants might be considered to be "undercounted," and therefore the overall average percentage agreement results may not represent their opinions as well as it could. Weighting methodology is used

to make these responses count more heavily in the calculation of the average (rather than each response counting the same weight in the calculation of the average). Quantitative results described in this report are raw (unweighted) averages, calculated from only the survey responses provided, reflecting the opinions of the participants who chose to respond this year.

Average Percentage Agreement Results: Full Survey

The unweighted results below show the average percentage agreement across all survey questions (calculated as the number of survey questions respondents reported agreement with, divided by the total number of survey questions answered). Because the results are intended to show the overall agreement for the full survey, respondents that did not answer enough of the questions were not included in these analyses. Using unweighted methodology, the statewide average percentage agreement across all questions was 91.2% for families of preschool children, and 85.3% for families of school age children. Percentage agreement across all survey questions averaged by CESA, averaged by the child’s race / ethnicity, and averaged by the child’s primary area of impairment are shown in the tables below. Results with less than 20 responses are redacted from these tables to help maintain student privacy (shown as N/A). Average percentage agreement tended to be higher among families with preschool children than school age children, across CESAs.

CESA	Average % Agreement		
	Preschool	School Age	Combined Ages
1	91.3%	83.4%	84.7%
2	92.6%	85.6%	86.8%
3	91.8%	84.1%	85.5%
4	91.0%	84.2%	85.0%
5	90.5%	85.0%	86.0%
6	90.2%	86.2%	86.6%
7	95.9%	92.1%	92.6%
8	N/A	91.2%	92.6%
9	N/A	88.4%	88.2%
10	87.7%	86.8%	86.9%
11	86.3%	85.3%	85.5%
12	N/A	86.8%	87.6%

Average percentage agreement varied by the race and ethnicity of the families' child. Families of Asian and Pacific Islander children and Latinx children reported higher average percentage agreement than families of African American, Native American, and Multiracial children, for preschool and school age results combined. The gap in average percentage agreement between preschool and school age was larger for families of African American and Multiracial children than for families of Latinx children.

Race / Ethnicity	Average % Agreement		
	Preschool	School Age	Combined Ages
African American	93.5%	82.3%	83.7%
Asian & Pacific Islander	N/A	89.8%	89.4%
Native American	N/A	86.4%	85.3%
Latinx	89.8%	87.8%	88.1%
Multiracial	93.4%	83.3%	84.7%
White	91.3%	85.2%	86.1%

Average percentage agreement also differed by the child's primary area of impairment. Families of children with a primary area of impairment of Deaf or Hard of Hearing or Speech and Language Impairment reported higher average percentage agreement than children with a primary area of impairment of Emotional Behavioral Disorder, Intellectual Disability, or Other Health Impairment, for preschool and school age results combined.

Primary Impairment Area	Average % Agreement		
	Preschool	School Age	Combined Ages
Autism	91.0%	83.3%	84.3%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	N/A	91.0%	92.1%
Emotional Behavioral Disorder	N/A	80.3%	80.5%
Intellectual Disability	N/A	82.8%	82.6%
Specific Learning Disabilities	N/A	86.3%	86.3%
Orthopedic Impairment	N/A	83.2%	83.2%
Other Health Impairment	93.8%	82.0%	82.4%
Significant Developmental Delay	88.5%	88.8%	88.7%
Speech or Language Impairment	92.4%	90.6%	91.1%
Blind and Visually Impaired	N/A	87.2%	88.1%

Average Percentage Agreement Results: Individual Questions

Average percentage agreement results on each survey question are shown in the two tables below.

Results of over 90% average agreement are shown in green, 80% - 90% in yellow, and below 80% in pink.

Q#	School Age Questions	% Agreement
1	I am an equal partner with school staff in planning my child's IEP.	90.3%
2	School staff offer me ways to provide information about my family and culture so the school can better support my child.	85.9%
3	School staff offer me different ways to ask questions and get information.	86.9%
4	School staff offer me information in ways I understand.	93.2%
5	My child is included in school activities that are available to other students (field trips, class performances, sports, clubs, other extracurricular activities, etc.).	91.3%
6	School staff help my child and family feel like we belong in the school community.	87.2%
7	IEP meetings are held at a time and place that meet my needs.	93.2%
8	In IEP meetings, we talk about my concerns and ideas.	94.0%
9	School staff ask me if my child's IEP services are meeting my child's needs.	84.0%
10	In IEP meetings, we discuss different options for my child's special education services.	88.9%
11	School staff share my high expectations for my child's progress.	87.2%
12	School staff listen to what our family wants for our child's future (independence, career, post-secondary education).	88.2%
13	In IEP meetings, we discuss how accommodations or modifications will help my child.	92.5%
14	School staff clearly explain when and where my child will receive special education services and supports.	87.8%
15	School staff offer me information for my child with an IEP about one or more community services.	63.1%
16	School staff explain one or more of the options I have if I disagree with a decision of the IEP team.	80.1%
17	I am happy with how often the school updates me on my child's progress on IEP goals.	79.8%
18	School staff offer me activities or strategies which support my child's learning outside of school.	69.3%
19	School staff offer me information about the academic standards AND behavior expectations for all students at my child's grade level.	82.9%
20	School staff offer me information on how to help my child be independent and advocate for their needs.	78.1%
21	My child receives the services, accommodations, modifications, and supports that are written into their IEP.	87.8%
22	Everyone who works with my child at school knows about the accommodations, modifications, or supports in my child's IEP.	80.8%

Note: Q# indicates the survey question number. See the full wording of questions #15 & #16 on p. 56. Families with high school aged students are asked an additional question not analyzed in this report.

Q#	Preschool Age Questions	% Agreement
1	I am an equal partner with school staff in planning my child's IEP.	91.9%
2	School staff offer me ways to provide information about my family and culture so the school can better support my child.	92.7%
3	School staff offer me different ways to ask questions and get information.	92.1%
4	School staff offer me information in ways I understand.	96.5%
5	My child is included in school activities that are available to other students (field trips, class performances, other extracurricular activities, etc.).	94.4%
6	School staff help my child and family feel like we belong in the school community.	94.7%
7	IEP meetings are held at a time and place that meet my needs.	95.4%
8	In IEP meetings, we talk about my concerns and ideas.	95.6%
9	School staff ask me if my child's IEP services are meeting my child's needs.	89.3%
10	In IEP meetings, we discuss different options for my child's special education services.	92.7%
11	School staff share my high expectations for my child's progress.	93.3%
12	School staff listen to what our family wants for our child's future (independence, friendships, social skills, transition to 5K and elementary education).	94.2%
13	In IEP meetings, we discuss how accommodations or modifications will help my child.	93.8%
14	School staff clearly explain when and where my child will receive special education services and supports.	93.4%
15	School staff offer me information for my child with an IEP about one or more community services.	74.3%
16	School staff explain one or more of the options I have if I disagree with a decision of the IEP team.	85.0%
17	I am happy with how often the school updates me on my child's progress on IEP goals.	86.3%
18	School staff offer me activities or strategies which support my child's learning outside of school.	83.3%
19	School staff offer me information about the early learning standards, developmentally appropriate practices, AND behavior expectations for all students at my child's age and developmental level.	87.7%
20	School staff offer me information on how to help my child be independent and advocate for their needs.	85.3%
21	My child receives the services, accommodations, modifications, and supports that are written into their IEP.	96.1%
22	Everyone who works with my child at school knows about the accommodations, modifications, or supports in my child's IEP.	93.1%

Note: For analyses of individual questions, a slightly larger dataset was used that included the responses from families who answered so few questions that they were excluded from analysis of the full survey calculations (the average across all questions). See the full wording of questions #15 & #16 on p. 56.

For analyses of individual questions, a slightly larger dataset was used that included the responses from families who answered so few questions that they were excluded from analysis of the full survey calculations (the average across all questions). A few highlights from these analyses of are noted below. Though informal comparisons can be made, it is important to keep in mind that these groups are not necessarily equivalent, and may differ in important ways that influence the results beyond the focus of a specific table. For example, families of children sharing an impairment area could have been concentrated in a particular CESA or age, which might have influenced the families' responses as much or more than the experiences and opinions associated with their child's specific area of impairment.

The highest percentage agreement for families of school age children was on question #8, asking whether the family's concerns and ideas are talked about in IEP meetings (94.0%), while the highest percentage agreement for families of preschool children was on question #4, asking whether school staff offer information in ways the families understand (96.5%). Families reported the lowest average percentage agreement on question #15, asking whether school staff offered them information about community services, for both preschool (74.3%) and school age children (63.1%).

Among families of school age children, families of White children reported higher percentage agreement on question #2, asking whether school staff offered ways to provide information about the respondent's family and culture so the school can better support their child (86.8%), compared to families of Latinx children (85.2%), Multiracial children (81.8%), and African American children (79.3%). Families of Latinx children reported notably higher percentage agreement on question #15, asking whether school staff offered them information about community services (73.2%), compared to families of White children (61.5%), Multiracial children (59.1%), and African American children (62.6%).

Among families of school age children, on question #17, asking whether families were happy with how often the school updates them on their child's progress on IEP goals, families in CESA 10 reported higher percentage agreement (83.5%) than families in CESA 4 (77.3%). On question #9, asking whether school staff asked families if their child's IEP services are meeting their child's needs, families in CESA 6 reported higher percentage agreement (86.2%) than families in CESA 4 (80.3%).

Appendix B details the percentage agreement results for each individual survey question from families of school aged children only, averaged by the child's race / ethnicity, by the child's primary area of impairment, and by CESA. Because results with less than 20 responses are redacted from these tables for privacy, results for some groups and CESAs are not shown at all, and others are shown as N/A.

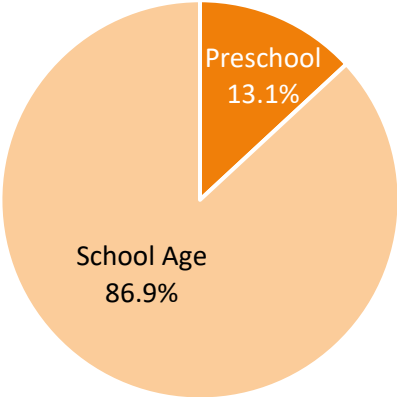
QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Survey Responses

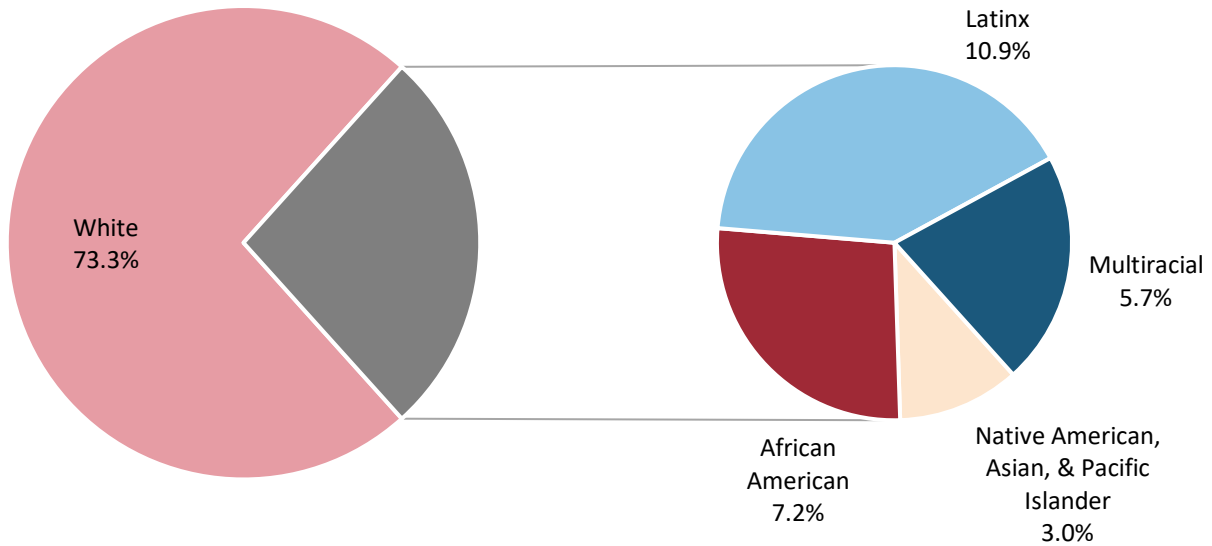
A total of 4,585 survey responses were provided for qualitative analysis. Because surveys are excluded from quantitative analysis if an insufficient number of questions are answered, the dataset for qualitative analysis is larger than the dataset for quantitative analysis. Similar to past years, about a quarter of the survey respondents (23.5%) provided meaningful written feedback analyzed for this report (1,076 responses out of 4,585 total responses provided). A handful of responses were also excluded from analysis where content such as “none,” “N/A,” etc. was entered into the comments. A table of the number of qualitative survey responses from each school district and CESA is included in Appendix A.

Respondent Demographics

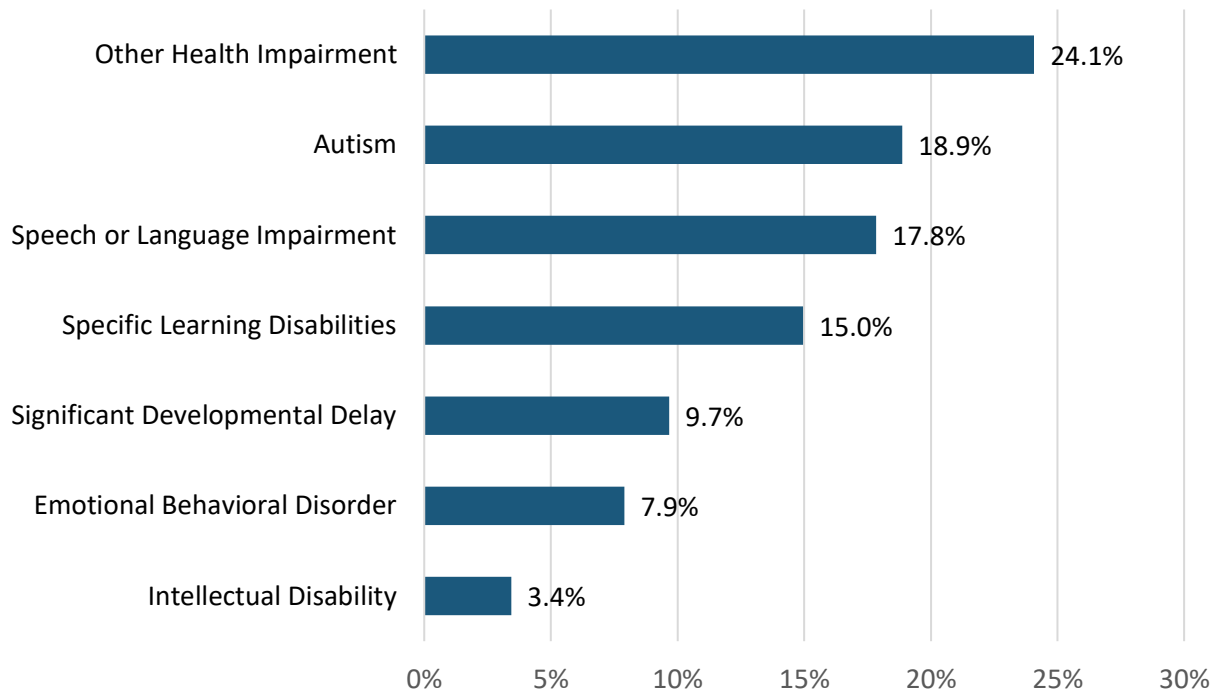
Similar to the quantitative results, the majority of qualitative respondents’ children were school age (935) rather than preschool age (141).



Again, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of qualitative respondents’ children were White (789, 73.3%), and about $\frac{1}{4}$ (287, 26.7%) were children of Color.



Responses were largely from families of children with the primary impairment areas of Other Health Impairment (259), Autism (203), Speech or Language Impairment (192), Specific Learning Disabilities (161), Significant Developmental Delay (104), Emotional Behavioral Disability (85), and Intellectual Disability (37). Responses were rare (less than 20) from families of children with the primary impairment areas of Traumatic Brain Injury, Blind and Visually Impaired, Orthopedic Impairment, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, or Deafblind.



Qualitative Methodology

Written content families submitted ranged from a single word to multiple single-spaced pages. This content was first coded for general positive or negative orientation. Qualitative content was then coded for themes and subthemes informing the two primary evaluation questions: 1) What are the areas that families feel are working well in their child's education? and 2) What are the areas that they feel they need more support? Responses reflected a wide variety of perceptions and opinions, and families even within the same school described different experiences, many both positive and negative.

The survey question collecting qualitative data is open-ended, and families are free to write about whatever they choose. However, the quantitative survey questions families respond to prior to arriving at the open-ended question are the same each year, which may frame respondents' reflections and focus, resulting in similarities from year to year in the topics families choose to write about in the qualitative responses. As a result, themes identified in these responses can also be similar from year to year. Families also tended to provide more detail about their concerns, negative experiences, and needs for support than their descriptions of areas working well, resulting in longer and more detailed themes for some areas where more support is needed. Many themes in areas where families needed more support were able to be paired with themes in what it looked and felt like when that same area was working well for families, but not all. Note that some of the descriptions in these summaries may refer to services that are currently occurring and available to families, or procedural rights for families, but respondents may not be aware of them.

Positive & Negative Orientation of Qualitative Results

Among the responses, 37.6% were rated as describing generally positive experiences, and 33.7% were rated as describing generally negative experiences. An additional 18.3% described a mix of both positive and negative experiences, and 7.1% were primarily recommendations or suggestions. The remaining 3.3% were other content, such as opinions of the survey questions or survey structure.

Themes in Written Responses

Themes in responses included Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); Staff; Communication; Progress; Accommodations; Educational Environment & Culture; Behavior; Child; Transitions to New Schools & Future Preparation; and Home, Community, & Non-School Services. These themes and brief definitions of their subthemes are listed in the table below. Some conceptual overlap exists across these themes and subthemes, as detailed in their summaries.

QUALITATIVE THEMES & SUBTHEMES FROM 2022-23 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY
Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
Identification: Identification, evaluation, diagnosis, or testing for child’s area(s) of impairment
IEP Meeting Scheduling: Timing and convenience of scheduling IEP meetings
IEP Meeting Experiences: Efforts to get an IEP in place, experiences in IEP meetings, and clarity of language
IEP Content: Content of IEPs, including specificity, comprehensiveness, individualization, and changes
IEP Implementation: Degree of full, consistent, and comprehensive implementation of child’s IEP
Staff
Response to Family: Family’s experiences with, feelings about, and relationship to staff, and staff’s overall treatment of child
Concerns Addressed: Staff responsiveness with taking action on families’ concerns
Professionalism & Effort: Level of professionalism and effort displayed by staff
Experience & Knowledge: Staff’s familiarity, knowledge, or competence with a specific area of impairment
Additional Training: Staff training needs unrelated to specific areas of impairment
Awareness of IEP: Staff’s lack of awareness of child’s IEP and its contents
Staffing & Turnover: Adequacy of staffing levels and staff turnover
Communication
Tone & Openness of Communication: Tone of communication, openness to communication, listening to family, value of family input and questions
Progress Updates: Updates from the school on child’s progress
Frequency of Communication: Amount or frequency of communication from the school and delays in communication
Format: Preferences on format or method of communication with school
Proactive Initiation of Communication: Patterns in the school or family initiating communication, timely communication that allows for early intervention and issue resolution
Inter-staff Communication: Communication between school staff, including professionals that work with child
Progress
Academic Progress: Academic progress in learning, comprehension, and grades
Social / Emotional & Area of Impairment Progress: Emotional, social, and behavioral improvements and growth related to child’s area of impairment
Graduating from Services: Degree of accurate and authentic progress resulting in graduation from services, services and IEPs ending, and rising to the next school grade
Accommodations
Effectiveness: Perceived effectiveness of accommodations in meeting child’s needs
Amount: Amount of time child receives services
Missing: Accommodations, modifications, or services were denied or did not occur
Explanations When Not Provided: Reasons given for why accommodations and services were not provided
Details: Descriptions of specific accommodations and supports families wanted

Educational Environment & Culture
Classroom: Classroom or physical learning environment, including class size
Courses, Curriculum, & Grading: Coursework, classes, curriculum, and grading practices
Culture: General culture and impression of the school system, school, district, or classroom
Bullying: Experiences of bullying and harm by both staff and other students
Expectations: Family and staff expectations for child and child's future
Integration & Extracurriculars: Inclusion or exclusion, as well as extracurricular activities, school special events, and summer school
Legal Issues: Legal issues, legal rights for children with IEPs, or formal complaints about educational experiences
Behavior
Behavior Due to Lack of Accommodations: Behavioral situations arising from a lack of services or accommodations being provided
Disproportionate Discipline & Manifestation: Disproportionate discipline compared to other children, discipline for behaviors related to child's area of impairment, or perception child is targeted
General Discipline: General descriptions of discipline or disciplinary results, including tardiness or truancy
Behavioral Issues Receiving More Support: Perceived support for children with and without behavioral issues
Behavior Management: Staff's capability to effectively support or manage behaviors, and participation in behavioral solutions
Child
Self-Advocacy: Child advocating for themselves and their needs
Relationship with Staff: Child's relationship with school staff and other professionals working with them
Effort, Resistance, & Cooperation: Perceptions of effort, resistance, or cooperation from the child related to school attendance, schoolwork, or accommodations
Mental Health: Child's mental health, confidence, and emotional well-being
Transitions to New Schools & Future Preparation
Future Preparation: Preparation for future independent living in community and employment
Higher Education: Preparation for higher education
High School Tour: Tour or orientation for children with IEPs as they enter high school
Continuity of Services: Continuity of the child's IEP and services to a new school, or a transfer from Birth to Three to K-12
Home, Community, & Non-School Services
Community Services: Families' awareness of and access to organizations, resources, and services in the community that support children with IEPs
External Resources & Services: Resources, materials, services, medical providers, evaluation services, advocates, and legal support not provided by the school system that families are using and potentially privately paying for
Home Support: Homework or lessons for home use, behavioral supports to provide at home, and recommendations to support child at home
Changing Districts: Staying in or leaving a school district based on the access to and quality of education available there, including open enrollment, and virtual, charter, or private schooling

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Identification: Identification, evaluation, diagnosis, or testing for child's area(s) of impairment

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described struggling to get their child initially identified, evaluated, or diagnosed for areas of impairment, or retested when they felt there was a need, and some stated that the school fought this. Families expressed frustration with resistance from the school system during this process, or being denied access to identification, evaluation, or diagnosis for an area of impairment. Some families shared experiences of getting their child tested for Dyslexia on their own. Families discussed their perspective that their child only received a diagnosis for one area of impairment when this was not their child's only area of impairment, or disagreed with a diagnosis from the school system. Families described the school dismissing their documentation during the evaluation process, refusing to acknowledge the area(s) of impairment that families believed their child was experiencing, or determining that needed services would not be provided because another area of impairment was responsible for the child's educational challenges. Families noted that their child had gone through stressful testing experiences, and then the school system was not willing to follow the resulting recommendations or diagnoses from medical providers or other professionals. Families observed that private evaluation results found that services needed to be offered to their child, while evaluation results from the school system did not. Families expressed their disagreement with the school system's decision that their child no longer qualified to receive services or have an IEP. Families wanted Dyslexia to be a separate and specific area of primary impairment under which their child could be identified.

WORKING WELL

Families described receiving timely intervention and identification for their child that would provide lasting benefit in their child's life.

IEP Meeting Scheduling: Timing and convenience of scheduling IEP meetings

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that it took an excessively long time to schedule an IEP meeting once it was determined that this was needed. Families noted that IEP meetings were infrequent, explaining that they would prefer more than one to be held throughout the year. Some families described situations where it had been years since their child's last IEP meeting, and other families expressed frustration

with an excessive number of IEP meetings in which they felt they were repeating themselves. Families observed that scheduling IEP meetings during school hours was inconvenient, requiring them to take time off work, and resulting in families not being able to attend IEP meetings in cases where taking time off work was not possible. Families explained that because IEP meetings occurred at the end of the school year each year, their child's needs were going unmet. Some families reported receiving a notification from the school with documentation describing IEP meetings occurring on specific dates with statements that the family member attended, yet the family had not been notified, no meeting had occurred, and the family member had not attended an IEP meeting. Families who missed a meeting due to illness described not being given a chance to reschedule, and families who notified the school that they were not available at the time a meeting was scheduled stated that the meeting had been held without them, despite their requests to reschedule it for a time when they could attend.

WORKING WELL

Families noted that meetings were held on a timely basis. Families described meetings being arranged around the family's work schedule, and the school planning regular renewal dates for meetings with the family.

IEP Meeting Experiences: Efforts to get an IEP in place, experiences in IEP meetings, and clarity of language

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that working with the IEP team had never felt like an equal partnership, that they did not feel like a part of the IEP team, and that they felt as though they had no rights. Families noted that the meetings needed more structure, direction, and transparency. Families described meetings that were missing staff who were supposed to attend, that staff were not able to come due to a lack of coverage for their classrooms, or that the staff who did attend were not familiar enough with their child to contribute meaningfully. Families observed that the language used in IEP meetings and documents was too technical and difficult to understand, and hoped that Spanish language translators could be available when needed. Families explained that meetings could feel stressful, daunting, vulnerable, and overwhelming. Families observed that IEP meetings were often deficit-focused, and this could feel negative, demoralizing, and hard on the family, noting that staff should also emphasize their child's strengths. Some families described feeling rushed during the meeting, and others felt that the meetings were too long. Families described feeling pressured to make an immediate decision about their child's

education. Families stated that it should be explained to them in advance what would take place in the meetings and who would be there.

Families stated that many people did not know whether they even had a say in their child's IEP decisions, and some reported never having seen their child's IEP and not being aware of what it said, or never having had an IEP meeting at all. Families discussed feeling as though they were the only ones providing suggestions to help their child, and that they didn't want to be in the role of leading the process of the IEP, researching the most effective solutions for their child, or educating themselves on their child's legal rights. Families stated that they had to correct the school on the school's mistakes. Families described experiences of what was written in their child's IEP, including goals and services, being fully decided prior to IEP meetings, without their presence or input, or the IEP being brought to them for a signature, already fully completed. Families expressed frustration with feeling that decisions about their child had already been made by others and that this information was being reported to them in the IEP meeting, rather than having a meaningful role and an opportunity to influence and participate in the IEP process for their child.

Families described feeling ganged up on by staff in order to minimize their input, that time limits on the meetings prevented families from having a chance to have a say in the process, and that their concerns and needs were considered a problem in the IEP process instead of helpful contributions to the discussion. Families explained that they did not feel comfortable asking questions, that staff tried to avoid answering their questions during meetings, that their questions were dismissed or characterized as irrelevant, and that staff did not respond well to families questioning the team's decisions. Some families observed that they would be listened to during the IEP meeting, but that this never resulted in alterations to the actual IEP.

Families described having to fight with the school district to get an IEP in place and that the school district tried to avoid allowing an IEP to be put in place for their child. Families stated that the school had been caught lying in IEP meetings repeatedly, and due to past problems, they no longer trusted staff and needed to fact check what was said in meetings to prevent new legal issues from occurring. Families explained that the school district was out of compliance, resulting in delays for their child's IEP process and placement. Some families were told in IEP meetings that they could accept a 504 Plan instead of continuing their child's IEP, or receive nothing. Families wanted the process to be slowed down and for mentors and advocates from family support organizations to be present to provide support, explain what was happening, and share information about strategies to meet their child's needs.

WORKING WELL

Families described a collaborative process that involved them in the decision making while developing the IEP, and allowed for open dialogue to voice any concerns. Families expressed feeling empowered, that they had been made to feel like a member of the team, that the team made them feel like an equal in the process during meetings, and that they had an equal seat at the table. Families noted that meetings were very constructive and gave staff and families an opportunity to set common goals. Families observed that they felt comfortable in the meetings, and that the meetings were respectful, honest, engaging, and productive. Families stated that they asked many questions in the meetings. Families explained that staff were very helpful, that they explained their child's IEP well, took their concerns and recommendations into consideration, and were open to listening to the family's ideas. Families stated that they felt "in the loop" with IEP planning, and that the staff accepted their input and built their feedback into the IEP. Families described meetings that were run professionally, sharing that the school did a good job walking them through the IEP process and helping them identify appropriate accommodations for their child. Families observed that the process was detailed, thorough, informative, easy to understand, well communicated, and set their child up for success. Families shared that they were very pleased with the outcome of the IEP meetings.

IEP Content: Content of IEPs, including specificity, comprehensiveness, individualization, and changes

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families expressed frustration that there was a gap between what their child actually needed and what was listed on their IEP, and that their child's IEP was inadequate to meet their true needs. Families described experiences of staff telling them that they were not permitted to speak freely about what help they as staff believed the child would benefit from, and not permitted to list all that they as staff felt the child actually needed on the IEP (such as one on one support). Families outlined how their child's IEP was inflexibly uniform and "cookie cutter," and that it seemed to be shaped by what was general practice for the school or selected from a limited number of options allowed by the school, rather than genuinely individualized to meet their specific child's actual needs. Families explained that their child's IEP was minimal, did not have a clear plan to help their child achieve the goals listed, did not detail the specific services that would be provided to help their child achieve their goals, did not name specific

staff to provide the services or implement the accommodations, and that staff had been resistant to their efforts to add this specificity to the IEP.

Families expressed concern that evaluating their child only once a year was not frequent enough to adapt the IEP for continued progress. Families observed that there were issues with measurable data collection, baseline data, and accurate data reporting. Families stated that changes were made to their child's IEP without notifying them, without their consent, and without updating the rest of the staff about the changes. Families shared that changes to the IEP that were agreed to in meetings were never made. Families explained that their child's IEP did not include a level of staff support that would help prevent their child from being bullied. Families described wanting a summary of the IEP (to reduce redundancy), more specificity in the IEP to help create expectations and determine concretely if their child was receiving what they needed or not, IEP content that was genuinely individualized to their child's needs and goals, to list all relevant diagnoses in order to better select appropriate services and accommodations, a place to include what they felt would help their child, to no longer allow "special education" to be listed in the location section of the IEP, and to not base goals off of MAP scores.

WORKING WELL

Families stated that their child's IEP was working to meet their child's needs, and expressed satisfaction with their child's goals and accommodations as listed in the IEP. Families noted that their child's supports would now be provided comprehensively across all primary subjects. Families shared that staff always made sure the IEP was comprehensive and that nothing got forgotten or left out. Families explained that their child's IEP was written to be specific for their child's needs, resulting in progress for their child. Families stated that their child's goals were always well written and their success was always documented. Families noted that the team constantly re-evaluated the IEP as their child's needs changed, and consistently adjusted it according to their progress. Families observed that staff were pushing to have the amount of time children received support services (as listed in the IEP) determined based on what met the child's needs, instead of based on the school's staffing.

IEP Implementation: Degree of full, consistent, & comprehensive implementation of child's IEP

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families stated that their child's IEP felt like more of a formality, and lacked follow-through. Families expressed frustration with not knowing if their child's IEP was being followed, including whether their child was being provided with their accommodations in all classes or with all staff. Families described

waiting for accommodations agreed upon in meetings to be implemented, with minimal information about when this would occur. Families described their child's IEP not being followed by all staff, not being followed consistently, not being followed in all classrooms, and other situations where their child's accommodations, modifications, services, supports, or safety plans were not being provided as listed in their child's IEP. Families observed that their child received help with some goals in their IEP, but that others seemed to be ignored due to a lack of resources or staff.

Families shared their perspective that some general education staff were not following their child's IEP because they considered it optional, or believed it was only the responsibility of the special education teachers to follow it. Families explained that their child did not receive their services because it was too inconvenient for the school to work them into a half day schedule, that services their child missed were not made up, or that the amount of time their child actually received services (the minutes or hours), was less than it was supposed to be. Families described discovering that their child had not received services because the staff providing these services was not present at the school that day, or not for an extended period of time. Families described that they or their child had to ask the staff to follow the accommodations in their child's IEP. Families reported that their child was told to "deal with it" when their IEP was not being implemented, and that school administration did not help. Families wanted a process or system of periodic checks to ensure that their child's accommodations were being provided, and for each teacher to be given an IEP summary or a list of modifications for easy reference.

WORKING WELL

Families described feeling pleased with the school following through on their child's IEP, and that it had been a wonderful experience. Families explained that all teachers followed their child's IEP on a daily basis. Families noted that an issue with their child's IEP not being followed by one teacher was resolved after going to the principal for assistance. Families stated that the way their child's IEP had been implemented was the epitome of how the process should work. Families explained that staff did an exemplary job of handling the IEP and ensuring their child's needs were met, and that staff were professionally exceptional in delivering all the required services for their child. Families observed that their child was flourishing because of the follow-through on their IEP.

Staff

Professionalism & Effort: Level of professionalism and effort displayed by staff

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that staff working with their child did not have experience or a license. Families described staff embarrassing their child in front of classmates, disregarding their child's privacy by reading from their IEP in front of other students, speaking about their child's failing grades in front of the class, and using their child "as an example" in classes. Families discussed staff giving them a hard time because staff did not understand the challenges involved in their child being an English Learner. Families observed that staff made inappropriate comments. Families explained that effort from some staff was low and engagement was minimal, observing that some staff seemed to be just clocking in and out and going through the motions. Families discussed staff acting unprofessionally during meetings, including walking out of meetings. Families reported retaliation from staff related to their IEP meetings. Families described situations of staff being constantly negative towards their child, and using language both to them or their child that was demeaning to children receiving special education services. Families discussed situations of staff mocking or provoking their child, being confrontational with their child, and causing physical harm to their child. Families described staff responding to incidents in a problematic way, such as using inappropriate restraint hold methods on their child.

WORKING WELL

Families observed that staff invested a lot of time in their child's success, working hard to ensure their child's needs were met and for opportunities to help their child succeed. Families described being happy with the effort staff put forth for their child, noting that staff had gone above and beyond to help their child develop their skills, and gone the extra mile to help their child feel understood. Families observed that staff worked skillfully with their child, were creative in the approaches they used to help their child, and offered services the family had not been aware of. Families noted that staff never gave up on their child, and expressed appreciation for the staff's level of dedication and commitment to their child.

Response to Family: Family's experiences with, feelings about, and relationship to staff, and staff's overall treatment of child

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families stated that staff were not supportive of them and their child, did not care about their child, and were not sensitive to their child and their child's experiences. Families described feeling disrespected by staff's treatment of them. Families observed that staff's attitudes and assumptions were not beneficial for their child, and that staff did not help their child. Families discussed feeling like they had to fight to

get the staff to help their child and treat their child better, and that they did not trust staff. Families stated that they felt like staff had failed their child. Families described feeling like school leadership was more concerned about the appearance and reputation of the school or the special education program than the children.

WORKING WELL

Families expressed feeling support for themselves and their child from staff. Families stated that staff were welcoming, kind, understanding, and helpful, and that staff did a phenomenal job with their child. Families explained that staff truly cared about their child, were great at connecting with their child, and acted as though the child was their own child. Families noted that staff advocated for their child and was always there for their child when their child needed someone. Families stated that they felt staff truly had their child's best interest at heart. Families observed that staff were personally invested in their child's success, which helped their child feel valued. Even when the majority of their feedback was describing challenging situations, families often expressed appreciation for certain staff who were helpful to them and their child. Families explained that they felt like part of a team in their child's care, with an equal seat at the table.

Concerns Addressed: Staff responsiveness with taking action on families' concerns

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described staff asking for their advice on how to help their child, but never trying their suggestions. Families reported that staff were dismissive towards their requests, and that staff did not look into, address, or handle the concerns they brought up about issues their child was experiencing. Families described some staff being too scared of losing their jobs to take action on the concerns families raised.

WORKING WELL

Families explained that staff made time to meet with them to address their concerns, and brainstormed ways to solve issues. Families noted that staff listened to their concerns about their child's education and addressed them.

Experience & Knowledge: Staff's familiarity, knowledge, or competence with a specific area of impairment

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families reported being told by staff that their child did not “look like” they had the area of impairment that they had been diagnosed with, and discussed feeling like their child’s area of impairment was ignored by staff because it was less visible than other areas of impairment. Families observed that staff had not called their child for IEP services because the staff felt their child did not need help, or that staff acted like their child was faking their area of impairment and therefore would not follow their child’s IEP. Families stated that not all teachers (particularly general education teachers) seemed to know what their child needed in relation to their area of impairment, know how to accommodate or help their child, or fully understood the emotional modifications in their child’s IEP. Families explained that staff, including school security and School Resource Officers, needed more training on working with children with Dyslexia, Autism, high functioning children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and emotional dysregulation, and who were Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Families expressed concern that staff’s inadequate training put their child at risk, and described situations where this lack of training and experience resulted in harm to their child.

WORKING WELL

Families observed that staff were knowledgeable, and stated that they were happy with staff’s level of expertise with their child. Families explained that staff fully understood their child’s strengths, as well as struggles with self-regulation. Families noted that specialists working with their child were up-to-date on new practices and always trying new things to support their child.

Additional Training: Staff training needs unrelated to specific areas of impairment

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that staff needed better mental health training, observing that not all staff knew how to help children cope with triggers when children were struggling with mental health, and that more training was needed on ways to recognize stressful situations and help de-escalate children. Families emphasized the need to transition all schools to be trauma-informed schools. Families outlined the need for more staff training on bullying and the social and emotional needs of children. Families suggested that continuing education on full inclusion be required to maintain licensure, including for aides and paraprofessionals. Families requested more staff who spoke Spanish. Families observed that staff needed cultural sensitivity training, and more training in ways to address how implicit racial bias impacts children, noting that many teachers were not acknowledging how race played a role in their child’s life.

Awareness of IEP: Staff's lack of awareness of child's IEP and its contents

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families observed that not all staff were aware of their child's IEP and the accommodations listed in it, or that it was unclear to them whether all staff were aware of their child's IEP. Families noted that all staff who work with their child, including bus drivers, substitutes, lunch aides, and field trip aides needed to know about their child's needs, to help prevent their child from feeling lost or scared. Families described situations where their child's teacher did not receive their child's IEP until several months into the school year, or stated that they had not had time to review their child's IEP when there were only a few months left in the school year. Families noted that their child did not always advocate for themselves well, so it was important that all staff be familiar with their IEP. Some families stated that they felt certain teachers did not want to acknowledge their child's IEP.

Staffing & Turnover: Adequacy of staffing levels and staff turnover

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that there was a shortage of staff at the school and not enough specialists, aides, and other professionals to work with children receiving special education services, resulting in potential safety issues and unmet needs. Families described staff as not having enough time, being spread thin, and being overworked. Families discussed ways staff turnover, unfilled staff positions, and unreliable schedules for specialists appearing at their child's school were negatively impacting their child and leaving them without support and services.

WORKING WELL

Families described the positive impact on their child of maintaining the same staff working with their child over many years, or having the same teacher for more than one year of preschool.

Communication

Tone & Openness of Communication: Tone of communication, openness to communication, listening to family, value of family input and questions

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that they did not feel listened to or heard by the school, that the school ignored their requests and concerns, and sometimes did not respond to them. Families stated that their advice, ideas, and recommendations were disregarded by the school. Families observed that communication felt difficult, described staff speaking to them in a way that felt brash and short, and said that letters to them were harshly worded. Families observed that staff were not able speak freely to them. Families discussed feeling hesitant to reach out to staff because they were stretched thin, like their requests for information were a burden to the school, and that they wished staff would reach out to them so they would not have to feel like contacting the school was bothering staff. Families described staff laughing at them, being rude to them, and yelling at them in professional settings.

WORKING WELL

Families explained that staff listened to them respectfully, and asked the family for their opinion. Families stated that they never felt unheard and that staff listened to their concerns. Families noted that staff asked them questions. Families described experiences of open communication with staff, noting that staff felt easy to talk to, reached out to them, and were always willing and able to talk with them. Families observed that staff always replied promptly to them. Families explained that they felt comfortable expressing their concerns to staff. Families stated that the school had been completely transparent in sharing information with both them and their child.

Progress Updates: Updates from the school on child's progress

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that they did not receive updates on their child's progress from the school often enough, were only updated on their child's progress at the annual IEP meeting (often at the end of the school year), or had not received any progress updates for their child at all. Families discussed a preference for meetings with the school more than once a year about their child's progress. Families explained that a single mailed document about their child's goals, or once a year updates about their child's goals that were one sentence long, was not enough communication to understand how their child was doing or how to support their child. Families reported that numerical progress updates in the form of percentages related to their child's IEP goals were not useful to them. Families explained that it was difficult to understand their child's progress over time on an IEP goal set as a target for the whole year, and that they would prefer to have the goal set using quarterly progress targets instead. Families wanted to be updated regularly about all aspects of their child's education and progress, such as their

learning abilities, how they were achieving their IEP goals, the steps taken to get to their goals, what they were practicing or learning, where they were experiencing progress and where they were experiencing challenges, how they were doing socially, and whether they were meeting expectations.

WORKING WELL

Families explained that they were always kept up to date and in the loop about their child's progress, and expressed appreciation for the daily progress reports they received about their child. Families noted that the school was clear about what progress their child was making. Families stated that their child's school kept them updated on their child's wins and challenges, what their child was working on, meaningful assessment data indicating where their child was at, progress toward IEP goals, areas that needed work, and any issues, concerns, or accomplishments for their child.

Frequency of Communication: Amount or frequency of communication from the school and delays in communication

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families noted that they were not receiving enough communication from the school and explained that they did not feel like they knew what was happening with their child or their child's education. Families discussed a lack of communication from their child's service providers or from specific teachers, including important paperwork from the school being received late or not at all. Families described attempting to contact staff repeatedly and experiencing a long delay before their contact was returned, or it not being returned at all. Families noted that communication with the school was at a minimum. Families discussed receiving no communication with the school about their child at all, receiving none beyond the annual IEP meeting, receiving no communication about services their child was receiving, and no communication from regular education teachers. Families wanted contact from the school more often, to be more informed, for staff to communicate more closely with them, for communication to be more regular and scheduled, and more information about when their child was receiving services and what their child was working on at school. Families wanted communication related to their child's goals or IEP on a weekly or monthly basis (or at least quarterly), and to feel more in the loop.

WORKING WELL

Families described keeping in touch with school staff outside of IEP meetings. Families explained that they received prompt and detailed responses from staff in answer to their questions. Families discussed

receiving weekly updates and noted that staff kept them informed about any changes or issues. Families stated they were in constant communication with school staff and were able to call or text school staff any time.

Proactive Initiation of Communication: Patterns in the school or family initiating communication, timely communication that allows for early intervention and issue resolution

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that they did not receive information from the school about situations that required their attention or intervention in a timely manner, which negatively impacted their child. Families observed that the school did not contact them unless their child did something wrong or had a bad day, but that they preferred to discuss solutions and wanted to be proactive about issues. Families explained that they had not been made aware that their child's grades were dropping until their child was failing classes, or expressed frustration at not being notified by the school at all when their child was struggling academically. Families stated that in these situations, they wanted the school to reach out, discuss options their child may have, and inform them on how to assist their child. Families asked for more notifications from the school when their child was behind on work or had not turned in their work.

Families explained that unless they initiated the contact, they never heard from their child's school. Families noted that they did not get information about their child from the school unless they reached out to the school themselves, and that being in the role of always having to ask for information felt like having to dig. Families observed that they did not receive their child's final IEP or their child's updated IEP goals unless they asked the school for these documents. Families described that resources from the school had not been given without the family asking.

WORKING WELL

Families explained that the school did a great job of letting them know if their child was having any issues, and that the daily communication from the school helped them address any issues for their child right away. Families observed that the school notified them with information about their child's missing work. Families stated that planning for their child was addressed before it became a major concern.

Format: Preferences on format or method of communication with school

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described problems with emails to the school always going to staff's spam or junk folder, and that their child's current teachers only communicated via email (with delays), when they had previously been able to text for quicker information. Families observed that other parents were not aware that their child's IEP progress notes were in Infinite Campus, and that it would be helpful to include these progress notes with the quarterly report card that was sent home. Families expressed a preference for daily reports that followed a template. Some families stated that they would prefer a verbal update of their child's IEP progress instead of just mailed documents. Other families explained that a more fluid form of communication between families and staff during the week would be helpful (like a journal), especially for families of younger or nonverbal children.

WORKING WELL

Families described receiving frequent updates on strategies staff were using with their child, and mentoring tips, through different modes of communication, such as Class Dojo videos, a school app they found helpful, and a daily notebook they appreciated.

Inter-staff Communication: Communication between school staff, including professionals that work with child

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families stated that there seemed to be a lack of communication or poor communication between the school and the child care staff, between the school and the district, between regular education and special education teachers, and between their child's case worker and teachers.

WORKING WELL

Families noted that everyone on their child's team was always in communication with each other and with them, and that their child's case manager followed up with general education teachers quickly when the family had concerns.

Progress

Academic Progress: Academic progress in learning, comprehension, and grades

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families expressed concern that their child was not learning, noting that their child was struggling with classes or having difficulty understanding the material. Families stated that they believed their child should be further along academically, or described slow progress for their child compared to past years. Families observed that their child was falling behind academically, sometimes by several years or grade levels, or behind on math and reading skills. Families described their child's grades dropping, or receiving failing grades, with little to no academic intervention provided by the school. Families discussed lost academic progress during the summer months when their child was not in school. Families expressed concern that the school was not teaching their child, and often attributed their child's academic challenges to the school environment, staff, or the school not following their child's IEP.

WORKING WELL

Families described growth in their child's reading skills, higher grades, and improvement in their studies, understanding, and learning. Families observed that their child was far ahead academically, getting caught up in school, and up to grade level academically. Families noted that their child had become interested in learning again. Families frequently attributed their child's academic gains to their child's IEP, new school, or the staff supporting their child.

Social / Emotional & Area of Impairment Progress: Emotional, social, and behavioral improvements and growth related to child's area of impairment

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families noted that their child's confidence and self-esteem had dropped, that their child was still lacking awareness of their social limitations, or that they had not seen improvements in their child's behaviors. Families expressed concern that their child's social emotional progress would be negatively impacted during summer when their child could not attend school, or because they were learning in a home environment due to disciplinary actions. Families explained that their child was far behind with speech skills and that more intervention each week was needed for their child.

WORKING WELL

Families reported that their child had blossomed, opened up, come out of their shell, and made friends. Families described improvements in their child's behaviors and trust in staff. Families stated their child had made gains in confidence and self-esteem. Families noted their child's growth and expressed that their child was being supported for success in life and as a member of society. Families explained that

social emotional goals were more important to them than academic goals for their child, and described their child flourishing in their social and emotional development. Families attributed much of this growth to staff support. Families described improvements in their child's speech skills.

Graduating from Services: Accurate and authentic progress resulting in graduation from services, services and IEPs ending, and rising to the next grade in school

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described their child being pushed through the system to higher grades, regardless of their child's level of actual growth or readiness for the next grade, or given passing grades in their classes, resulting in their child falling further and further behind. Families questioned how their child was achieving goals as stated on their IEP, but failing all their classes. Families described that when their child achieved their IEP goals, the IEP was ended instead of setting new goals. Families explained that they felt the school was overstating their child's progress in order to reduce or remove services their child was receiving, when they believed their child still needed the original level of services in order to succeed. Families described their child being prematurely taken out of therapies or the school cancelling their child's IEP, when their child had not been helped and their needs had not been met.

WORKING WELL

Families described their child advancing in their skills (primarily in speech) and achieving a status of no longer needing the services provided, explaining that the IEP had been effective for their child.

Accommodations

Effectiveness: Perceived effectiveness of accommodations in meeting child's needs

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that the services and accommodations the school offered their child were not effective, and their child did not get what they needed in their education. Families noted that the one-on-one assistance their child needed did not occur during the subject they had difficulty with so they were not able to improve in that subject. Families stated that their child's supplementary aids and services were not being implemented well.

WORKING WELL

Families stated that their child got exactly what they needed in their education, that their child was being very well supported through the services they received, and that the school had accommodated their child's needs very well. Families stated that their child's supports led to their child being successful both in and out of school.

Amount: Amount of time child receives services

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained their child was not getting enough support or resources from the school to meet their needs. Families observed that the amount of services their child received seemed to decrease as they got older. Families discussed being told by the school that the amount of time their child was receiving services would not increase even if their child was retested for additional areas of impairment. Families stated that the amount of time their child received services would not be sufficient to help their child achieve their goals, and more time receiving these services was necessary for their child.

Explanations When Not Provided: Reasons given for why accommodations and services were not provided

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described being told that their child could not receive the specific services and supports that they need, or the amount of time for their services that would help them meet their goals, because the school lacked sufficient resources and staff to fulfill these needs. Families observed that everyone at the school seemed to be reducing the amount of time their child received services based on the school's budget and staffing concerns. Families noted that lack of adequate staffing resulted in their child not receiving support in their classes. Families observed that other families had been allowed to receive the same services that the school claimed they could not provide for their child. Families stated that the school found excuses not to provide services, or claimed that the school did not have the resources to accommodate their child at all. Families described being told that their child could not get the services that would help them because other children had a greater need.

WORKING WELL

Families described the school helping them get the services they needed for their child and meeting those needs without effort from the family.

Missing: Accommodations, modifications, or services were denied or did not occur

Families noted that their child did not get all the services they needed. Families discussed being told by the school that their child did not qualify for services. Families explained that the school denied services for their child that they felt their child needed to be successful, and services that medical providers had recommended for their child. Families stated that there was no help available for some areas of impairment, especially Dyslexia. Families observed that their child got the bare minimum for six months and then their IEP was cancelled.

Details: Descriptions of specific accommodations and supports families wanted

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described a wide variety of specific accommodations they believed their child needed and should be receiving, including specific specialized support for children with Autism and Dyslexia, support on standardized tests, virtual therapies, and techniques for nonverbal or limited speaking abilities. Families noted their preference for one-on-one time for their child.

Educational Environment & Culture

Culture: General culture and impression of the school system, school, district, or classroom

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described a lack of consistency in the special education services across the schools in their district. Families noted that the school had a reputation for doing a poor job of working with students in special education. Families described chaos and disorganization, and stated that the special education program had been a disaster. Families expressed concern that the school was not properly equipped to deal with children with their child's types of needs. Families observed that the school district overall was inept at providing social education. Families observed that the school district had a history of pushing students with IEPs to virtual learning or alternative learning environments. Families expressed concern about their child's safety at the school and the school's policies and practices related to safety, observing that the school did not provide a safe environment for students or staff.

Families stated that the culture was unwelcoming, that there was no effort to involve families, and that the school made it hard to advocate for their child. Families expressed feeling as though the district did

not want to work with them and their child. Families described a culture of indifference toward children receiving special education services, that the minimum was done to support their child, and that no one seemed to care about their child, how their child was doing, their child's academic success, or whether their child had friends. Families stated that their child was lost in the system and that the system had failed their child. Families expressed that they were not impressed with the program, they felt disconnected from their child's education, that school districts in Wisconsin were harming their family, that they were very disappointed with their experiences, and some stated that they had given up. Families described having to fight with school system and that the district had a history of fighting families on special education, wishing the environment could be more cooperative.

Families expressed that there was a greater emphasis on legal compliance than treating their family like humans. Families noted that their city did not think about children receiving special education services, and wished as much time and attention was given to children receiving special education services as to those in the magnet program or sports program. Families stated that the culture felt outdated, and they wished youth with IEPs could have a spot at the table to reshape the mission of the school district. Families observed that the school district had a very top-down leadership style that did not allow room for staff doing direct work with students to share their insights and generate improvements for special education. Families emphasized that laws needed to change and educators needed flexibility within their individual schools to be able to create a better educational environment. Families expressed a desire to connect with other families with children with IEPs to work together to make the learning environment safer and less restrictive.

WORKING WELL

Families stated that they were happy with the school, district, program, and educational opportunities for their child, that their child was given opportunities to excel, and that they loved the family atmosphere and were treated like family by the system. Families expressed that they felt reassured their child was in a safe place while at school. Families expressed appreciation about the growth in Spanish Language services to support them. Families observed that they felt welcomed into the school, and that the system was doing an excellent job.

Classroom: Classroom or physical learning environment, including class size

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described wanting their child to be able to go to school in person for longer, or be able to have the option of in person learning or virtual learning that was best for their child. Families observed that their child's class was too big, and that they needed to be in classrooms with fewer students. Families expressed concern about where their child was being taught, such as their child sitting in the front of the classroom facing the wall. Families noted that schools need a calming sensory room for all grade levels, and observed that there were too many children being pushed to be in environments that they were not comfortable in due to sensory needs or dysregulation. Families reported that children should not be isolated, and that their child had been isolated many times.

WORKING WELL

Families described being happy to have the option to place their child in virtual learning settings which removed distractions for their child, or being given permission to attend a special school that allowed them to graduate with their peers. Families expressed appreciation for the play setting and sensory regulated classroom at their school.

Courses, Curriculum, & Grading: Coursework, classes, curriculum, and grading practices

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described specific curriculum they would prefer that the school use or not use to support their child's needs, and stated that the school was not prepared to utilize the alternative core curriculum options for their child. Families expressed concern that the life skills, trades classes, and vocational training classes had not been available to their child that would have benefitted them. Families described their child being pushed out of classes. Some families observed that their child did not understand the material that was being taught in their classes, and others felt that their child was not being challenged in their classes. Families expressed concern that their child did not have support to help them with choosing classes for their schedule that were a good fit for them. Families explained that their child had taken classes that were inappropriate for their needs or level of academic achievement, setting them up for failure, and that it was challenging or not possible to get their child moved from an inappropriate class, resulting in consequences for the child's grades. Families described being confused about the grading system, and discussed a lack of explanations for why their child had been given failing grades. Families described their child being graded in ways that did not take their IEP into account, such as not being given their accommodations on an assignment or test, or being given assignments that were not appropriate for their child per their IEP. Families observed their child failing classes and

potentially not receiving necessary credits for graduation, and their child not having options to try to improve their grades or turn in missing work.

WORKING WELL

Families described staff being willing and open to try adapting to different curriculum to better help their child.

Expectations: Family and staff expectations for child and child's future

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families expressed frustration at staff attitudes and assumptions that their child would not have the ability to learn. Families observed that staff had lower expectations for their child's future than they did. Families explained that they felt the school wanted their child to just get by, not excel, and that the school did not match their own sense of urgency for their child's success. Families observed that the school did not seem to want students receiving special education services to achieve what their peers achieved. Families stated that staff believed all special needs children were the same and should all have the same expectations. Families noted that goals were written for their child that focused on maintaining, which did not reflect high expectations. Families observed that the school was focused on academic goals, and the social emotional goals they prioritized for their child were neglected. Families described feeling uncomfortable at the school's suggestion of a program for students who were not expected to finish high school, when they expected their child to graduate and go on to higher education.

WORKING WELL

Families noted that the staff held their child to high standards, and appreciated the high expectations from staff around how their child could progress. Families observed that staff noticed if their child was not being challenged in their environment and adjusted their program to change this.

Integration & Extracurriculars: Inclusion or exclusion, as well as extracurricular activities, school special events, and summer school

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described their child feeling left out of special events or activities at the school, or not being placed in the early childhood classroom because they were told the child would not be a fit there.

Families expressed reservations about the impact the other children in both special education classrooms and general education classrooms were having on their child. Families described their child being placed in general education classrooms against their wishes. Families discussed situations of children receiving special education services being systematically isolated by the school. Families wanted all playgrounds to be changed to be inclusive, and for the school district to do a better job of celebrating diversity and educating the student body about neurodivergence.

Some families stated that there were no extracurricular activities available to their child at all, or none but sports, or were concerned that children were accommodated in sports but not in any other extracurricular activity at the school. Families expressed concern that their child was not able to play sports, either because their grades were too low in situations related to their accommodations not being provided, because the school had determined that their child's disability-related behaviors prevented them from being involved, or because the sports teams themselves were not inclusive or accessible to their child. Families described situations where their child was not able to participate in fun or enriching school events such as dances, field trips, or after school programs. Families explained that they wanted their child's IEP to be supported in summer school.

WORKING WELL

Families noted that everyone had been inclusive to their child. Families expressed gratitude for the high level of inclusion in the school and in the way their child was treated, such as being greeted and embraced by other students when the child was dropped off at school. Families stated that they were grateful for their child's inclusive classroom, and grateful to work with both special education and general education staff to meet their child's needs in an inclusive setting. Families described their child being able to learn with the rest of their peers and feel like they belong, and noted that the full inclusion in the classroom was a big deal for students wanting to fit in with their friends. Families expressed appreciation for the staff being strategic about providing services to their child during different times, and using different tactics to ensure services would fit in with their child's ability to be a part of the class. Families observed that their child never felt any different from other children in their class, and never felt left out. Families described their child participating in sports and clubs at school.

Bullying: Experiences of bullying and harm by both staff and other students

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families stated that there was too much bullying of children with IEPs at the school and that these children did not get adequate support. Families noted that bullying and harassment were allowed to be pervasive in the school district, explaining their perceptions that there was a culture of staff not intervening and looking the other way when their children were being bullied. Families observed that the school was not making improvements on the issue of their child being bullied. Families described experiences of other children physically or verbally bullying their child. Families expressed concern that their child had been bullied and abused by both students and staff for several years. Families discussed incidents of verbal and physical abuse from staff, including school principals. Families expressed that they wanted more plans and protection related to bullying, and for the schools to do more education of the full student body to help end bullying.

Legal Issues: Legal issues, legal rights for children with IEPs, or formal complaints about educational experiences

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families stated that they had become extremely familiar with IDEA law. Families described complaints filed with the Department of Public Instruction related to their child's experiences and rights, observing that their district routinely violated the right to access a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and that services in the district were withheld unless parents filed formal complaints or got lawyers involved. Some families noted that school staff and leadership had been caught lying in complaint investigations. Families also described experiences of being bullied by staff and retaliated against.

Behavior

Behavior Due to Lack of Accommodations: Behavioral situations arising from a lack of services and accommodations being provided

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that their child became frustrated, acted out in class, or reacted poorly as a result of not understanding the material or being assigned schoolwork that they could not complete without adequate support or accommodations, while also being told that the appropriate behavioral supports would not be provided. Families described being told by staff that their child needed to be punished, in situations where they felt their child's needs were clearly not being met by the school.

General Discipline: General descriptions of discipline or disciplinary results, including tardiness or truancy

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families referenced their child being reprimanded, punished, kicked out of school, sent home from school, suspended, taking classes online instead of in person, or going to court. Families described receiving notifications that their child was tardy or truant, in situations due to weather, or where the school itself had sent the child home due to the child's behaviors. Families expressed concern that they were being held accountable for their child's tardiness and felt the situation should be managed by the school since it was occurring while the child was in the school's care.

Disproportionate Discipline & Manifestation: Disproportionate discipline compared to other children, discipline for behaviors related to child's area of impairment, or perception child is targeted

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families outlined situations that they believed were unfair where their child was disciplined for incidents or behaviors related to their area of impairment, including their child being sent home, suspended, or expelled. Families described experiences of police being called on their child when behavior plans were not followed or staff did not consider their child's area of impairment, their child being traumatized and/or physically harmed by police contact, and receiving fines from police related to incidents with their child at school. Families stated that police handcuffing students in elementary school and middle school was inappropriate and traumatic. Families referenced their child being punished based on standards for children who lack impairment related to behavior. Families described their perceptions that their child or their child's behavior, including behavior related to their area of impairment, was being unfairly targeted, monitored, or singled out by staff. Families noted their concern that their child was seen as a troublemaker or labeled as a "bad child" rather than as a child with a diagnosed behavioral impairment. Families expressed frustration that their own child received punishment in situations where their child was being bullied by other children. Families stated that relevant information about their child's rights and placement was not shared by the school until there was a manifestation or discipline hearing, instead of being shared from the beginning of the process.

Behavior Management: Staff's capability to effectively support or manage behaviors, and participation in behavioral solutions

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families stated that staff minimized their concerns about their child's behavioral needs. Families described staff not being willing to receive constructive criticism about how behavioral situations were handled, look into the function of a child's behaviors in order to help resolve the cause, or acknowledge that the current behavior plan was not working. Families observed that the school did not implement interventions that effectively resolved behavioral issues for their child. Families described a lack of awareness of their child's specific needs, resulting in behavioral issues for their child, or in staff mis-categorizing their child as noncompliant or misbehaving. Families observed that if children with behavioral issues were considered defiant rather than lacking in skills to behave appropriately, the school would avoid providing behavioral instruction to the student. Families noted that other children's behaviors were not managed effectively by staff, which sometimes resulted in dangerous situations.

Families explained that staff misunderstanding their child's needs or not attempting to understand the source of their child's behaviors resulted in their child being categorized as incapable of engaging academically or functioning in a classroom environment. Families described their child not being appropriately supported in relation to their behaviors, and staff interactions with their child that resulted in behavioral issues. In some cases, families outlined how staff's response to their child's behavior significantly escalated a situation or put their child in danger. Families expressed concern that some staff intentionally interacted with their child in ways that would result in behavioral responses from their child that allowed staff to then send them out of the room, instead of redirecting their child effectively or providing reminders for their child to use their behavioral strategies.

WORKING WELL

Families described staff managing their child's behaviors effectively, raising concerns so families could explain why the behaviors existed. Families discussed staff being willing to try new things with the family and better understand their child's behavioral issues, helping families handle their child's behaviors at home, or helping their child manage frustration at school in healthy ways.

Behavioral Issues Receiving More Support: Perceived support for children with and without behavioral issues.

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Some families expressed concern that children without behavioral issues received insufficient resources, support, or staff attention compared to children who did have behavioral issues.

Child

Relationship with Staff: Child's relationship with school staff and other professionals they work with

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families expressed that staff had let their child down. Families described that their child did not have a positive connection with their special education teacher, that they do not feel valued and cared for by their special education teacher, that they do not feel like they belong, and that their teachers did not like them. Families shared that their child stated staff made them feel like a burden, or that it was bothering staff to bring things up, so they remained silent. Families described their child reporting repeated experiences of asking staff for help and feeling forgotten when the teacher did not get back around to them. Families shared that their child had been treated poorly by staff, so now their child was saying that people at the school did not want them around. Families stated that that their child was struggling, and had become so frustrated that they did not want to go to school as a result of staff not following their IEP or pushing them too much. Families explained that their child did not feel safe with their special education teacher, and therefore would not access the accommodations related to being with that person. Families described their child being afraid of the principal after being verbally and/or physically harmed by this person. Families stated that their child had been diagnosed with PTSD as a result of the way they had been treated by school staff and police in the school.

WORKING WELL

Families reported that their child had great relationships with staff, that they loved and enjoyed the staff, that they have a very special connection with staff, and that they created a bond with all staff. Families reported that staff were patient while their child took time to become comfortable with them. Families explained that staff invested time in rebuilding their child's trust in teachers, and their child was now thriving because of that trust. Families noted that their child wanted to impress their teachers. Families reported that their child responded to staff very well, went to staff often, and enjoyed working with staff. Families explained that their child shared that staff were always easy to talk to. Families observed that staff ensured their child was comfortable going to them with questions and concerns, and

was there for them if they felt sad or frustrated. Families reported that their child would be sad when they no longer needed services from certain staff, because they liked that person so much. Families described that their child had a positive relationship with the school principal, who frequently intervened to provide support when their child was frustrated, worked through situations together with their child, and helped their child to process experiences and create a plan.

Self-Advocacy: Child advocating for themselves and their needs

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families observed that their child did not advocate for themselves well (or not at all), and that in some cases this was related to their area of impairment. When their child did ask for help in class, staff did not always follow through, families noted. Families explained that if their child did not speak up, staff would not follow their IEP, and described their child having to bring their IEP to staff to prove that they were allowed to receive their accommodations. Families described their child being brushed off or disciplined by staff when they attempted to advocate for themselves.

WORKING WELL

Families described their child becoming more independent and better at advocating for themselves, and that staff supported their child in developing this self-advocacy. Families described their child growing to take an active role in meetings and planning for their own education.

Effort, Resistance, & Cooperation: Perceptions of effort, resistance, or cooperation from the child related to school attendance, schoolwork, or accommodations

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described their child shutting down or mentally checking out during school as a result of accommodation needs being denied by the school, not understanding the material, or feeling very far behind in school. Families explained that staff stated their child needed to be more accountable for keeping track of their things and managing their work, when challenges with the executive functioning necessary to carry this out were the main reason for the child's IEP. Families described their child wanting to give up due to the substantial struggles they were having because their IEP was ignored. Some families observed that their child could be difficult, that they did not believe their child was doing their part to be academically successful, that their child was refusing to go to school or do their work, or that their child was acting like they did not know how to do something when they did know how to do it.

Families noted that their child did not like the stigma around receiving special education services, and this made it challenging to engage them. Families explained that their child's resistance to receiving help was due to embarrassment, because receiving help made their child feel singled out or excluded from the rest of their class. Some families noted that their child said they would prefer to fail rather than accept the support they needed, because their peers teased them about it. Families expressed concern that staff were allowing the child's refusal or self-isolation to result in the child not receiving the support or integration they needed because this was easier on the staff, rather than staff working to try to offer supports again in different ways the child might be more comfortable with, or finding creative solutions to ensure the child received their supports. Families noted that when their child was failing academically, staff pointed to the child and their child's unwillingness to accept the supports in their IEP, instead of taking professional responsibility for engaging their child skillfully and sufficiently enough to ensure that their child felt comfortable receiving the help they needed.

WORKING WELL

Families explained that their child loved going to school and going to their services. Families described their child as working hard, practicing what they have been taught, being really engaged and motivated to work on their skills, wanting to read books, and striving to get their work done. Families observed their child making an effort to prepare for independent living. Families explained that the special education program had given their child the courage and motivation to learn. Families noted that their child's active participation in meetings and solutions resulted in higher levels of cooperation from them.

Mental Health: Child's mental health, confidence, and emotional well-being

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families explained that a lack of consistency for their child caused them frustration. Families discussed their child coming out of school crying. Families described their child's confidence and self-esteem being very low as a result of falling behind and being pushed through the school system. Families described anxiety, frustration, and discouragement occurring for their child when their child was asked to participate in activities that were not appropriate for them, when their accommodations were not provided, when they were tested or graded poorly without their IEP being taken into account, or when they did not know who to ask for help because their assigned teacher had left the school and no other staff took responsibility for helping them. Families explained that bullying led to anxiety and depression for their child. Some families expressed a preference for a full special education environment for their

child, in order to avoid the experience of self-esteem issues arising from being with peers who did not accept their child. Families reported that their child had been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of how they were treated by school staff. In some cases, families described their child's depression becoming severe enough to lead to a suicide attempt, as a result of bullying from teachers and students when teachers had not been given their child's IEP at the beginning of the year.

WORKING WELL

Families described their child as happy, confident, and having an outlook that anything was possible, noting that the school, program, or staff were often the reason for this.

Transitions to New Schools & Future Preparation

Continuity of Services: Continuity of the child's IEP and services to a new school, or a transfer from Birth to Three to K-12

NEED MORE SUPPORT

When their child started at a new school, families reported experiencing delays or decreases in services and denials of the services and accommodations their child had been receiving at the previous school. Families described how issues with the schools communicating about and transferring necessary reports and documents impacted their child negatively. Families described their child missing a month of school because the school did not have the resources to accommodate their child, needing to advocate for their child with the school district when advocacy with school staff was ineffective, their child not receiving hygiene assistance that had been promised by the school, and their child now failing classes because their accommodations were no longer being provided at the new school. Families anticipating a transition to a new school or from a Birth to Three program into Kindergarten expressed concern about the lack of information about how their child's accommodations and services would be provided at the new school, or that their child's needs would not be met as they entered higher grades. Families reported that the communication and amount of services from the school decreased as their child entered higher grades, and expressed a preference for better communication between grade transitions about what had been going well for their child and why, to support consistency for their child.

WORKING WELL

Families described receiving support for their child's transition to a new school, their child receiving necessary services immediately, and that their child's IEP was followed accurately each day after the transition. Families expressed confidence that their child's needs would be met in the new school and as their child entered higher grades.

Future Preparation: Preparation for future independent living in community and employment

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families expressed concern with the late timing of transition planning and stated that they preferred to learn about their child's post-graduation options in the first year of high school rather than later. Families expressed concern that the school lacked a curriculum that would teach their child independent community living and money management skills, and concern that their child was now lost or left to fend for themselves due to the lack of post-graduation preparation. Families reported that their child had not received promised assistance from the school with finding a job or preparing for job interviews, and that the school was not capable of effectively helping their child develop the functional, social and safety skills to make them employable. Families wanted to learn more about how their child could find a job that was a good fit for their needs, communicate to employers about their disability, and receive information about services to support their child when their child began working. Some families expressed concern that their child was excessively supported by staff and would not develop the level of independent emotional regulation necessary for independent living. Families felt staff minimized their concerns about their child's future. Families wanted more information about how to help their child prepare for the future and about services available to help their child succeed in life after high school.

WORKING WELL

Families expressed appreciation that schools and staff helped prepare their child to graduate with the skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful adult and member of society, including options for future help, and referrals to the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.

High School Tour: Tour or orientation for children with IEPs as they enter high school

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families requested an orientation and detailed tour specifically for students with IEPs to help transition their child to high school.

WORKING WELL

Families reported receiving a private tour of the high school, which assisted their child in their transition to high school.

Higher Education: Preparation for higher education

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described needing more support with planning for college, identifying funding for their child's higher education, determining whether their child's IEP transitioned to college with their child, and who would be available to support their child in college.

WORKING WELL

Families stated that they loved the help they received with college preparation for their child.

Home, Community, & Non-School Services

Community Services: Families' awareness of and access to organizations, resources, and services in the community that support children with IEPs

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families noted that schools had provided few suggestions of services available outside of school (even when they had asked), and many stated that they had been given none at all. Families noted that they learned about resources such as parent support groups or the Children's Long Term Support Program from other families instead of the school system. Families wanted more information about resources in their area (especially in rural areas), observing that their county lacked programs that would benefit their children. Specifically, families described wanting information about services to help their child achieve their goals, after school help with homework, music teachers, clubs for kids with IEPs, and community activities to participate in, such as Autism walks. Families also suggested that family mentors or advocates available to support navigating the public school system would be helpful, including opportunities to learn more about the IEP process before going into the meetings, and promoting the Wisconsin FACETS IEP Training modules to help families understand jargon. Families also described wanting community services to be more accessible (for example, more days and times to access the

Aging & Disability Resources Center), or being notified by the school about events held by outside organizations in time for the family to attend.

WORKING WELL

Families noted that the external resources the school shared helped their family tremendously.

External Resources & Services: Resources, materials, services, medical providers, evaluation services, advocates, and legal support not provided by the school system that families are using, and potentially privately paying for

NEED MORE SUPPORT

Families described having to invest time and effort into researching external services, therapies, and programs that would assist their child, and contacting outside experts in the field who provided guidance on accommodations for their child, expressing concern about what would have happened to their child if they had not been able to do this. Families described obtaining services for their child, such as private tutors and reading instructors, Sylvan Learning, Carevel Autistic Clinic, Wisconsin Early Autism Project, Occupational Therapy clinics, private counselors, social workers, behavioral therapies, private testing, and other services. Several families of children with Dyslexia referenced the need to provide support to their child outside the school system because support was not available within the school system. Families expressed the opinion that the private testing, advocacy, or services they were accessing outside the school system were the only source of assistance for their child, or only reason their child was making progress. Some families felt they had to purchase services themselves because the school had limited resources and their child's needs were overlooked due to a lower level of impairment.

Families described purchasing books and workbooks so their child could work on reading and math skills when options for helping their child at home were not provided by the school, but were unsure if the materials were appropriate for their child's needs and reading level. Some families also explained that their child's progress reports were only available through the advanced features of an app that they could not afford to pay for. Families noted that the school district was charging their insurance for services but they did not feel that their child was receiving adequate help. Families also referenced advocates supporting their family and expensive legal services they had purchased to help get clarification on their child's rights, get their child an IEP that would meet their needs, or get services from the school they felt were appropriate for their child.

Home Support: Guidance, suggestions, and materials provided by the school system to assist families with their child's academic, emotional, or behavioral needs at home

Families described not receiving guidance, information, strategies, tools, online resources, or homework or other activities to help their child at home, even if they had requested these from the school. Other families felt that the resources or homework provided by the school to assist their child at home were inadequate, or having an online resource their child used at home being taken away by the school.

Families described having to take on the role of ensuring their child understood assignments and was prepared for tests at home because their child did not receive the help they needed at school. Families noted that they were told their child was struggling in a certain area, but their child seemed to understand the work when they worked on it together at home. Families described feeling as though the school expected them to fix behavioral issues for their child at home while the school provided minimal support. Families wanted to be able to maintain alignment between home and school with strategies implemented in their child's classroom, and to have virtual therapy be available to their child online outside of school hours. Families wanted information on what their child was working on academically, what their child's regimen was, and how to use accommodations when their child was working on school work at home.

WORKING WELL

Families described being provided with many different practice worksheets, flashcards, games, activities, as well as coaching and mentoring tips, techniques, strategies, ideas, and ways the child could continue to grow that allowed them to help their child at home. Families described their child practicing at home what they were being taught at school. Families explained how staff helped them build continuity between home and school by allowing them to sit in on sessions from school staff, giving them insight into the child's behavior at school and how it was handled there, and maintaining consistent levels of accountability and expectations between home and school.

Changing Districts: Staying in or leaving a school district based on the access to and quality of education available there, including open enrollment, and virtual, charter, or private schooling

Families described trying to determine if they needed to pull their child from their current school or transfer their child to another school, so that their child would have a chance to get the help they needed. Some families stated that they would move out of their current school district if they could, that if they had any other option for their child's education, they would put their child there, or that one

staff member they liked was the only reason that they had not left the district. When families asked if there was another school or program their child could attend instead of their child's current school, or when they expressed concerns about their child's education at their current school, they described never being given an answer, being told that only certain schools in the district provided services to students with IEPs and not others (or not their child's current school), that the family would need to seek private schooling, that homeschooling or transferring to another school was recommended, or that the family should move out of the district. Families observed that their district appeared to push children with IEPs to virtual learning.

Families stated that they were making an intentional choice to remove their child from their current school because the school was not a safe or effective option for their child, sometimes by moving out of their school district's boundaries or leaving the state altogether. Families noted that they were looking forward to their child attending a different school, or that they would soon begin homeschool or virtual school for their child. While some of these descriptions clearly referenced a change at the end of the school year, others referenced a change in the middle of the school year. Families also described being rejected when trying to enroll in private schools due to the amount of intervention and support their child required, or being denied from a lottery system to place their child in a school they preferred.

WORKING WELL

Families described intentionally moving to the school district, or intentionally seeking a new home within the same school district when having to move, so that their child could be educated in that district. Families described the special education program or department as the only reason they continued to reside where they do, and that they would never leave the district because of the IEP support and other services and supports for their child. Families referenced open-enrolling because they had heard how good the district was at serving children with IEPs, having to go outside their residential boundaries for their child to attend their school, or that they 'choice' into a specific district due to the positive supports their child received there. Families described moving to a new school district as an easy experience compared to other districts, that a hybrid program of virtual and in-person learning was ideal for their child, that a fully virtual program was the best decision for their child's education, and that the move they had made changed the direction their child was heading completely for the better.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Families could use more support with...

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs):

- Opportunities to learn more about the IEP process before going into the meetings
- Clear and comprehensible language to explain the process, jargon, and rights
- Scheduling IEP meetings promptly when needed and when families are available
- Accessing identification, evaluation, and testing for their child
- Including in the IEP all supports they feel are necessary for their child to succeed
- Feeling heard, participating meaningfully in IEP development, and feeling like an equal
- Getting detailed, specific IEPs with schedules for services and how goals will be achieved
- Full implementation of all aspects of their child's IEP with all staff and in all classes

Staff:

- Feeling supported by school staff and getting staff to address any concerns families have
- All staff being aware that their child has an IEP and being familiar with its contents
- Ensuring staff are experienced and knowledgeable about specific areas of impairment
- Staffing at sufficient levels for their child to be safe, learning, and getting their needs met
- Reducing staff turnover to help their child have more consistency and fewer service gaps

Communication:

- Developing open lines of communication with the school and the IEP team
- Timely notification from the school about concerns related to their child
- More frequent, detailed, and informative updates about their child's progress
- Responsive replies from the school when families contact them

Progress:

- Ensuring IEPs or services are not lost due to inflated characterizations of progress
- Getting academic interventions implemented by the school when grades drop
- Helping their child make friends and feel a sense of belonging

Accommodations:

- Accommodations, modifications, services, and supports that are effective for their child
- Ensuring their child receives enough time in their services to make progress on goals

- Services specifically for children with Dyslexia
- Receiving the accommodations their child truly needs, not limited by school resources

Educational Environment & Culture:

- Ensuring all legal requirements and all child and family rights are respected and fulfilled
- Including and accommodating all children in extracurricular activities and school events
- Active and immediate intervention to prevent and stop bullying
- Clarity on grading policies and options to try to improve grades or turn in missing work
- Ensuring that IEPs will be implemented throughout summer school
- Having choices about their child's educational environment, including virtual options
- Maintaining high expectations for all children

Behavior:

- Ensuring staff interpret behavior through an understanding of behavioral impairments
- Advocacy and steps to take if their child has been disciplined unfairly
- Ensuring all behavioral accommodations, services, and modifications are provided
- Ensuring their child is treated safely by staff and law enforcement in their school
- Effective behavioral management in classrooms

Child:

- Creating a positive, safe, and trusting relationship with staff
- Helping their child develop self-advocacy skills
- Nurturing positive mental health, confidence, and motivation in their child
- Ensuring accommodations and services are offered repeatedly and respectfully

Transitions to New Schools & Future Preparation:

- Transferring their child's IEP between grades and schools smoothly and promptly
- Ensuring their child retains access to their supports and services without interruption
- Helping their child be prepared for independence, and life and work after high school

Home:

- Strategies, suggestions, and materials to help support their child at home
- Learning about organizations and other sources of support available in the community
- Planning for higher education, including funding and accommodation supports

APPENDIX A: NUMBER OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESPONSES BY CESA & SCHOOL DISTRICT

School District	Number of Quantitative Survey Responses	Number of Qualitative Survey Responses
Almond-Bancroft	10	2
Auburndale	37	4
Baraboo	51	17
Bayfield	17	5
Beloit	113	25
Beloit Turner	21	5
Blair-Taylor	15	1
Bloomer	39	9
Bonduel	21	5
Brighton #1	6	1
Brillion	18	0
Cadott Community	17	5
Cambridge	41	7
Cameron	18	2
Cashton	22	3
Chequamegon	13	3
Cornell	14	4
Dodgeville	40	17
Dover #1	10	0
Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy	7	1
East Troy Community	19	1
Edgar	11	2
Elkhorn Area	95	19
Florence County	11	3
Frederic	8	3
Geneva J4	6	0
Gilmanton	6	1
Glendale-River Hills	62	18
Glenwood City	20	2
Hartford UHS	20	4
Herman-Neosho-Rubicon	10	3
Horicon	27	10
Iola-Scandinavia	14	5
Jefferson	111	32
Kenosha	501	131
Kohler	28	7
La Crosse	144	40
Lake Country Classical Academy Inc	8	0
Lancaster Community	54	8
Linn J6	6	1
Little Chute Area	62	15

<i>School District, Continued</i>	Number of Quantitative Survey Responses	Number of Qualitative Survey Responses
Marion	15	2
Markesan	37	5
Marshall	30	9
Medford Area Public	85	23
Menomonee Falls	147	34
Menomonie Area	85	15
Milestone Democratic School Inc	2	0
Milwaukee	254	62
Mishicot	22	3
Muskego-Norway	51	14
Neenah Joint	290	55
Neillsville	21	2
New Lisbon	29	2
New London	71	18
New Richmond	145	41
Norris	6	1
Northland Pines	33	11
Northwood	6	2
Oostburg	10	4
Owen-Withee	19	1
Paris J1	12	4
Pepin Area	9	3
Phillips	13	4
Platteville	54	17
Princeton	14	3
Randall J1	11	0
Reedsville	19	5
Richland	29	4
River Falls	56	14
Rosholt	10	1
Seneca Area	8	2
Seymour Community	29	14
Sheboygan Falls	36	9
Shullsburg	10	3
Silver Lake J1	8	1
Southwestern Wisconsin	25	7
Sparta Area	77	17
Stockbridge	6	1
Sun Prairie Area	179	65
Three Lakes	16	2
Tomah Area	68	2
Tomorrow River	31	10
Twin Lakes #4	12	4
Viroqua Area	12	3

<i>School District, Continued</i>	Number of Quantitative Survey Responses	Number of Qualitative Survey Responses
Walworth J1	13	2
Waterford UHS	13	7
Webster	11	2
West Bend	242	54
West Salem	28	4
Weston	11	2
Whitefish Bay	58	15
Whitnall	34	5
Wisconsin Dells	25	7
Wisconsin Rapids	211	56
Woodlands School Inc	12	2
Total	4,513	1,076

CESA	Number of Quantitative Survey Responses	Number of Qualitative Survey Responses
1	1140	283
2	708	183
3	231	60
4	366	70
5	432	107
6	759	164
7	168	43
8	47	10
9	60	15
10	201	45
11	352	82
12	49	14
Total	4,513	1,076

APPENDIX B: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT BY QUESTION

Q#	Primary Impairment Area School Age Questions	% Agreement						
		A	EBD	ID	LD	OHI	SL	SDD
1	I am an equal partner with school staff in planning my child's IEP.	89.6%	87.0%	86.9%	91.1%	88.9%	92.7%	91.4%
2	School staff offer me ways to provide information about my family and culture so the school can better support my child.	85.6%	83.2%	86.6%	85.1%	83.3%	90.2%	87.0%
3	School staff offer me different ways to ask questions and get information.	86.9%	83.2%	84.2%	86.1%	84.0%	91.3%	90.2%
4	School staff offer me information in ways I understand.	92.9%	89.7%	N/A	93.6%	92.0%	95.1%	N/A
5	My child is included in school activities that are available to other students (field trips, class performances, sports, clubs, other extracurricular activities, etc.).	87.6%	80.4%	82.3%	94.3%	91.1%	96.4%	N/A
6	School staff help my child and family feel like we belong in the school community.	84.7%	76.5%	84.4%	88.0%	84.5%	93.4%	91.3%
7	IEP meetings are held at a time and place that meet my needs.	92.6%	91.6%	N/A	93.3%	93.3%	94.8%	92.1%
8	In IEP meetings, we talk about my concerns and ideas.	94.0%	89.7%	N/A	94.9%	92.8%	96.5%	N/A
9	School staff ask me if my child's IEP services are meeting my child's needs.	81.3%	78.9%	82.6%	85.7%	79.2%	90.8%	87.0%
10	In IEP meetings, we discuss different options for my child's special education services.	87.9%	86.7%	86.1%	90.3%	85.9%	91.8%	91.3%
11	School staff share my high expectations for my child's progress.	84.6%	84.4%	85.0%	89.3%	83.0%	92.1%	90.0%
12	School staff listen to what our family wants for our child's future (independence, career, post-secondary education).	86.6%	82.7%	87.9%	90.2%	84.6%	92.9%	89.6%
13	In IEP meetings, we discuss how accommodations or modifications will help my child.	91.4%	91.5%	N/A	93.3%	90.9%	94.1%	N/A
14	School staff clearly explain when and where my child will receive special education services and supports.	85.1%	87.0%	87.9%	88.0%	84.9%	91.4%	92.1%
15	School staff offer me information for my child with an IEP about one or more community services.	57.4%	60.6%	61.3%	64.1%	58.2%	71.9%	68.5%
16	School staff explain one or more of the options I have if I disagree with a decision of the IEP team.	79.6%	75.4%	74.7%	81.1%	76.9%	83.9%	85.0%
17	I am happy with how often the school updates me on my child's progress on IEP goals.	76.5%	74.8%	81.5%	80.2%	73.9%	86.9%	87.6%
18	School staff offer me activities or strategies which support my child's learning outside of school.	63.2%	55.5%	70.3%	70.8%	63.2%	82.7%	77.6%

Q#	Primary Impairment Area School Age Questions, Continued:	% Agreement						
		A	EBD	ID	LD	OHI	SL	SDD
19	School staff offer me information about the academic standards AND behavior expectations for all students at my child's grade level.	80.4%	78.6%	72.2%	85.4%	78.6%	90.5%	85.7%
20	School staff offer me information on how to help my child be independent and advocate for their needs.	75.1%	70.8%	71.5%	80.5%	73.1%	86.7%	81.3%
21	My child receives the services, accommodations, modifications, and supports that are written into their IEP.	87.1%	81.3%	85.0%	88.3%	84.1%	93.2%	N/A
22	Everyone who works with my child at school knows about the accommodations, modifications, or supports in my child's IEP.	77.9%	75.5%	82.2%	80.7%	74.9%	88.8%	90.7%

Notes: Q# indicates the number of the question on the survey. For analyses of individual questions, a slightly larger dataset was used that included responses from families who answered so few questions that they were excluded from analysis in the full survey calculations (the average across all questions).

The full wording of survey question #15 on the School Age Survey is as follows:

“School staff offer me information for my child with an IEP about one or more community services that:

- offer support for my child and family
- support my child’s learning outside of school (libraries, community centers, after school programs, child care, etc.)
- help my child prepare for college, independent living, and work
- help me connect with transition and support (life after high school)” [“help me connect with transition to 5K and elementary school” on the Preschool Survey]

The full wording of survey question #16 on the School Age Survey is as follows:

“School staff explain one or more of the options I have if I disagree with a decision of the IEP team:

- I can ask questions at the IEP meeting
- I can request another IEP meeting or facilitated IEP meeting
- I can talk with the special education / pupil services director
- I am provided with procedural safeguards parent rights (mediation, IDEA state complaint, due process hearing request)”

Primary Impairment Area Abbreviation	Primary Impairment Area
A	Autism
EBD	Emotional Behavioral Disorder
ID	Intellectual Disability
LD	Specific Learning Disabilities
OHI	Other Health Impairment
SDD	Significant Developmental Delay
SL	Speech or Language Impairment

Q#	Race / Ethnicity School Age Questions	% Agreement			
		African American	Multi-racial	Latinx	White
1	I am an equal partner with school staff in planning my child's IEP.	88.7%	89.7%	92.3%	90.2%
2	School staff offer me ways to provide information about my family and culture so the school can better support my child.	79.3%	81.8%	85.2%	86.8%
3	School staff offer me different ways to ask questions and get information.	81.1%	84.1%	87.7%	87.5%
4	School staff offer me information in ways I understand.	90.0%	N/A	93.1%	93.5%
5	My child is included in school activities that are available to other students (field trips, class performances, sports, clubs, other extracurricular activities, etc.).	87.2%	90.1%	90.4%	91.9%
6	School staff help my child and family feel like we belong in the school community.	83.3%	85.3%	88.8%	87.4%
7	IEP meetings are held at a time and place that meet my needs.	91.7%	N/A	94.2%	93.2%
8	In IEP meetings, we talk about my concerns and ideas.	90.0%	N/A	94.2%	94.4%
9	School staff ask me if my child's IEP services are meeting my child's needs.	79.3%	81.5%	87.2%	84.0%
10	In IEP meetings, we discuss different options for my child's special education services.	88.0%	87.5%	90.7%	88.7%
11	School staff share my high expectations for my child's progress.	83.1%	85.6%	90.5%	87.2%
12	School staff listen to what our family wants for our child's future (independence, career, post-secondary education).	83.8%	84.5%	92.0%	88.2%
13	In IEP meetings, we discuss how accommodations or modifications will help my child.	91.2%	90.0%	94.1%	92.5%
14	School staff clearly explain when and where my child will receive special education services and supports.	87.1%	84.2%	91.5%	87.6%
15	School staff offer me information for my child with an IEP about one or more community services.	62.6%	59.1%	73.2%	61.5%
16	School staff explain one or more of the options I have if I disagree with a decision of the IEP team.	77.4%	78.7%	84.0%	79.5%
17	I am happy with how often the school updates me on my child's progress on IEP goals.	78.5%	79.7%	84.4%	78.9%
18	School staff offer me activities or strategies which support my child's learning outside of school.	67.3%	65.8%	74.1%	68.7%
19	School staff offer me information about the academic standards AND behavior expectations for all students at my child's grade level.	81.4%	80.3%	83.6%	82.9%
20	School staff offer me information on how to help my child be independent and advocate for their needs.	72.8%	75.9%	80.0%	78.3%
21	My child receives the services, accommodations, modifications, and supports that are written into their IEP.	83.1%	86.8%	90.2%	87.8%
22	Everyone who works with my child at school knows about the accommodations, modifications, or supports in my child's IEP.	80.1%	77.8%	86.6%	80.1%

Q#	CESA School Age Questions	% Agreement							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	10	11
1	I am an equal partner with school staff in planning my child's IEP.	89.1%	90.5%	87.4%	88.6%	90.6%	91.0%	N/A	90.1%
2	School staff offer me ways to provide information about my family and culture so the school can better support my child.	82.7%	86.3%	85.1%	84.8%	84.5%	87.7%	88.7%	87.1%
3	School staff offer me different ways to ask questions and get information.	83.6%	88.1%	86.3%	85.6%	84.8%	87.9%	N/A	88.3%
4	School staff offer me information in ways I understand.	91.6%	92.5%	N/A	94.4%	94.2%	93.7%	N/A	93.1%
5	My child is included in school activities that are available to other students (field trips, class performances, sports, clubs, other extracurricular activities, etc.).	89.9%	90.9%	N/A	87.9%	91.9%	92.2%	N/A	91.9%
6	School staff help my child and family feel like we belong in the school community.	86.4%	88.0%	83.6%	86.9%	84.4%	87.4%	N/A	88.1%
7	IEP meetings are held at a time and place that meet my needs.	91.5%	94.7%	N/A	93.4%	94.4%	93.2%	N/A	90.3%
8	In IEP meetings, we talk about my concerns and ideas.	92.7%	95.4%	N/A	92.2%	N/A	94.7%	N/A	92.5%
9	School staff ask me if my child's IEP services are meeting my child's needs.	81.3%	85.2%	82.5%	80.3%	81.6%	86.2%	83.2%	85.8%
10	In IEP meetings, we discuss different options for my child's special education services.	86.9%	90.0%	86.8%	87.7%	90.5%	88.7%	N/A	88.3%
11	School staff share my high expectations for my child's progress.	85.2%	86.9%	86.2%	87.1%	87.6%	88.6%	86.4%	87.0%
12	School staff listen to what our family wants for our child's future (independence, career, post-secondary education).	85.7%	89.5%	87.7%	87.6%	89.0%	88.7%	N/A	85.7%
13	In IEP meetings, we discuss how accommodations or modifications will help my child.	90.6%	93.3%	N/A	93.0%	90.9%	93.5%	N/A	92.3%
14	School staff clearly explain when and where my child will receive special education services and supports.	86.4%	85.1%	87.2%	85.8%	89.3%	89.1%	N/A	88.1%
15	School staff offer me information for my child with an IEP about one or more community services.	62.8%	62.3%	63.6%	66.2%	62.1%	61.5%	65.0%	62.6%
16	School staff explain one or more of the options I have if I disagree with a decision of the IEP team.	76.8%	81.0%	79.3%	80.1%	79.6%	81.5%	78.4%	80.5%
17	I am happy with how often the school updates me on my child's progress on IEP goals.	78.7%	80.0%	78.8%	77.3%	79.5%	79.8%	83.5%	79.4%
18	School staff offer me activities or strategies which support my child's learning outside of school.	67.1%	68.5%	70.4%	68.6%	68.1%	70.1%	74.1%	69.9%
19	School staff offer me information about the academic standards AND behavior expectations for all students at my child's grade level.	81.9%	81.8%	82.2%	80.6%	81.6%	86.2%	82.1%	82.2%
20	School staff offer me information on how to help my child be independent and advocate for their needs.	76.8%	77.9%	77.0%	76.8%	75.0%	77.8%	79.2%	79.9%
21	My child receives the services, accommodations, modifications, and supports that are written into their IEP.	85.7%	89.0%	85.4%	84.8%	87.7%	89.0%	N/A	89.0%
22	Everyone who works with my child at school knows about the accommodations, modifications, or supports in my child's IEP.	78.2%	81.5%	77.7%	78.7%	83.5%	83.4%	86.1%	79.1%