

SEEDS Project

Analysis of Parent Input

Verification Review 2003- 2004

Overview

During the 2003-04 school year, SEEDS completed its fourth consecutive year of support to the CDE-SED's Verification Reviews. Within this compliance review process, SEEDS facilitated Parent/Guardian Input meetings, conducted follow-up parent telephone interviews, and assisted in the review of infant and preschool student records. SEEDS also participated in the state design team to refine the verification review process.

The CDE-SED Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistance (FMFTA) teams selected districts and designed monitoring plans according to those districts' performance on the Special Education Division's Key Performance Indicators. Fifteen school district Verification Reviews were conducted in 2002-03. In addition, the Special Education Division worked in conjunction with the California Youth Authority (CYA) to hold reviews at two sites, one in Northern California and one in Southern California.

During the 2003-04 monitoring year, two major changes occurred in SEEDS' participation in the Verification Review process. The Parent/Guardian Input Sessions were scheduled several months in advance of the Verification Review, rather than several weeks before each review. All parent meetings were conducted between November and December of 2003, which differed from the previous years' practice of scheduling between October and May. In order to meet this time commitment, the meetings were often grouped over two to three consecutive days.

Early childhood records were previously reviewed at the time of the parent/guardian input meeting. This year, the early childhood records were reviewed during the Verification Review itself, along with the other student files. SEEDS responded by assigning only one SEEDS representative who lives locally to the Southern California districts under review, rather than assigning one consultant and one SEEDS staff.

Format of Parent/Guardian Input Sessions

With the input session as the opening activity for the verification review, CDE-SED consultants were afforded sufficient time to incorporate the parent/guardian data into their monitoring plans. During the input meeting, the SEEDS' parent moderators presented a series of questions on special education themes to the group. The CDE-SED consultants took notes on the parent responses to identify suspected areas of noncompliance for the monitoring plan. The CDE consultants and the SEEDS moderators compared notes briefly following the meeting to ensure that all themes had been included.

In order to address the priorities of the CDE-SED, SEEDS annually modifies the protocol for conducting Parent/Guardian Input Sessions. The 2003-04 list of questions and themes

for the meetings reflected concerns generated from several sources of information. The data sources included:

1. The most frequent areas of non-compliance tabulated by CDE-SED in 2002-03.
2. Parent concerns most often reported from previous input meetings.
3. Questions related to educational benefit.

CDE-SED Verification Review staff reviewed the final revisions to the protocol.

During the Parent/Guardian meetings, SEEDS continued its practice of disseminating community resource sheets listing numerous local and state sources of support for answering parent-guardian questions. The resource sheet included the contact information for the local school district's administrators, the Community Advisory Committee chairperson, the Parent Training and Information Center, the Family Resource Center, Protection and Advocacy, Inc., and the toll free phone number for CDE-SED's Procedural Safeguards unit. The resource sheets for this year, and for previous years, are available on the SEEDS website. The SEEDS' parent moderators receive training in maintaining neutrality as facilitators. They do not answer questions, but provide the resource sheets to families to follow up on their specific concerns.

As in past years, the local school districts were responsible for providing interpretation services for families who do not speak English. The languages represented at 2003-04 parent/guardian meetings included English, Spanish, Hmong, Korean and Cantonese. As reported by parent moderators and FMTA consultants, the simultaneous system of interpretation continued to be the most effective method. During the 2003-04 contract year, SEEDS purchased a system which provides simultaneous interpretation.

SEEDS continues to be responsible for translating written materials into other languages. The brochure, describing the input meeting, was available in English and Spanish during the 2001-02 verification reviews. In 2002-03, the brochure was translated into Hmong, Korean, Hindi, and Punjabi. In 2003-04, a draft of the brochure was developed in Chinese. SEEDS will access community resources to reproduce the brochure in Vietnamese

Data Collection and Analysis

CDE-SED utilized a variety of methods for collecting the parent/guardian perspective during the input sessions. The sources include:

- parents written comments on Comment Sheets
- parents written comments on index cards submitted to CDE-SED (a new practice this year)
- the SEEDS moderator report listing topics and themes generated during the input session
- phone interviews conducted by SEEDS following the input session

At the end of the 2001-02 reviews, SEEDS analyzed parent input data by coding comments into topics and themes. During 2002-03 and 2003-04, parent comments were related, when possible, to items located within the CDE-SED compliance table. The 2003-04 data will be sent to CDE-SED and will be posted on the SEEDS website.

During the 2002-03 verification year, SEEDS introduced a Parent/Guardian Comment sheet to be completed by participating family members at the end of each input meeting. Using a four point Likert-type scale, parents rated and then commented on their experiences in special education under the four topics covered at the meeting. The Comment Sheet was used again this year, in both English and Spanish. SEEDS received Parent Comment forms from 11 parent/guardian meetings, containing 587 comments. This year's top ten negative and positive topics are listed below, organized by compliance items, followed by a sample of comments:

Parents Top Ten Positive Themes:

- LEA provides special education & related services in accordance with child's IEP/IFSP.
- IEP includes descriptions of program modifications/support for school personnel.
- The IEP team considers the parent's concerns.
- IEP team includes parents of the child.
- IEP includes measurable annual goals/benchmarks related to child's need that enables child to be involved and progress in general ed curriculum.
- Placement decisions made by a team that includes the parents.
- LEA takes necessary action to ensure parent understands IEP proceedings.
- LEA makes good faith effort to assist the child in achieving the goals & objectives/benchmarks listed in IEP.
- Student's nonacademic activities were considered in relation to those of non-disabled peers.
- Staff must be qualified.

Parents Top Ten Negative Themes:

- The IEP team considers the parent's concerns.
- IEP includes direct relationship between present levels of performance, evaluations, & education services provided and the student's goals/benchmarks.
- IEP includes measurable annual goals/benchmarks related to child's needs that enable child to be involved and progress in general ed curriculum.
- IEP contains statement of transition needs.
- Each teacher/provider is informed of specific responsibilities related to implementing the IEP.
- LEA provides special education and related services in accordance with child's IEP/IFSP.
- A full continuum of services and placements are available if needed for each individual w/disabilities.
- LEA takes necessary action to ensure parent understands IEP proceedings.

- Evidence of coordinated ongoing staff development.
- IEP includes descriptions of program modifications and support for school personnel.

Sample of Most Frequent Positive Themes Identified by Parents			
Compliance Item#	Compliance Test	# Comments	% of Comments
4-1-3	LEA provides special education and related services in accordance with child's IEP/IFSP	13	2.22
<i>Sample Comments:</i> I think that the teachers are great working with my daughter. They understand where she is at in her learning ability and are working with her.			
Compliance Item#	Compliance Test	# Comments	% of Comments
3-2-5	IEP includes descriptions of program modifications and support for school personnel	12	2.0
<i>Sample Comments:</i> 1. All efforts have been made to help my son grow and to participate with the general students. 2. Staff are well prepared and helpful and willing to listen and make appropriate modifications.			
Compliance Item#	Compliance Test	# Comments	% of Comments
3-3-10.2	The IEP team considers the parent's concerns.	11	1.9
<i>Sample Comments:</i> 1. I am glad because they pay attention to me, they answer all my question about my daughter. 2. I am happy because they have helped me a lot.			
Sample of Most Frequent Negative Themes Identified by Parents			
Compliance Item#	Compliance Test	# Comments	% of Comments
3-3-10.2	The IEP team considers the parent's concerns.	21	3.6
<i>Sample Comments:</i> 1. We have been insulted, told we complained too much, and asked to leave spec ed if we were so displeased-my response-"just because you have not helped does not mean you should not help." 2. The IEP process in this district is combative, demoralizing, and an enormous energy drain on parents. I am a negotiator in my career and twenty years of experience allow me to advocate strongly for my child, yet I remain a lonely voice.			
Compliance Item#	Compliance Test	# Comments	% of Comments
3-2-3	IEP includes direct relationship between present levels of performance, evaluations, and education services provided and the student's goals/benchmarks.	21	3.6
<i>Sample Comments:</i> 1. That my son is not getting the appropriate help for his problem, he needs reading and writing and he is not supported in this problem so that he can get out of the special education program as soon as possible. It is important that they analyze the situation as he is a student in high school. 2. My son does not know how to read and write and that concerns me, because my son gets depressed because he does not know how to read. Irwin concerns me because he has behavior problems and he does not learn.			
Compliance Item#	Compliance Test	# Comments	% of Comments
3-2-2	IEP includes measurable annual goals/benchmarks related to child's needs that enable child to be involved and progress in general ed curriculum	21	3.6
<i>Sample Comments:</i> 1. Goals have been written so low and I've watched him circle the drain since kindergarten, even though I've tried to prevent it by providing evaluations and guidance. 2. I have my daughter with speech problems. We have asked for help, therapy, but we don't know why they told us that they have already tried to give her therapy but she had not made progress. I would like to know what to do in order for her to continue to receive therapy, because my daughter does not talk at all. That is what concerns me.			