



# 2011 Parent/Guardian Survey Report

## Summary of Findings

April 2012

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## Introduction

In the spring of 2011 the AB SpEd PAC conducted a follow-up survey to its 2008 Parent/Guardian Survey. The 2011 survey consisted of 45 questions of which 32 mirrored the 2008 survey. This allowed us to compare parent responses from the two surveys to identify changes in parent perception over the last three years. In terms of survey response rate, over 100 parents responded to the 2011 survey, which is an increase from 2008. This number represents more than 11% of households in the district with special education students.

The AB SpEd PAC performed this parent/guardian survey to identify issues of concern to special education families and to help prioritize future goals for the organization. As a result the report focuses on potential areas of improvement. It is important to note that overall parents who took the survey reported moderate satisfaction with the programs and services provided by the districts. In addition, parent responses in 2011 were slightly more positive than those received in 2008, which is an encouraging trend. We hope that our findings will be helpful to the district in its continuous effort to improve special education programs and services in the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools.

## Survey Methodology

The 2011 AB SpEd PAC Parent/Guardian survey is very similar to the original survey conducted in 2008. Thirty-two of forty-five questions were the same or substantially similar to the 2008 survey. Almost all the questions use a 5 choice Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” with “Agree Somewhat”, “Neither Agree/Disagree”, and “Disagree Somewhat” in between. Respondents could also answer “Not Applicable” or leave the question blank. Almost all the questions were phrased so that an “Agree” answer indicated satisfaction and a “Disagree” response indicated dissatisfaction. Questions phrased in the opposite manner are noted in this report by a change in the color of the Likert scale answers.

The survey was distributed online only and all responses were confidential by survey design. The survey was shared with families via Pupil Services email list, which includes almost all special education families in the two school districts. Survey reminders were sent to families periodically both by Pupil Services and by the AB SpEd PAC through our email list (which includes only a portion of special education families). We did not use any sampling methodologies to ensure that survey results reflected the entire special education community; consequently our survey results are subject to sampling bias.

The 2011 Parent/Guardian survey was divided into six main sections:

1. **School and Parent Partnership** (3 questions) – This section generally focused on communication between parents, the special education child’s Team and school Administrators.
2. **Initial Assessment & the IEP** (9 questions) – This section probed parents’ experiences with initial special education assessment and the IEP development process.
3. **IEP Services & Progress Reporting** (7 questions) – This section focused on the scheduling and delivery of special education services outside the classroom and the effectiveness of progress reporting.
4. **Teachers and Administrators** (6 questions) – This section asked questions about parents’ experiences with SpEd administration, principals, regular classroom teachers, SpEd assistants, communication with those persons, and parents’ access to the classroom.
5. **Quality & Provision of Services** (14 questions) – This section focused on communication with special education staff, the classroom environment, and the scheduling and delivery of special education services outside the classroom.
6. **Bullying** (6 questions) – This section asked questions about the schools bullying prevention programs.

In 2011 questions were scored and ranked in two different ways:

First, consistent with the 2008 survey, we used a scoring system which gave two points for a Strongly Agree answer, one point for an Agree Somewhat answer, no points for a Neither answer, negative one point for a Disagree Somewhat answer and negative two points for a Strongly Disagree answer. Thus a positive average score indicates satisfaction and a negative score indicates dissatisfaction. Questions phrased so that an Agree answer indicated dissatisfaction were scored in reverse when calculating averages for consistency.

Second, in the 2011 survey questions were also scored using a “Net” number, which is the sum of the Agrees (somewhat and strongly) minus the sum of the Disagrees (somewhat and strongly). By providing total Agrees, Disagrees, and Net numbers the reader has more information about the distribution of the answers and the total number of question respondents. While the first scoring system discussed has the benefit of brevity – one number – it provides no information about distribution. For example, a “0” average could consist of all “Neither Agree or Disagree” answers or an equal number of Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree answers, which would be an important distribution of answers to identify.

A review of survey respondents in 2011 and 2008 indicates the makeup of the two groups is very similar. A detailed comparison of survey respondents is included at the end of this report.

## Highlighted Observations

**Modest Positive Trend** – We are pleased to relate that in most areas surveyed special education parents expressed a modestly more positive perception of special education programs and services than they did in 2008. This is a positive trend and one we hope the district will continue to build on. Specifically, parents indicated increased satisfaction with bullying prevention and intervention strategies implemented by the district; the satisfaction gap between parents of students on the Autism Spectrum versus parents of students with Specific Learning Disabilities narrowed by more than half; and parents continued to express strong positive opinions about the IEP process and communication with the district.

Having said that, we believe the survey also identified some areas of concern within special education as perceived by parents of children with special needs. After review and discussion, the AB SpEd PAC leadership has identified three particularly interesting findings where the survey data points to possible areas of program improvement.

**Key Observation #1 – Progress Reporting** – Parents’ satisfaction with progress reporting about their special needs child decreased materially from 2008, moving against the modestly positive overall survey trend. In 2011 a full 48% of parents disagreed (26% strongly) with the statement, “I am given sufficient information to understand how my child's progress and grades relate to regular education peer standards/performance for my child's current grade level” while in 2008 parents expressed moderate agreement to a similar question. In 2011 parents also expressed an overall neutral opinion about whether progress reports provide the information necessary to assess whether their child is achieving IEP goals while in 2008 parents expressed moderate satisfaction with this question. Finally, parents’ satisfaction with the introduction of new strategies when their child failed to meet his/her IEP goals also declined from a neutral rating in 2008 to a -0.36 in 2011.

As one parent commented on the survey: *“I think there needs to be some correlation between their [student’s] progress and their grades. I have received great progress reports in the past on my son but in reality he was still struggling in class and his grades were 1 C and the rest Ds.”* – Parent comment

It is important to note that this comment reflects a common misconception about what information is contained in IEP progress reports versus report cards. Progress reports contain the student’s progress towards his/her individual IEP goals, which may or may not be directly tied to grade level curriculum standards while report cards identify a student’s progress/mastery of the general education curriculum for his/her specific grade.

Given that almost 50% of special education parents don't feel they receive sufficient information to understand how their child's progress relates to regular education peer standards/performance for their child's grade, the AB SpEd PAC would ask that the district explore parents' concerns and institute a progress reporting solution that meaningfully integrates regular and special education reporting to district families. We suspect the underlying cause of parents' negative feedback is confusion surrounding the two separate, parallel progress-reporting systems of regular education and special education. Currently there is no mechanism in place that connects feedback from one source to the other or bases both sets of feedback within a single frame of context for families. It is very confusing and frustrating for parents to receive a special education progress report that reflects their child is on target to meet all his/her IEP goals while that same student is performing poorly in multiple academic classes. We would suggest that evaluating and revising the progress reporting system would benefit from a working group comprised of regular educators, special educators and parents.

**Key Observation #2 – Before School, After School & Summer Programming** – In three survey questions related to before and after school programming parents overall expressed modest dissatisfaction with answers skewed to the two extremes (Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree). An analysis by primary disability showed that parents of children with Specific Learning Disabilities were very satisfied with extracurricular programming, whereas parents of children on the Autism Spectrum were very dissatisfied, while parents of all other primary disabilities (about half of survey respondents) were moderately dissatisfied. This same dichotomy of responses was seen in regards to parent satisfaction with Extended Year/Summer programming.

This was an issue that was raised by the 2008 Parent/Guardian survey and discussed in the Autism Parent Forums in 2009, yet unfortunately no measurable progress has been made to resolve parent concerns regarding children's access to before and after school programs or enhanced summer programming. We recognize the organizational, financial and planning complexities inherent to this task. However, we would ask the district to commit to making before and after school programs and summer programs accessible to all students with special needs – putting particular emphasis on serving children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and students with challenges other than Specific Learning Disabilities who already seem to be well served by the district. We would suggest that this task would benefit from a working group of parents, special educators and Community Education staff.

**Key Observation #3 – Speaking Freely Without Negative Consequences** – In 2011 almost one in four parents (24 respondents, 23% of total respondents) expressed concern about retribution from speaking freely by “Disagreeing Somewhat or Strongly” with the statement “I feel I can speak freely with district staff and disagree with my child's special education program or services without negative consequences for me or my child.” This is a slight increase from 2008 when 21% of parents responded similarly. An analysis of this minority group revealed a deeply and broadly dissatisfied group of parents. However, of the 24 respondents who replied negatively there doesn't appear to be a definable group.

This was also an issue that was raised by the 2008 Parent/Guardian survey and discussed in the Autism Parent Forums in 2009. Unfortunately, the problem doesn't seem to have become any less entrenched in the ensuing years. We continue to be troubled that almost a quarter of parents surveyed expressed concern about negative consequences to their child or themselves if they disagree with the Administration regarding their child's special education needs. Open, honest communication is the cornerstone of true partnership, which both parents and administrators strongly desire. An analysis of this group's other survey answers shows this to be a broadly and deeply dissatisfied group of parents. In light of this group's fear of reprisal, is it difficult to know how to reach parent members to better understand their concerns. Over the coming months we hope to develop a plan for how to effectively communicate with this group of parents.



## Other Observations

We are pleased to relate that in most areas surveyed special education parents expressed a modestly more positive perception of special education programs and services than they did in 2008. This is a positive trend and one we hope the district will continue to build on in the future. However, there continue to be a few areas of concern in special education that beare additional exploration. Below are other observations from the 2011 Parent/Guardian survey, which are discussed in more detail in the body of this report.

1. **Parents Modestly More Satisfied** – Overall parents in the 2011 survey expressed modestly more favorable opinions than in the 2008 survey. This trend was strongest in questions about bullying and communication with the school district regarding IEPs and pullout therapies. In the 32 questions repeated in this year’s survey parents expressed a neutral to an “Agree Somewhat” opinion (+.31 by our scoring system where +1.00 is Agree Somewhat and +0.00 is Neither Agree/Disagree). This is an increase of +.08 from the 2008 survey. In regards to issues related to bullying when looking at all of the bullying question together, the overall score improved +.20 points moving from a negative -.05 in 2008 to a positive +.15 in 2011.
2. **Difference Narrowed Between Specific Learning Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder Families** – The 2008 survey identified a wide disparity of satisfaction among parents of children with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) who were highly satisfied with district programs and services and parents of children on the Autism Spectrum (ASD) who were highly dissatisfied with programs and services. In 2011 this disparity was still evident, but at a greatly diminished level, mostly as a result of autism parents expressing more favorable opinions than they did in 2008. In 2011 the spread between the SLD parents and ASD parents was .51 points while in 2008 the spread was 1.20 points.
3. **Bullying** – In 2008 parents expressed dissatisfaction with the schools’ bullying programs. This year parents expressed a more neutral opinion, which was an improvement over the 2008 results. As noted above when looking at all of the bullying question together, the overall score improved +.20 points moving from a negative -.05 in 2008 to a positive +.15 in 2011. Yet in 2011 almost one in five parents (16 respondents, 19% of total respondents) still disagreed with the statement “My child feels safe from bullying and supported by the adults in his or her environment.”
4. **Class Size** – Consistent with 2008 results, parents again strongly expressed the opinion that large class sizes are having a detrimental impact on their child’s progress. In 2011 the question dealing with class size garnered the largest number of dissatisfied parents and the lowest score of all the survey questions.

5. **Other Areas of Concern** – While overall scores indicate general satisfaction in most areas surveyed, there were a few areas where a material minority expressed the opposite view. In particular:
  - a. **Independent Evaluations** – In 2011 parents continued to express concern about the consideration given to Independent Education Evaluations by the IEP Team. More than half of all respondents (n=53) disagreed with a statement that equal weight and consideration was given to reports created by independent specialists. This response is similar to the 2008 survey results. Note: this question received fewer responses than others, presumably because many parents do not seek independent evaluations.
  - b. **Consideration of Disability re: Behavior** – There was a material decline in parents' perceptions that their child's disability was considered before addressing any behavior problems. The parent response score on this question declined by .90, which was the largest decline of the 32 questions asked in both the 2008 and 2011 surveys. In 2011 parents overall rated this question as a -.29. Note: this result is based on a relatively low 42 responses (of 105 survey participants) in 2011. Parents without experience in this area were instructed not to answer this question.
6. **Open-Ended Responses** – We recommend that you read the included selection of thoughtful open-ended parent comments beginning on page 36 of this report to gain a fuller understanding of parents' perspectives on special education in the Acton and Acton-Boxborough school districts.

## Progress on Key Findings From 2008 Survey

Based on the results of the 2008 Parent/Guardian Survey the AB SpEd PAC highlighted two primary findings. One was the discrepancy in satisfaction between parents with children on the Autism Spectrum and parents with children who had Specific Learning Disabilities. The other was parent concerns regarding the bullying of children with special needs. We're pleased to share the following progress on those highlighted issues.

**Difference Between Specific Learning Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorder Families – Pupil Services** became a proactive force for addressing the dissatisfaction of parents with children on the Autism Spectrum by holding a series of parent forums, summarizing group discussions, and developing an action plan based on parent feedback. We directly associate these actions with the substantial improvement in 2011 feedback from this group of parents. In 2008 parents of Autism Spectrum children scored -.47 in the 32 questions asked on both surveys. That indicates a moderate level of dissatisfaction and contrasts sharply with the +.73 score of parents of children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). In 2011 parents of children on the Spectrum scored a positive +.11 representing a very large +.58 change. Good progress has been made. However there is still a material gap between the satisfaction of Autism and SLD parents, which indicates that more investigation and action is necessary to close the gap.

**Bullying**– The 2008 Survey's identification of bullying as a major issue among special education parents occurred at about the same time that bullying became a state-wide high profile issue. We were pleased to contribute to the groundswell of opinion, which led to the formation of a district Bullying Task Force under the leadership of Liza Huber and on which our Co-Chair, Nancy Sherburne served. We believe the districts' implementation of a Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy and associated practices has been the primary cause for the improvement in parent satisfaction around bullying issues reported in 2011. However, parents' overall satisfaction of a modest +.15 seems to indicate that there is still significant room for improvement.

In regards to the district reporting of bullying incidents this year, the AB SpEd PAC is unable to reconcile the 19% of special education parents (16 respondents) in the 2011 survey who disagreed with the statement, "My child feels safe from bullying at school..." with public announcements that the district has had no reported incidents of bullying thus far this year. Bullying experts who spoke to the Bullying Prevention Task Force projected that initial reporting of bullying incidents should rise significantly with the institution of a new policy and reporting system. However, our district seems to have moved dramatically against that projected trend. Why is that? Since the AB SpEd PAC's 2011 survey indicated that approximately 20% of

special education students experienced bullying this past year and CAFY's 2009 Parent Survey indicated that 30% of junior high parents and 25.8% of parents with children younger than junior high reported their children having experienced bullying, we would propose that the district would benefit from an investigation into why there is such a large discrepancy between the number of district reported bullying incidents this year and recent parent/student experience. It is hard to imagine that the implementation of any bullying prevention program would result in a precipitous drop to 0 incidents of bullying within the first year of program implementation.

## Ranked Survey Results and Observations

### Survey Summary

The average of all survey answers in 2011 was +0.30 indicating a modest tilt toward “Agree Somewhat” by survey respondents. There were 32 questions that were common to both the 2008 and 2011 surveys. For this subgroup of questions the 2011 average score was +0.31 versus +0.23 in 2008.

### Strongest Positive Responses

In general parents expressed strong positive opinions in the 2011 survey with respect to the IEP process and communication with the district. Parents felt that the district routinely provided them with a complete IEP within 5-10 days of a Team meeting, that the IEP included all of the recommendations made in the Team meeting, that IEP goals were specific and measureable, that the IEP was implemented expeditiously, that parents were treated as equal members of the Team and that staff responded to parent questions in a timely manner.

### Strongest Negative Responses

The strongest negative response in the survey was to Question 32 regarding the impact of class size on a child’s ability to make effective progress (Q32, -25). In addition, parents disagreed: that the district proposed different strategies when current special education strategies failed a student (Q17, -12), they disagreed that the district provided a rationale to parents for rejecting any proposals discussed but not included in the IEP (Q12, -15), that their child’s principal was informed and understood how to support their child’s disability (Q21, -17), and that home based services and assistive technology were explored fully by the Team (Q7, -21). In addition, parents disagreed that they were given sufficient information to understand how their child was performing in comparison with typical students (Q16, -15). Parents were also dissatisfied with the before and after school programs available to their child and disagreed that the school ensures extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities. See Key Observation #2 for further details regarding this topic.

### Question Scoring

The first sort of the Survey seeks to identify issues for which there is a strongly positive or negative opinion held by parents. In the following table Survey questions are sorted by the number of “Net” Agrees or Disagrees (Disagrees have a negative net value). The

net Agree number is calculated by adding the Strongly Agree and Agree Somewhat responses and then subtracting the Strongly Disagree and Disagree Somewhat responses. A large number of “net” Agrees indicates a strong favorable aggregate opinion.

#### **Drawback of Net Agree Scoring**

One of the drawbacks of this “Net Agree” approach is that in some circumstances it is more important to focus on the negatives, notwithstanding that a strong majority of respondents have a positive opinion. One such question is Question #2: “I feel I can speak freely with district staff and disagree with my child's special education program or services without negative consequences for me or my child.” Although a large majority of parents agree with this statement, 24 parents (24% of 102 respondents) disagreed at least somewhat with this proposition. This percentage has increased slightly from 2008. It is troubling to the PAC that up to a quarter of special education parents may feel inhibited from communicating honestly with the Administration due to fear of reprisal either to themselves or their child.

An analysis of the group of 24 who indicated concern about reprisal indicates this is a very dissatisfied and disaffected group as shown in the analysis below, which compares total survey responses on four key questions with the responses from this group of 24 parents.

## Comparison of All Answers with Those Who Disagree with Q2

- 2 "I feel I can speak freely with district staff and disagree with my child's special education program or services without negative consequences for me or my child."

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	Score <u>All</u>	Score <u>Subgroup</u>	<u>Difference</u>
1	I am treated as an equal member of my child's Team.	0.84	-0.43	-1.27
3	I feel that communications from special education administrators to parents are open, honest and transparent.	0.46	-1.27	-1.73
20	Based on my experiences the special education administration is a service-oriented organization that has children's best interests as its number one priority and the organization responds expeditiously when seeking problem resolution.	0.34	-1.26	-1.60
40	My child has experienced bullying on the school campus, on the bus, during school field trips/activities, or via the internet by classmates.	-0.20	-1.47	-1.27

Of the 24 parents who disagreed with Question 2, 15 (63%) provided information about their child. As might be expected, parents expressing concern about negative consequences were less likely than other parents to provide information about their child. 89% of other parents provided data about their child. An analysis of the parents who disagreed with Question 2 did not identify a particular school or grade where this attitude was prevalent. However, we did find weak evidence of a possible over-representation of parents of children on the Autism Spectrum. 7 of the 15 dissatisfied parents (47%) who provided information about their child identified Autism as their child's primary disability. Overall 25% of respondents identified Autism as the primary disability. Given the small sample size we believe it is possible that the over-representation found may be due to randomness.

## Question 2 Breakout

Total Respondees	102	Disagree Somewhat or Strongly	24
Disagree Somewhat or Strongly	24	Of above, child data provided	15
% of Total	24%	% of Disagree Somewhat or Strongly	63%

## Breakout of Disagrees

<i><b>by Primary Disability</b></i>		<i><b>by School</b></i>		<i><b>by Grade</b></i>	
Autism	7	Conant	2	Pre-school	0
Neurological	3	Douglas	1	Kindergarten	0
Emotional	2	RJ Grey	4	Grade 1	2
SLD	3	ABRHS	2	Grade 2	1
		Out of			
No Answer	9	District	2	Grade 3	1
		Other	4	Grade 4	0
		No Answer	9	Grade 5	1
				Grade 6	3
				Grades 7-8	5
				Grades 9-12	2
				No Answer	9



## Questions Sorted by Number of Agrees less Disagrees

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Neither Agree / Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Net Agrees - Disagrees</u>
9	The school district routinely provides me with a complete IEP or IEP Amendment within 5-10 days after my child's Team meeting.	57	21	5	7	7	64
10	The IEP Summary/Meeting Notes I receive at the end of the Team meeting and the full IEP I receive 5-10 days later Include all of the recommendations and agreements made by parents and school staff at the Team meeting.	53	24	6	7	7	63
1	I am treated as an equal member of my child's Team.	52	24	6	6	17	53
28	To the best of my knowledge, over the last two years the school has provided my child with all the special education services and hours of service documented in my child's IEP.	44	19	9	8	6	49
8	The IEP goals and objectives for my child established by the Team are specific and measurable. (For example, "my child will use appropriate eye contact with peers and teachers 50% of the time as observed by the special educator in a natural setting.")	41	29	3	14	8	48
2	I feel I can speak freely with district staff and disagree with my child's special education program or services without negative consequences for me or my child.	39	31	8	14	10	46
29	The district does not delay implementation of my child's IEP due to lack of classroom space or personnel.	41	17	10	6	6	46
23	I feel I have adequate direct access to the individuals working most closely with my child throughout the school day, such as classroom assistant, special service providers, and teachers.	39	27	6	9	12	45
26	District staff responded to my concerns (whether communicated by phone, email or meeting) in a timely (within 1-2 days) and professional manner.	38	24	6	6	11	45
22	I believe my child's classroom teacher is knowledgeable regarding my child's disability and knows what types of supports are necessary for my child's social and academic success.	38	28	5	8	16	42

## Questions Sorted by Number of Agrees less Disagrees

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Neither Agree / Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Net Agrees - Disagrees</u>
5	The IEP Team routinely considers what part of the general education classroom my child can participate in before deciding to remove my child from the general education classroom for special education services.	37	18	11	9	8	38
44	My child feels safe from bullying at school and supported by the adults in his/her school environment (including lunch, hall and recess monitors).	21	31	17	4	12	36
31	I am informed of and understand the in-class and pullout interventions my child receives on a daily basis (from the classroom assistant, speech/language specialist, occupational therapist, recess monitor, etc.).	29	23	6	11	6	35
11	The proposed IEP sometimes includes information or decisions that were not discussed at the team meeting.	8	12	18	15	38	33
27	I am notified promptly by staff when my child is experiencing difficulties in school (social, academic, or behavioral).	33	24	6	13	15	29
3	I feel that communications from special education administrators to parents are open, honest and transparent.	37	21	11	20	14	24
35	If my child is at risk of regression over the summer due to his/her disability, my child was offered appropriate extended year programming. (Respond N/A if your child is not at risk of regression over the summer.)	30	4	5	5	7	22
20	Based on my experiences the special education administration is a service-oriented organization that has children's best interests as its number one priority and the organization responds expeditiously when seeking problem resolution.	25	25	13	17	13	20
14	The special education pullout services my child receives (such as speech/language or occupational therapy) are scheduled so that my child doesn't miss important academic time in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible.	17	26	11	7	16	20



## Questions Sorted by Number of Agrees less Disagrees

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Neither Agree / Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Net Agrees - Disagrees</u>
<b>4</b>	Before my child was referred for special education, the district tried to meet my child's needs within the regular education program. (By providing a modified curriculum and/or teaching strategies, reading and/or math supports, behavioral supports, counseling, etc.)	20	18	2	8	10	20
<b>43</b>	The school has taught my child how to respond appropriately to bullying at school and to whom he/she should report bullying incidents.	12	27	16	12	11	16
<b>30</b>	Staff ensure that skills taught to my child in pullout sessions are effectively generalized to the regular education classroom.	14	23	14	10	11	16
<b>45</b>	My school has an effective bullying program in place with a clear reporting structure and consequences that have been shared with all families.	11	25	22	13	12	11
<b>18</b>	My request(s) to have the regular education teacher complete an Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) Teacher Report Form as part of a private or outside assessment were honored. (Forms like the Achenbach Teacher Report Form often used for neuropsych evaluations, etc.) All forms were completed and returned to me or the private evaluator within three weeks from the time I delivered the forms to the school.	14	4	0	2	9	7
<b>25</b>	If I requested an observation of my child's current or proposed program or services (either for myself or an outside specialist), the district scheduled the observation in a timely fashion and allowed a sufficient duration of time to fully evaluate the program.	9	5	5	5	2	7
<b>15</b>	The assessment mechanisms identified in the IEP and included in progress reports are sufficient so that I can monitor and understand my child's rate of progress towards attaining IEP goals.	16	25	13	20	17	4
<b>42</b>	My child's disability has been taken into consideration when investigating/responding to bullying incidents.	10	8	10	8	6	4
<b>36</b>	I am satisfied with the summer/extended year programming my child receives from the school district.	10	11	3	8	10	3

## Questions Sorted by Number of Agrees less Disagrees

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Neither Agree / Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Net Agrees - Disagrees</u>
6	If an assistive technology evaluation was conducted for my child the district competed that evaluation within 30 days and held a Team meeting to discuss the results within 45 days of receiving my written permission to evaluate. (Respond N/A if you haven't	9	2	1	3	5	3
41	Any bullying my child has experienced at school or on the bus has been addressed promptly and effectively.	13	8	13	6	13	2
24	I am permitted to observe my child's program in order to understand/evaluate his or her needs and the efficacy of a particular intervention.	11	6	27	10	6	1
34	Community Education ensures that before/after-school programs, school vacation and summer programs are accessible to students with disabilities.	11	6	17	2	14	1
13	The special education program and services my child receives from the school district are sufficient for her/him to achieve academic and social proficiency.	20	23	9	23	20	0
19	The Team gave equal weight and consideration to outside specialists' testing, reports and recommendations (such as a neuropsych evaluation, speech/language or occupational therapy evaluation). All important recommendations made by outside	12	13	1	12	17	-4
33	The school ensures that after-school and extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities.	14	8	17	9	17	-4
37	I am satisfied with the before and after school programs available that support my child's special needs.	6	4	4	5	9	-4
38	When my child has behavior concerns, the school considers whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability before determining the appropriate course of action. (Respond N/A if your child does not have behavior issues at school.)	7	8	6	8	13	-6



## Questions Sorted by Number of Agrees less Disagrees

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Neither Agree / Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Net Agrees - Disagrees</u>
40	My child has experienced bullying on the school campus, on the bus, during school field trips/activities, or via the internet by classmates.	27	16	5	10	17	-8
17	If my child's IEP goals were not met, the district offered new/different strategies to assist my child in meeting his/her IEP goals.	9	13	8	14	20	-12
16	I am given sufficient information to understand how my child's progress and grades relate to regular education peer standards/performance for my child's current grade level.	11	19	18	21	24	-15
12	If the district rejects proposals made at the IEP Team meeting, the rejected options are explained in the written notice I receive from the district when it send me the proposed IEP.	4	4	2	6	17	-15
21	I believe my child's school principal is informed regarding my child's disability and knows what types of supports are necessary for my child's social and academic success.	9	10	31	16	20	-17
7	Both home based services such as parent training and private tutoring, and assistive technology options for including my child in general education activities, were fully explored by the Team and included in the IEP as appropriate.	9	8	4	11	27	-21
32	I believe that current class sizes negatively impact my child's ability to make effective progress in the general education classroom/curriculum without additional supports.	34	14	14	9	14	-25

## Comparison of 2011 and 2008 Surveys and Observations

### Observations

The 2011 Survey included 32 questions, which were the same as, or substantially similar to questions in the 2008 survey. This next analysis compares 2011 and 2008 answers to these 32 questions. The analysis is sorted by the change in overall score between the two surveys and it includes the “Net” number of Agrees (Strongly and Somewhat) minus the Disagrees (Strongly and Somewhat). The total number of 2011 responses (“n”) is also included.

As mentioned earlier, the average score of all 32 questions improved modestly in 2011, from +.23 in 2008 to +.31 in 2011. In ten questions there was an improvement of +.25 or more. All of these questions also showed an increase in Net scores as well. The areas that showed the most positive increases were related to communication with parents and bullying. See the results on p. 25 for a list of those individual questions.

### Negative Trend

The scores for five individual questions declined by -.25 or more, pushing the scores of four of these questions into negative territory from a positive score in 2008. Parents’ opinion that the schools consider their child’s disability when dealing with behavior issues (Question # 38 declined by -.90, from an above average score of +.62 in 2008 to -.29 in 2011. This question received fewer responses than other questions (n = 42 of a possible 105) likely because parents with children who don’t have behavioral problems were instructed not to answer the question.

### 2011 Survey Sorted by Score Change from 2008

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Scores</u>			<u>Net Agrees - Disagrees</u>	
		2011	2008	Change	2011	2008
38	When my child has behavior concerns, the school considers whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability before determining the appropriate course of action. (Respond N/A if your child does not have behavior issues at school.)	-0.29	0.62	-0.90	-6	18

Parents also expressed a higher level of dissatisfaction about the reporting of their child’s progress. Questions related to the progress assessment tools in the IEP (Question # 15) and the reporting of student progress relative to typical students (Question #16) showed a negative trend and a negative Net score for Question 16 as shown below.

### 2011 Survey Sorted by Score Change from 2008

<u>Q#</u>	<u>Survey Question</u>	<b>Scores</b>			<b>Net Agrees - Disagrees</b>	
		<b>2011</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>The assessment mechanisms identified in the IEP and included in progress reports are sufficient so that I can monitor and understand my child's rate of progress towards attaining IEP goals.</b>	0.03	0.31	-0.27	4	18
<b>16</b>	<b>I am given sufficient information to understand how my child's progress and grades relate to regular education peer standards/performance for my child's current grade level.</b>	-0.30	0.29	-0.59	-15	18

Parents also reported a higher level of dissatisfaction with the use of third party evaluations (Question 19) and the offering of new strategies when goals are not met (Question 17).

### 2011 Survey Sorted by Score Change from 2008

Q#	Survey Question	Scores			Net Agrees - Disagrees	
		2011	2008	Change	2011	2008
19	The Team gave equal weight and consideration to outside specialists' testing, reports and recommendations (such as a neuropsych evaluation, speech/language or occupational therapy evaluation). All important recommendations made by outside specialists were discussed and incorporated into my child's IEP, as appropriate.	-0.16	0.16	-0.32	-4	4
17	If my child's IEP goals were not met, the district offered new/different strategies to assist my child in meeting his/her IEP goals.	-0.36	0.08	-0.44	-12	2

### Survey Sort by Change in Score from 2008 to 2011

The following sort compares 2011 and 2008 answers to the 32 questions that were substantially the same on both surveys. The analysis is sorted by the change in overall score between the two surveys and it includes the “Net” number of Agrees (Strongly and Somewhat) minus the Disagrees (Strongly and Somewhat). The total number of 2011 responses (“n”) is also included. This sort is organized from the highest positive change in value to the highest negative change in value for each question.



## 2011 Survey Sorted by Score Change from 2008

Q#	Survey Question	Scores			Net Agrees - Disagrees	
		2011	2008	Change	2011	2008
18	My request(s) to have the regular education teacher complete an Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) Teacher Report Form as part of a private or outside assessment were honored. (Forms like the Achenbach Teacher Report Form often used for neuropsych evaluations, etc.) All forms were completed and returned to me or the private evaluator within three weeks from the time I delivered the forms to the school. (Respond N/A if you haven't requested an Independent Education Evaluation in the past two years.)	0.41	-0.34	0.76	7	-5
9	The school district routinely provides me with a complete IEP or IEP Amendment within 5-10 days after my child's Team meeting.	1.18	0.48	0.70	64	22
35	If my child is at risk of regression over the summer due to his/her disability, my child was offered appropriate extended year programming. (Respond N/A if your child is not at risk of regression over the summer.)	0.88	0.33	0.55	22	7
10	The IEP Summary/Meeting Notes I receive at the end of the Team meeting and the full IEP I receive 5-10 days later include all of the recommendations and agreements made by parents and school staff at the Team meeting.	1.12	0.64	0.49	63	36
41	Any bullying my child has experienced at school or on the bus has been addressed promptly and effectively.	0.04	-0.38	0.42	2	-10
28	To the best of my knowledge, over the last two years the school has provided my child with all the special education services and hours of service documented in my child's IEP.	1.01	0.60	0.41	49	26
31	I am informed of and understand the in-class and pullout interventions my child receives on a daily basis (from the classroom assistant, speech/language specialist, occupational therapist, recess monitor, etc.).	0.77	0.43	0.35	35	22
43	The school has taught my child how to respond appropriately to bullying at school and to whom he/she should report bullying incidents.	0.22	-0.11	0.33	16	-3
45	My school has an effective bullying program in place with a clear reporting structure and consequences that have been shared with all families.	0.12	-0.15	0.27	11	-5
24	I am permitted to observe my child's program in order to understand/evaluate his or her needs and the efficacy of a particular intervention.	0.10	-0.15	0.25	1	-10
44	My child feels safe from bullying at school and supported by the adults in his/her school environment (including lunch, hall and recess monitors).	0.53	0.30	0.23	36	13



## 2011 Survey Sorted by Score Change from 2008

Q#	Survey Question	Scores			Net Agrees - Disagrees	
		2011	2008	Change	2011	2008
36	I am satisfied with the summer/extended year programming my child receives from the school district.	0.07	-0.13	0.20	3	-6
20	Based on my experiences the special education administration is a service-oriented organization that has children's best interests as its number one priority and the organization responds expeditiously when seeking problem resolution.	0.34	0.15	0.20	20	8
33	The school ensures that after-school and extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities.	-0.11	-0.29	0.18	-4	-9
26	District staff responded to my concerns (whether communicated by phone, email or meeting) in a timely (within 1-2 days) and professional manner.	0.85	0.68	0.17	45	34
32	I believe that current class sizes negatively impact my child's ability to make effective progress in the general education classroom/curriculum without additional supports.	-0.53	-0.66	0.13	-25	-24
2	I feel I can speak freely with district staff and disagree with my child's special education program or services without negative consequences for me or my child.	0.74	0.71	0.03	46	41
23	I feel I have adequate direct access to the individuals working most closely with my child throughout the school day, such as classroom assistant, special service providers, and teachers.	0.77	0.75	0.02	45	39
27	I am notified promptly by staff when my child is experiencing difficulties in school (social, academic, or behavioral).	0.52	0.51	0.01	29	22
3	I feel that communications from special education administrators to parents are open, honest and transparent.	0.46	0.45	0.01	24	24
1	I am treated as an equal member of my child's Team.	0.84	0.83	0.01	53	52
40	My child has experienced bullying on the school campus, on the bus, during school field trips/activities, or via the internet by classmates.	-0.20	-0.20	0.00	-8	-8
42	My child's disability has been taken into consideration when investigating/responding to bullying incidents.	0.19	0.26	-0.07	4	8
7	Both home based services such as parent training and private tutoring, and assistive technology options for including my child in general education activities, were fully explored by the Team and included in the IEP as appropriate.	-0.66	-0.54	-0.12	-21	-15

## 2011 Survey Sorted by Score Change from 2008

Q#	Survey Question	Scores			Net Agrees - Disagrees	
		2011	2008	Change	2011	2008
8	The IEP goals and objectives for my child established by the Team are specific and measurable. (For example, "my child will use appropriate eye contact with peers and teachers 50% of the time as observed by the special educator in a natural setting.")	0.85	0.99	-0.14	48	55
22	I believe my child's classroom teacher is knowledgeable regarding my child's disability and knows what types of supports are necessary for my child's social and academic success.	0.67	0.82	-0.15	42	42
21	I believe my child's school principal is informed regarding my child's disability and knows what types of supports are necessary for my child's social and academic success.	-0.33	-0.08	-0.24	-17	-4
15	The assessment mechanisms identified in the IEP and included in progress reports are sufficient so that I can monitor and understand my child's rate of progress towards attaining IEP goals.	0.03	0.31	-0.27	4	18
19	The Team gave equal weight and consideration to outside specialists' testing, reports and recommendations (such as a neuropsych evaluation, speech/language or occupational therapy evaluation). All important recommendations made by outside specialists were discussed and incorporated into my child's IEP, as appropriate.	-0.16	0.16	-0.32	-4	4
17	If my child's IEP goals were not met, the district offered new/different strategies to assist my child in meeting his/her IEP goals.	-0.36	0.08	-0.44	-12	2
16	I am given sufficient information to understand how my child's progress and grades relate to regular education peer standards/performance for my child's current grade level.	-0.30	0.29	-0.59	-15	18
38	When my child has behavior concerns, the school considers whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability before determining the appropriate course of action. (Respond N/A if your child does not have behavior issues at school.)	-0.29	0.62	-0.90	-6	18



## Survey by Primary Disability and Observations

### Observations

The 2008 survey identified a large difference in parents' satisfaction with special education experience based on the primary disability of their child. Parents with children on the Autism Spectrum expressed broad-based dissatisfaction while parents of children with Specific Learning Disabilities reported a high level of satisfaction. In 2008 we called this the "Tale of Two Cities" phenomenon where it was the best of times for parents of SLD students and the worst of times for ASD parents. We looked again to see if this phenomenon continued by comparing the scores of these two parent groups. As shown below the phenomenon does still persist.

<b>2011 Survey (45 Questions)</b>	<b>Score</b>
Autism Spectrum	0.17
Specific Learning Disability	0.67
All Disabilities	0.30
Autism - SLD	-0.50
Autism - All	-0.13

We also compared the answers on the 32 questions common to the 2008 and 2011 survey to determine if there is a trend. While ASD parents remain less satisfied than SLD parents and parents of children with other disabilities, the gap was more than halved, mostly due to an increase in satisfaction among ASD parents in 2011 versus 2008.

Survey Trend	2011	2008	
<u>Questions asked both years</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Change</u>
Autism Spectrum	0.11	-0.47	0.58
Specific Learning Disability	0.62	0.73	-0.11
All Disabilities	0.31	0.23	0.08
Autism - SLD	-0.51	-1.20	0.69
Autism - All	-0.19	-0.70	0.50

We also compared answers to a survey question (Question 20 in the 2011 Survey) that was highly correlated with a parent's general satisfaction with special education and that highlighted the convergence among SLD and ASD parents. In 2008 it was clear ASD parents had doubts about the effectiveness of special education with more than 50% of respondents Strongly Disagreeing (and only 6% Strongly Agreeing) with the question below. In contrast in 2008 61% of SLD parents Strongly Agreed with the statement and only 11% Strongly Disagreed.

**Based on my experiences the special education administration is a service-oriented organization that has children's best interests as its number one priority and the organization responds expeditiously when seeking problem resolution.**

	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Net	n	SA % of n	SD % of n
<b>2011</b>						
Autism Spectrum	3	3	0	21	14.3%	14.3%
Specific Learning Disability	11	2	9	23	47.8%	8.7%
Other Disability or None Named	11	8	3	49	22.4%	16.3%
All Disabilities	25	13	12	93	26.9%	14.0%
<b>2008</b>						
Autism Spectrum	1	9	-8	17	5.9%	52.9%
Specific Learning Disability	11	2	9	18	61.1%	11.1%
Other Disability or None Named	15	12	3	47	31.9%	25.5%
All Disabilities	27	23	4	82	32.9%	28.0%
<b>Change</b>						
Autism Spectrum	2	-6	8	4	8.4%	-38.7%
Specific Learning Disability	0	0	0	5	-13.3%	-2.4%
Other Disability or None Named	-4	-4	0	2	-9.5%	-9.2%
All Disabilities	-2	-10	8	11	-6.0%	-14.1%

In 2011 the level of strong disagreement among ASD parents dissipated as represented by only 14% (vs. 53% in 2008) of parents in this subgroup indicated Strong Disagreement with Question 20. It now appears the ASD parents are approaching the total survey averages in terms of overall satisfaction while still not as satisfied as SLD parents. One area where there is still a wide difference of opinion among parents of children in each disability group involves before and after-school programming. SLD parents expressed strongly positive opinions while ASD parents were the polar opposite. Parents of children with other primary disabilities indicated

moderate dissatisfaction with extra-curricular activities, as shown in the tables below. See Key Observation #2 for a more complete discussion of this topic.

**33**

**The school ensures that after-school and extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Total Replies	Positives	Negatives	Net	Average (SA=+2, SD=-2)
<b>ASD</b>	2	0	5	4	6	17	2	10	-8	-0.71
<b>SLD</b>	5	3	5	0	0	13	8	0	8	1.00
<b>Others</b>	7	5	7	5	11	35	12	16	-4	-0.23
<b>ALL</b>	14	8	17	9	17	65	22	26	-4	-0.11

**34**

**Community Education ensures that before/after-school programs, school vacation and summer programs are accessible to students with disabilities.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Total Replies	Positives	Negatives	Net	Average (SA=+2, SD=-2)
<b>ASD</b>	3	2	4	2	6	17	5	8	-3	-0.35
<b>SLD</b>	6	0	3	0	0	9	6	0	6	1.33
<b>Others</b>	2	4	10	0	8	24	6	8	-2	-0.33
<b>ALL</b>	11	6	17	2	14	50	17	16	1	-0.04

37

I am satisfied with the before and after school programs available that support my child's special needs.

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Total Replies	Positives	Negatives	Net	Average (SA=+2, SD=-2)
<b>ASD</b>	1	1	2	0	5	9	2	5	-3	-0.78
<b>SLD</b>	3	0	1	2	0	6	3	2	1	0.67
<b>Others</b>	2	3	1	3	4	13	5	7	-2	-0.31
<b>ALL</b>	6	4	4	5	9	28	10	14	-4	-0.25

A comparative analysis of SLD practices and other disability practices may reveal some of the underlying causes of the difference in satisfaction.



## General Education and Bullying Questions and Observations

### Observations

We believe that the success of special education students depends on both regular and special educators, district and school administrators and staff. Consequently our survey questions crossed over district organizational functions. We have tried to isolate survey questions where the school management and staff play a large role. Questions are broken down as “General” and “Bullying.” Ten questions are in the “General” category, seven of which were also asked in 2008. The average score of +.15 for the 2011 survey questions is about the survey average. However, the trend overall is negative (-.24 decline for the 7 questions) with parents reporting declining satisfaction with reports on student progress (Question 16, -.59 decline) and consideration of the student’s disability when there are behavior issues (Question 38, .90 decline). Whereas the overall score for the six Bullying questions improved +.20 from 2008 led by a +.42 improvement in the question related to prompt and effective action (Question 41). However, the 2011 score was +.04, a neutral rating, suggesting more attention to prompt and effective action may be necessary. In our view another troubling sign is that 12 (14%) respondents Strongly Disagreed with the statement that their child feels safe at school (Question 44), another 4 (4%) Disagreed Somewhat. We do not believe the Administration should be content that the overwhelming majority of students feel safe – in our view the only appropriate goal here is zero.

*“The school is not on the appropriate bullying track. An article in the Beacon actually said that there have been no reported incidents of bullying at AB. Teaching children the channels to report incidents is NOT all that is required. Children will not tattle on peers. It's similar to a prison atmosphere. No "inmate" will snitch on another "inmate" in fear of retaliation. That is why children suffer in silence and would rather take their own life than report peer abuse to school authorities.” – Parent comment*

### Survey Sort by Change in Score from 2008 to 2011

The following sort compares 2011 and 2008 answers for ten regular education questions and six bullying questions. This sort is organized from the highest negative change in value to the highest positive change in value for each question.

## GENERAL REGULAR EDUCATION QUESTIONS

Q#	Question	Total Replies		Average Score		Change
		2011	2008	2011	2008	
4	Before my child was referred for special education, the district tried to meet my child's needs within the regular education program. (By providing a modified curriculum and/or teaching strategies, reading and/or math supports, behavioral supports, counseling, etc.)	58		0.52	-	
16	I am given sufficient information to understand how my child's progress and grades relate to regular education peer standards/performance for my child's current grade level.	93	80	-0.30	0.29	-0.59
21	I believe my child's school principal is informed regarding my child's disability and knows what types of supports are necessary for my child's social and academic success.	86	59	-0.33	-0.08	-0.24
22	I believe my child's classroom teacher is knowledgeable regarding my child's disability and knows what types of supports are necessary for my child's social and academic success.	95	83	0.67	0.82	-0.15
23	I feel I have adequate direct access to the individuals working most closely with my child throughout the school day, such as classroom assistant, special service providers, and teachers.	93	81	0.77	0.75	0.02
27	I am notified promptly by staff when my child is experiencing difficulties in school (social, academic, or behavioral).	91	79	0.52	0.51	0.01
30	Staff ensure that skills taught to my child in pullout sessions are effectively generalized to the regular education classroom.	72		0.26	-	
33	The school ensures that after-school and extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities.	65	65	-0.11	-0.29	0.18

## GENERAL REGULAR EDUCATION QUESTIONS

Q#	Question	Total Replies		Average Score		Change
		2011	2008	2011	2008	
37	I am satisfied with the before and after school programs available that support my child's special needs.	28	34	-0.25	-	
38	When my child has behavior concerns, the school considers whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability before determining the appropriate course of action. (Respond N/A if your child does not have behavior issues at school.)	42	45	-0.29	0.62	-0.90
AVERAGE OF ALL GENERAL REGULAR EDUCATION QUESTIONS				0.15		
AVERAGE OF QUESTIONS ASKED IN 2008 AND 2011				0.12	0.37	-0.24

## BULLYING SPECIFIC REGULAR EDUCATION QUESTIONS

Q#	Question	Total Replies		Average Score		Change
		2011	2008	2011	2008	
40	My child has experienced bullying on the school campus, on the bus, during school field trips/activities, or via the internet by classmates.	75	60	-0.20	-0.20	0.00
41	Any bullying my child has experienced at school or on the bus has been addressed promptly and effectively.	53	39	0.04	-0.38	0.42
42	My child's disability has been taken into consideration when investigating/responding to bullying incidents.	42	35	0.19	0.26	-0.07
43	The school has taught my child how to respond appropriately to bullying at school and to whom he/she should report bullying incidents.	78	54	0.22	-0.11	0.33
44	My child feels safe from bullying at school and supported by the adults in his/her school environment (including lunch, hall and recess monitors).	85	60	0.53	0.30	0.23
45	My school has an effective bullying program in place with a clear reporting structure and consequences that have been shared with all families.	83	65	0.12	-0.15	0.27
AVERAGE OF ALL BULLYING QUESTIONS				0.15	-0.05	0.20

## Selected Parent Open-Ended Responses

Parents expressed concern on a variety of issues in the open-ended survey questions. Following are ones we thought brought forward a point of view worth considering.

### On professional development and accountability:

*“The single most important success factor for a SpEd student with a specific learning disability is the teacher. There are good teachers and less capable teachers. There doesn't seem to be any attempt to help the less capable improve. I'd like to see a teacher evaluation process that includes parent observations. Also like to see principals and teachers doing regular observation in classrooms...to figure out what's working and what's not. There's very little accountability at the end of the day.” – Parent comment*

### On pleading for resources and reliance on drugs:

*“There can be an Us vs. Them mentality in the IEP meetings. I always feel like I have to be the enforcer/defendant pleading my case, when the idea should be that our mutual goal is to support this child. The program does not consider what the child needs to succeed in the future i.e. considering outside opinions, offering programs to develop social/life skills and there is too much readiness on the part of the professionals to get the child on medications rather than thinking outside of the box.” – Parent comment*

### On accessibility to extra-curricular activities:

*“I have great difficulty in any programs before or after school by law my child is allowed to go, but there is no help for him so I am suffering by not having access to programs to help him socialize. Any program on school property for example the extended day should be open to children with disabilities and the IEP accommodations need to be put in place. Very poor communication in helping parents understanding what is offered.” – Parent comment*

Parents expressed modestly negative opinions about the special education population's access to before and after-school and vacation programs run by the schools and the district (Community Education) as shown below.



**33** The school ensures that after-school and extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities.

Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Total Replies	Positives	Negatives	Net	Average (SA=+2, SD=-2)
14	8	17	9	17	65	22	26	-4	-0.11
21.5%	12.3%	26.2%	13.8%	26.2%	100.0%				
2008						20	29	-9	-0.29

**34** Community Education ensures that before/after-school programs, school vacation and summer programs are accessible to students with disabilities.

Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Total Replies	Positives	Negatives	Net	Average (SA=+2, SD=-2)
11	6	17	2	14	50	17	16	1	-0.04
22.0%	12.0%	34.0%	4.0%	28.0%	100.0%				

**37** I am satisfied with the before and after school programs available that support my child's special needs.

Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree / Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Total Replies	Positives	Negatives	Net	Average (SA=+2, SD=-2)
6	4	4	5	9	28	10	14	-4	-0.25
21.4%	14.3%	14.3%	17.9%	32.1%	100.0%				

#### On transitions:

There were five critical and one compliment about key transitions among the open-ended comments from parents. Three of the six comments (two critical, one complimentary) related to the transition from the elementary schools to junior high school. The parent comment that follows contains both a transition and a communication issue.

*“My son is only in preschool and we have been overall pleased with the services he is receiving. He has a diagnosis and obvious issues so "qualifying" for services hasn't been an issue. It is a difficult transition from EI [Early Intervention] where you see all the therapy and techniques used to school where you don't and you only get progress reports a couple of times a year. I understand it's a burden on the staff and for preschool it might be OK but I don't see how this would be OK in upper grades.” – Parent comment*

#### On pullout sessions:

*“It is just astonishing the difference between the Jr. High and elementary school special ed models. Our son is thriving in Jr. High; he is not missing ANY classroom time because of the way the schedule is structured. The elementary programs need COMPLETE overhaul; even though our son was "full inclusion" in elementary - this was NOT how he was treated. He was constantly pulled out, missing big gaps in the curriculum. Now he has caught up and is doing beautifully - Cheers to the Jr. High model!” – Parent comment*

*“Pull out sessions in the elementary school do NOT take into account what is missed in the regular classroom. They SAY they do but my son missed a lot of things that were covered in the classroom while he was in a SpEd session. Some of them were fun things, too, that he was very disappointed that he missed. Something should be done to fix that. ” – Parent comment*

An additional question about pullout services was added to the Survey this year to ask parents about the impact of lost classroom time due to the pullouts. Two parents (above) were concerned enough about the subject to voice their thoughts in the open reply part of the Survey. Six others briefly mentioned pullouts as an area of concern. The PAC has expressed a preference for pullout services before or after school with the elementary school Thursday afternoon holiday a logical time for special services. Overall respondents were modestly positive about the scheduling of pullout services (Question 14). See below.

<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree Somewhat</u>	<u>Neither Agree / Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree Somewhat</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Net Agrees - Disagrees</u>	<u>Total Replies</u>	<u>Positives</u>	<u>Negatives</u>	<u>Net</u>
The special education pullout services my child receives (such as speech/language or occupational therapy) are scheduled so that my child doesn't miss important academic time in the regular education classroom to the maximum extent possible.	17	26	11	7	16	20	77	43	23	20

## Demographic Data of Survey Respondents

Following is a breakout of survey respondents by number of children with special needs, child's gender, grade level, school, primary disability and placement.



## ACTON-BOXBOROUGH SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL

### April 2011 Parents Survey

#### About Survey Respondents

**How many school age children do you have who receive special education services?**

	2008 Number of Responses	2008 Response Ratio	2011 Number of Responses	2011 Response Ratio	Ratio Change
One	20	21.2%	57	54.3%	33.1%
Two	31	32.9%	12	11.4%	-21.5%
Three	17	18.0%	3	2.9%	-15.1%
Four	3	3.1%	0	0.0%	-3.1%
More than four	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
No Responses	23	24.4%	33	31.4%	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**What is the gender of your child receiving special education services?**

is the count of respondent	2008 Male	2008 Female	2008 Total	2011 Male	2011 Female	2011 Total
All	56	22	78	59	27	86
	71.8%	28.2%		68.6%	31.4%	

### What is your special needs child's grade level?

2008 Top number is the count of	Preschool	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7 or 8	Grade 9 - 12
78	8	2	4	2	6	8	8	5	16	19
100.0%	10.3%	2.6%	5.1%	2.6%	7.7%	10.3%	10.3%	6.4%	20.5%	24.4%
<b>2011</b>										
87	2	5	4	7	7	10	5	8	18	21
100.0%	2.3%	5.7%	4.6%	8.0%	8.0%	11.5%	5.7%	9.2%	20.7%	24.1%
<b>Ratio Change</b>	-8.0%	3.2%	-0.5%	5.5%	0.4%	1.2%	-4.5%	2.8%	0.2%	-0.2%

### What school does your special needs child attend?

2008 Top number is the count of	Int. Preschool	Conant	Douglas	Gates	McCarthy	Merriam	R.J. Grey	ABRHS	Out of district	Other
90	7	13	4	7	4	11	12	16	14	2
100.0%	7.8%	14.4%	4.4%	7.8%	4.4%	12.2%	13.3%	17.8%	15.6%	2.2%
<b>2011</b>										
88	2	14	7	5	5	9	16	19	7	4
100.0%	2.3%	15.9%	8.0%	5.7%	5.7%	10.2%	18.2%	21.6%	8.0%	4.5%
<b>Ratio Change</b>	-5.5%	1.5%	3.5%	-2.1%	1.2%	-2.0%	4.8%	3.8%	-7.6%	2.3%

### What is your child's primary disability?

2008 Top number is the count of	Autism	Devel Delay (3-9)	Intellectual	Sensory	Neurologic al	Emoti onal	Communic ation	Physical	Specific Learning Disability
66	17	6	1	2	9	7	6	1	17
100.0%	25.8%	9.1%	1.5%	3.0%	13.6%	10.6%	9.1%	1.5%	25.8%
<b>2011</b>									
87	22	8	1	1	16	9	5	2	23
100.0%	25.3%	9.2%	1.1%	1.1%	18.4%	10.3%	5.7%	2.3%	26.4%
<b>Ratio Change</b>	-0.5%	0.1%	-0.4%	-1.9%	4.8%	-0.3%	-3.3%	0.8%	0.7%

### What is your child's placement (as indicated on his/her IEP)?

2008 Top number is the count of	Full Inclusion	Partial Inclusion	Substantially Separate Classroom	Separate Day School	Residential	Other
78	42	19	5	8	1	3
100.0%	54%	24%	6%	10%	1%	4%
<b>2011</b>						
85	56	18	4	3	1	3
100.0%	66%	21%	5%	4%	1%	4%
<b>Ratio Change</b>	12.0%	-3.2%	-1.7%	-6.7%	-0.1%	-0.3%

**Attachments:**

2011 Parents Survey

All Respondents

Autism Spectrum Respondents

Specific Learning Disability Respondents

Parent Comments