FACILITATED INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANNING

The State of Implementation and Evaluation

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PRESENTATION AGENDA

1. Introductions

2. FIEP: Background

3. What, Why, and When

4. FIEP Implementation across the US

5. FIEP Evaluation in six states

6. FIEP data from one state

BACKGROUND

- In the late 1990s, JDL Associates, Interaction Associates, and the Interaction Institute for Social Change adapted a meeting facilitation curriculum called Essential Facilitation (Interaction Associates, 1998) to the IEP team process (Little & Bellinger, 2000).

- Essential Facilitation for IEP Meetings (JDL Associates, 1999), included four days of instruction on creating ground rules, meeting agendas, communication, and negotiating skills, as well as training on maintaining meeting focus and creating consensus (Little & Bellinger, 2000).

- Since then, the principles of IEP meeting facilitation have been adapted formally and informally to meet the needs of implementing school districts. Several models of IEP meeting facilitation currently exist throughout the country

FIEP COMPONENTS

Components of Facilitated Individualized Education Planning

JDL Associates (1999) and later Mueller (2009) identified necessary elements of successful IEP meeting facilitation:

❑ Neutral facilitator,

❑ Ground rules,

❑ Meeting agenda,

❑ Goals created by each member of the team,

❑ A environment that fosters collaboration,

❑ Communication strategies that eliminate any power imbalance, and

❑ A parking lot.

WHY FIEP?

- Costs associated with formalized dispute resolution mechanisms have prompted some SEAs to seek out alternatives

- Unlike the IDEA mandated, formal dispute resolution mechanisms discussed above, FIEP occurs in the IEP meeting, prior to impasse.

FIEP: WHEN

FIEP is usually requested when the parents and the school personnel agree that a facilitator would assist with communication and problem solving among the team members, who may have a pre-existing history of contentious interaction, or who may need to address IEP team topics that are sensitive or complex (CADRE, 2004; Pudelski, 2013).

SOUNDS GREAT! WHY WOULD WE STUDY IT??

- FIEP has significant promise in theory, but few studies have examined its implementation or effectiveness (Barrett, 2013; Mueller, Singer & Draper, 2008).

- Despite this lack of research, the School Superintendents Association has recommended that Congress mandate FIEP in the next re-authorization to IDEA, and indicated that the majority of special education disputes can be resolved with this process (Pudelski, 2013).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(1) Where and how is FIEP being implemented?

(2) What outcome and participant feedback data are collected by SEAs implementing FIEP?

(3) Are data collected by SEAs sufficient to provide evidence that FIEP can reduce formal dispute resolution and/ or improve the parent-school relationship?

PHASE I AND PHASE II

Questions 1 and 2 were addressed in Phase I of the study

Question 3 was addressed in Phase II.

METHOD

Phase 1: On-line survey in Redcap to answer Research Questions 1 and 2:

- Survey (example being passed around) asked about implementation and data collection.

- 51 SEA professionals identified through individual SEA websites and CADRE's State/Territory Dispute Resolution Database (CADRE, 2014) were contacted via e-mail and telephone over a period of six weeks in the fall of 2014.

- 43 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia completed the survey. Non-responding SEAs (DC, DE, IN, MT, NM, OK, SC, UT) were not isolated to any particular region of the United States.

- 84% participation rate.

RESULTS: FIEP USE. SEAS WERE ASKED ABOUT CURRENT, PAST, AND FUTURE USE OF FIEP USING *YES-NO* QUESTIONS.

- In all, 56% (*n*=24) of participating SEAs indicated that they were using FIEP

- Of the 19 SEAs (44%) not currently using FIEP, 12 respondents, or 63%, said that they were considering implementing FIEP in the future, and one (5%) reported having used it in the past, and discontinuing its use.

- The states currently using FIEP were distributed across the country.

RESULTS: FIEP USE.
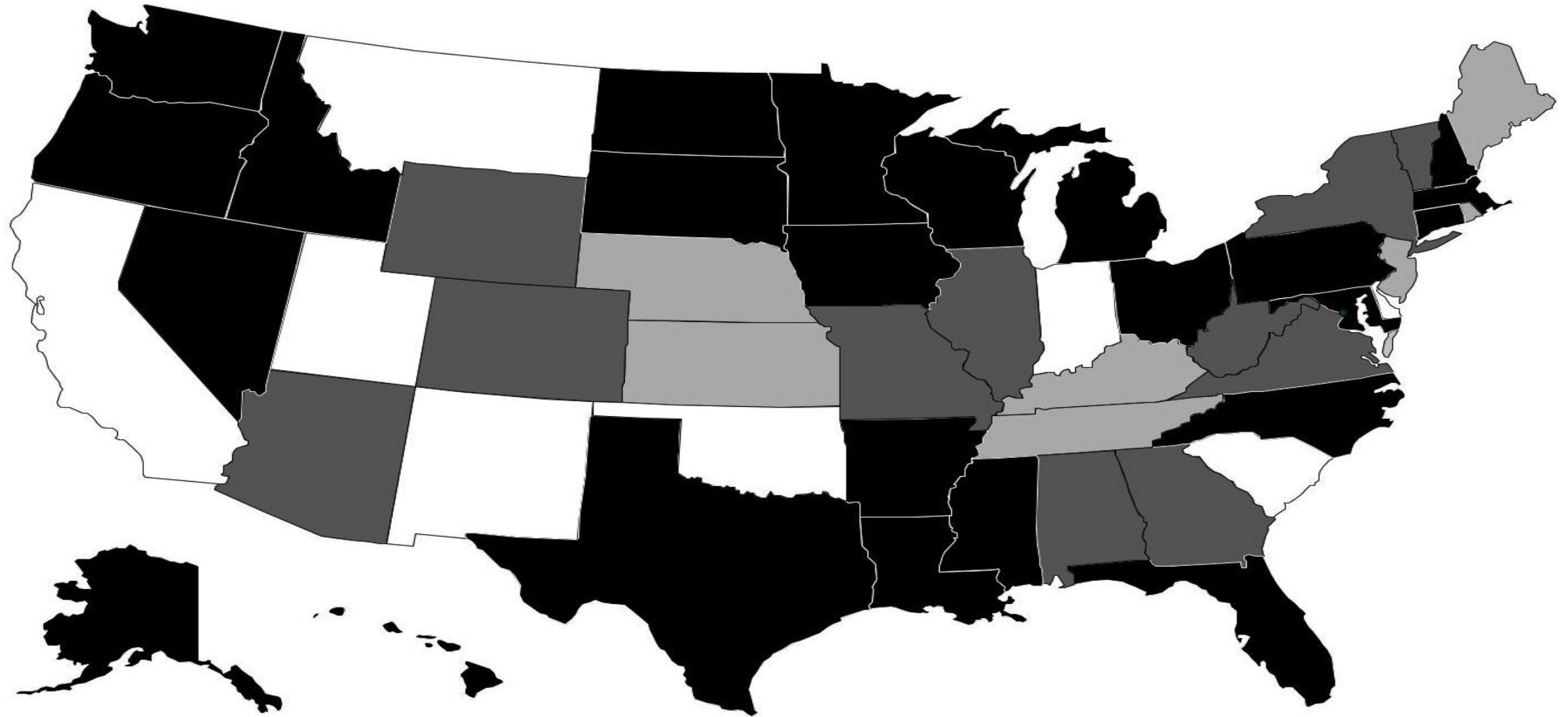
| | No response | | Not using or considering FIEP | | Does not use FIEP currently, but considering it | | Using FIEP currently |

FIEP IMPLEMENTATION: SEAS THAT USED FIEP WERE ASKED ABOUT THE INITIATION OF SERVICES, THEIR TRAINING MODEL, AND FACILITATOR TRAINING AND MONITORING

Among SEAs currently using FIEP that provided information (n=23)

- 13% (n=3), started using FIEP before 2004,

- 35% (n=8) began FIEP between 2005-2007,

- 22% (n=5) between 2007-2011, and

- 30% of states (n=7) reported implementing FIEP in 2012 or later.

FIEP IMPLEMENTATION

- All but one state (96%) indicated that they used an FIEP model that relied on a trained, neutral facilitator.

- The specific facilitator training program used varied by state.

  - One state (4%) used a national training model (Key 2ED; Little & Little, 2000), while five (22%) used training programs created by the state agency, and the majority (n=17; 74%) selected an "other" type of training program not specified on the survey.

DATA COLLECTION.
RESPONDENTS WERE THEN ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING:

- **Meetings;** such as "Does your SEA collect data on the number of FIEPs that end in full consensus, partial consensus, or no consensus each year?"

- **Facilitator feedback;** such as data collected on facilitator's perspective regarding level of pre-FIEP conflict between the parties, relationship status of the parties prior to FIEP, feedback regarding facilitator training needs, etc.

- **Participant feedback,** including the perspectives of school system employees and families/guardians respondents on facilitator skill, IEP outcome as judged by participant, participant impression regarding reason for outcome, whether FIEP improved the relationship of the parties, etc.

- **Post-meeting follow-up data,** including improved communication, improved relationship, continued satisfaction with FIEP process, and improved educational programming as a result of FIEP.

Participant Feedback Types Reported by State Educational Agency in Phase I (N=13)

	AR	ID	LA	MD	MI	NC	ND	NH	OH	PA	TX	WA	WI	Total % (n)
Facilitator skill level	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	92% (12)
Future FIEP use	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	85% (11)
Overall satisfaction	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	85% (11)
Outcome	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X*	X	77% (10)
Perspective following meeting	X	X		X	X		X		X		X	X	X	69% (9)
Improved communication	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X			62% (8)
Improved relationship		X		X	X	X			X	X	X			54% (7)
Meeting features	X			X	X				X		X	X	X	54% (7)
Reason for outcome	X	X	X			X	X		X		X			54% (7)
Perspective prior to meeting	X						X				X	X		31% (4)

QUESTION 3: ARE DATA COLLECTED BY SEAS SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT FIEP CAN REDUCE FORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND/ OR IMPROVE THE PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP?

PHASE II:

Six SEAs that indicated in Phase I that they collected participant feedback and outcome data.

Each provided their participant feedback form, along with data regarding meeting outcome, participant feedback, or both.

QUESTION TYPES: PRE-MEETING QUESTIONS

Questions related to participant's role, the meeting issue(s)/ the issue(s) that led to the meeting, how the participant was referred to the process, or how the participant felt prior to FIEP

QUESTION TYPES: DURING MEETING

- Questions related to the **facilitator, process and outcomes.**

- **Facilitator** type questions focused on neutrality; focus on the development of an appropriate IEP; keeping the team on task; focusing on the student's needs, listening to participants, gathering input from all team members, generating ideas for conflict resolution, and overall satisfaction.

- **Process** questions included whether a participant was allotted adequate time and/ or opportunity to participate, whether the participant had an appropriate level of input into the meeting

- **Outcome** questions related to meeting outcome and reasons for outcome.

POST-MEETING

Post-meeting questions asked about post-meeting emotions, future effectiveness in working out conflict, future effectiveness in addressing student's needs, and future use of FIEP.

Specific questions asked participants to indicate

- How the FIEP process had affected the relationship

- Whether the strategies used during the FIEP could be useful in future meetings

- Whether the participant believed that the FIEP process reduced the probability that other dispute resolution mechanisms (i.e., due process, mediation) would be used in the future and

- Whether the participant would recommend FIEP.

SURVEYS

Pre-Meeting: Each SEA asked at least one type of Pre-meeting question, with one SEA addressing all three types (i.e., Identifiers, Participant Pre-Meeting Characteristics, and Pre-Facilitation Experience)

During meeting. Five out of six SEAs asked questions that addressed all three types of during meeting groupings: Facilitator, Process, and Outcome

Post-meeting. In all, five of the six SEAs posed questions in their surveys related to post-meeting characteristics

Participant Feedback Survey Characteristics by State (Phase II)

	ID	MN	NC	OH	PA	WA
Dissemination	online	online	paper (in person)	paper (in person)	paper (in person)	paper (in person)
Survey Content						
# of items	20	27	20	18	18	10
Question type:						
Pre-meeting						
Meeting Identifiers	0	1	1	4	3	1
Participant Characteristics	2	3	1	1	1	1
Experience	0	1	0	0	0	1
During meeting						
Facilitator	6	4	7	4	5	2
Process	4	6	7	2	2	3
Outcome	2	5	3	2	2	0
Post-meeting	5	5	0	5	5	1
Open-ended Catch all (any other comments)	1	2	1	0	0	1

MEETING DATA: OUTCOME AND PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Outcome data. Five states reported data on FIEP meeting results

- Only two of the SEAs used consistent terminology to describe a desirable FIEP outcome: full or partial agreement.

- Other states referred to successful meetings, full or partial consensus, or fully or partially completed IEPs

MEETING DATA: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- All six SEAs also shared separate data on participant responses. This information was provided for time periods from two to seven years, with a mean of 60 meetings per year.

- SEAs reported response rates ranging from, on average, three participant evaluations per meeting, to an average of less than one feedback form for every FIEP meeting held over the reported period.

Reported Meeting Data by State

	ID	MN	NC	OH	PA	WA
Outcome Data						
Years	4	13	7	4	7	4
Total N	300	443	687	349	508	101
Outcome	86% successful	93% full or partial agreement	96% full or partial consensus	83% full or partial agreement	81% fully or partially completed IEPs	---
Participant Feedback Data						
Years	2	5	2	4	7	4
Total N	550	221	100	383	320	114
Number of meetings held	190	190	132	349	508	101

FINDINGS: QUESTION (1) WHERE AND HOW IS FIEP BEING IMPLEMENTED?

Far and wide!

First, among 43 SEA respondents, 24 SEAs, or more than half of respondents, indicated that they were currently using FIEP.

Among these SEAs, almost a third reported that they had adopted FIEP recently, since 2012, indicating that it is gaining in popularity.

Among the 19 SEAs that were not using FIEP currently, 12 SEAs, or almost two-thirds of SEAs not using FIEP, indicated that they were considering implementing FIEP.

FINDINGS: QUESTION (2) WHAT OUTCOME AND PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK DATA ARE COLLECTED BY SEAS IMPLEMENTING FIEP?

- Although most SEAs using FIEP reported collecting some data on meetings requested or completed, **only slightly more than half of SEAs reported collecting any data regarding meeting outcomes or participant feedback.**

- Further, **only nine states collected both outcome and participant feedback data.**

- This lack of data gathering on the part of SEAs presents a missed opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of FIEP within an SEA.

QUESTION 3: ARE DATA COLLECTED BY SEAS SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT FIEP CAN REDUCE FORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND/ OR IMPROVE THE PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP?

Where it is collected, can the data provide evidence that FIEP can achieve its goals related to decreased formal dispute resolution and improved parent-school relationship?

Agreement data were similar across SEAs, and were generally positive. Full or partial agreement ranged from 81% in 508 FIEP meetings over seven school years in PA to 96% in 687 FIEP meetings held over seven years in NC.

Such findings summarized across states provide some initial evidence for the possible effectiveness of FIEP in achieving positive outcomes in the form of agreement or consensus.

PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

Information on whether participants felt that FIEP improved relationships and reduced conflict also reflect on the effectiveness of FIEP.

All but one of the six SEA participant who responded in Phase II collected information on some feature of the parent-school relationship.

Two SEAs asked about improved communication as a result or during the FIEP meeting.

OPPORTUNITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the potential for SEA FIEP evaluation with regard to meeting success and participant relations during and following FIEP, researchers and practitioners should begin conducting analyses with **FIEP outcome and feedback data** that has been collected

Overall, this study demonstrates the need for increased research on the effectiveness of FIEP within SEAs in order to guide SEA policy

RECOMMENDATIONS

SEAs can investigate means to recruit high response rates

- Idaho uses survey monkey, and reported the highest response rates in our study
- Is an on-line survey easier to manage?

SEAs can investigate the representativeness of their samples

- In considering the representativeness of participant feedback data, overall FIEP team member participation rate is relevant.
- For example, if only parents, as opposed to school personnel, respond to participant feedback surveys, findings on the effectiveness of FIEP in improving the family-school relationship will only reflect the perceptions of one particular type of participant.
- Moreover, if respondents only submit participant feedback surveys following completion of a successful FIEP that results in consensus, findings based on these data will also not be accurate

LIMITATIONS

SEAs from all 50 states and the District of Columbia did not respond to the initial FIEP survey. Although we had an acceptable response rate, having information from all 51 SEAs may have impacted our findings.

Additionally, all responses were self-reported and were not confirmed through other means. Thus, it is possible that some of the information reported by respondents is inaccurate or incomplete. However, the data we collected in Phase II confirmed the reliability of the survey responses for those six states that provided data.

ONE STATE GAVE US ALL THEIR FIEP DATA FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS

Individual data links shared:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-977TL39V/browse/

Individual participant feedback data available from 2012-2014 (2 school years)

State summary data from corresponding meetings

NEW RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the outcomes of FIEP meetings in terms of:
- Agreement?
- Improved parent-school relationship?
- Reduced use of other dispute resolution processes?

How do state reported data compare to participant feedback data?

What characteristics relate to agreement, improved relationships, and reduced use of safeguards?

PARTICIPANTS: IDAHO

141 FIEP meetings

1-11 respondents per meeting

549 total respondents
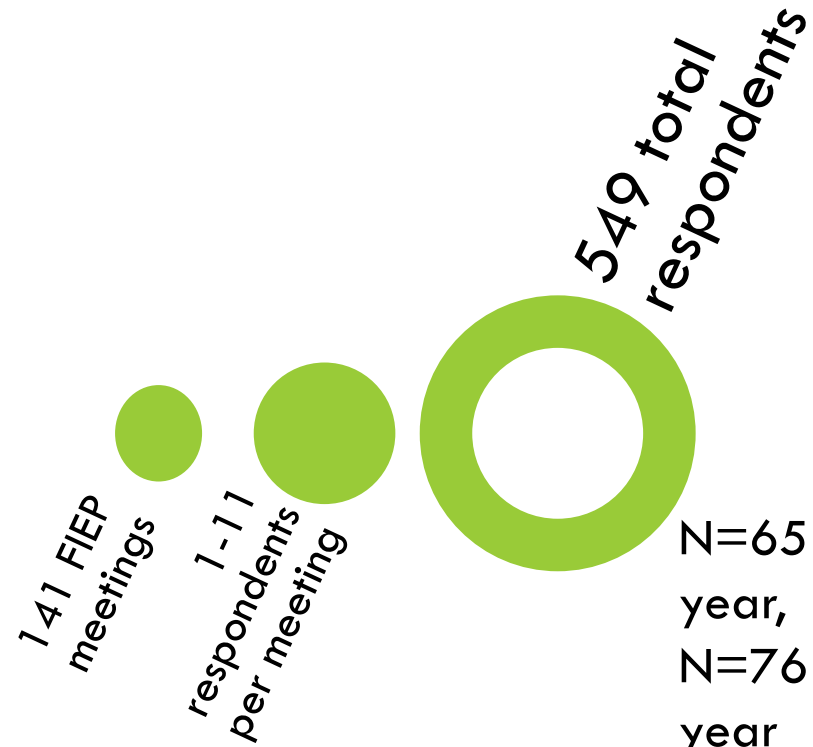
N=65 (46%) meetings in 2012-2013 school year,
N=76 (54%) meetings in 2013-2014 school year

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS PER MEETING
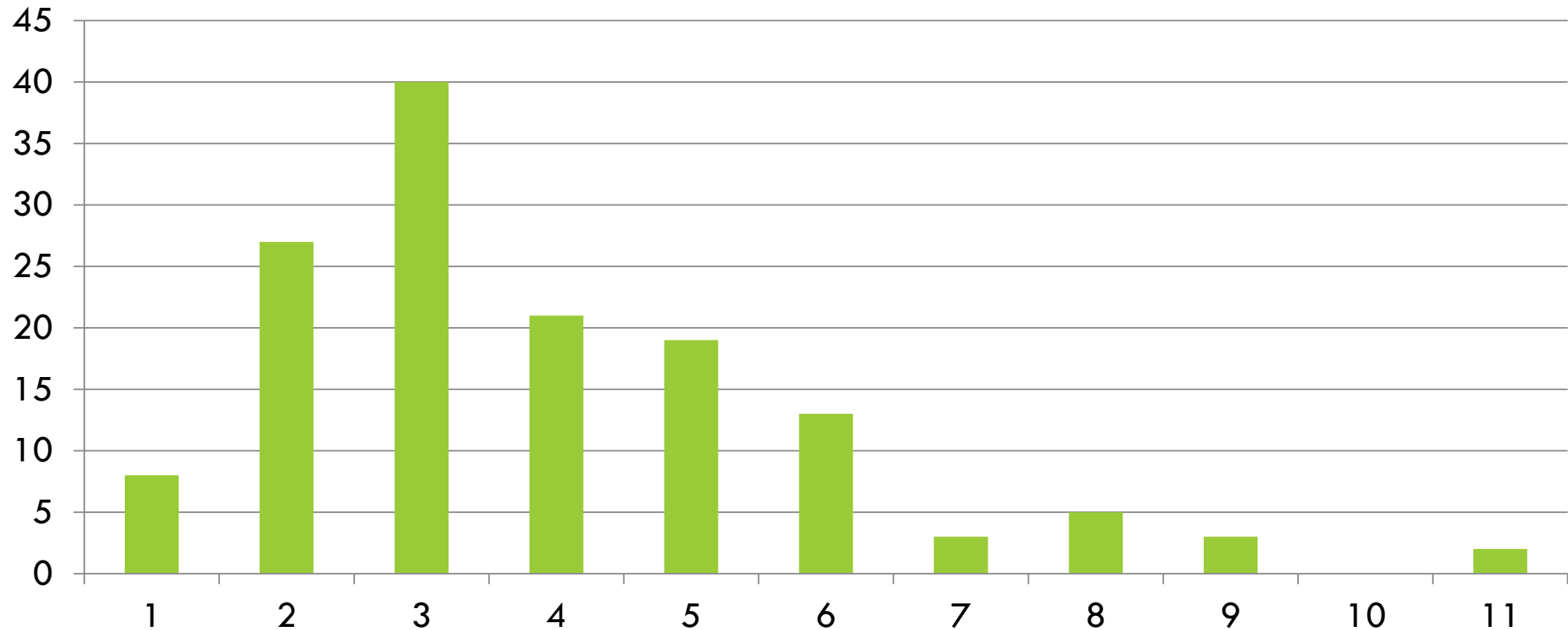
RESPONDENT ROLE
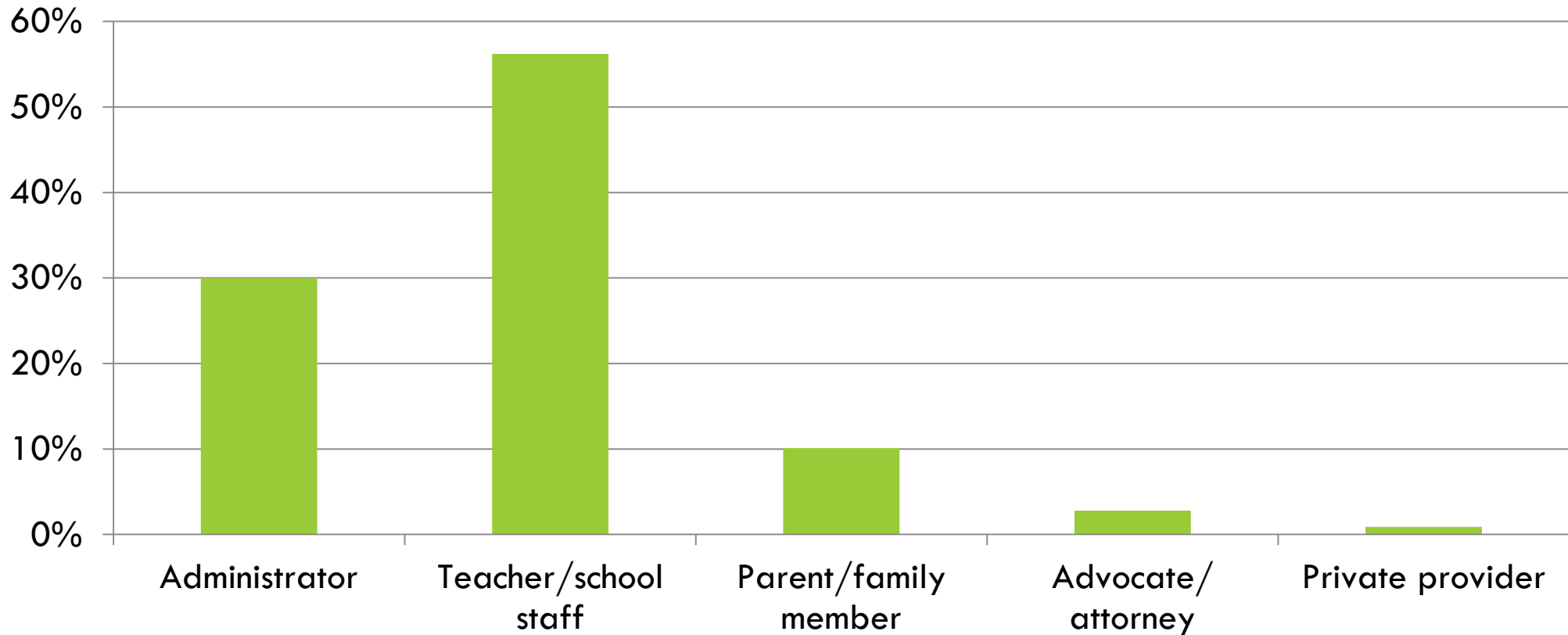
MEETING INFO: DISTRICT

52 different school districts out of 125

Range 1-24 meetings per district, median=1

Nampa School District (Bordering Ada)

West Ada School District (includes Meridian bordering Boise)
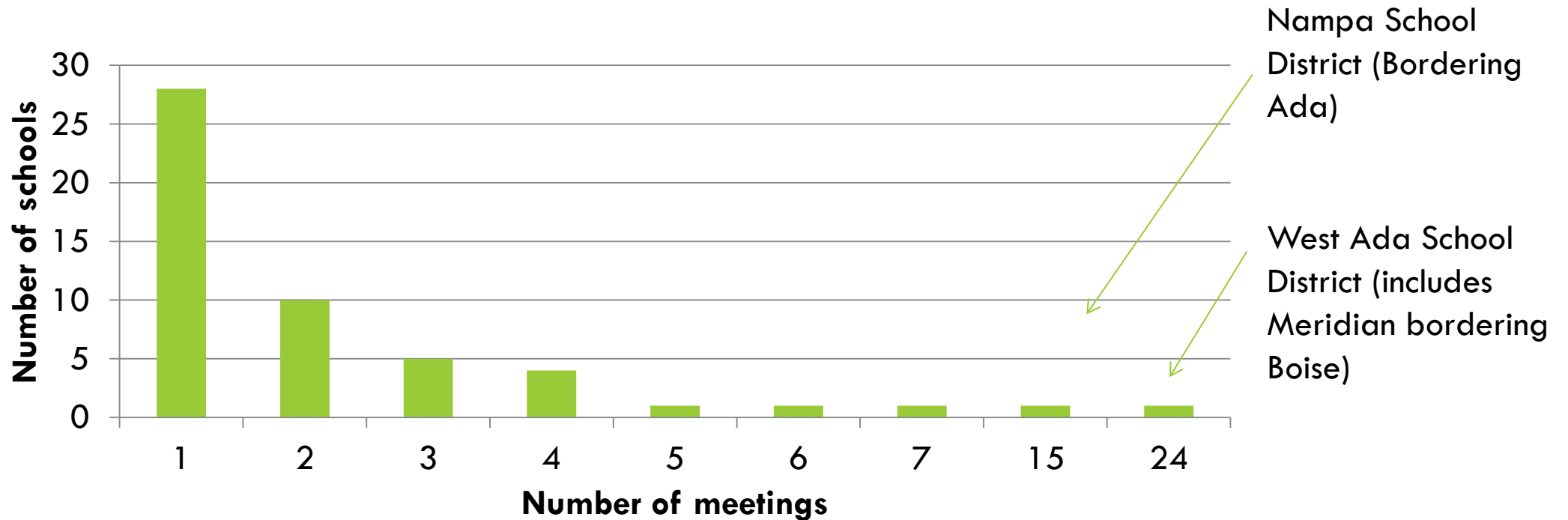
MEETING INFO: REGION

6 state regions

Range 8-75 meetings per region

- Region 1 = 11 meetings
- Region 2 = 10 meetings
- Region 3 = 75 meetings
- Region 4 = 18 meetings
- Region 5 = 15 meetings
- Region 6 = 8 meetings
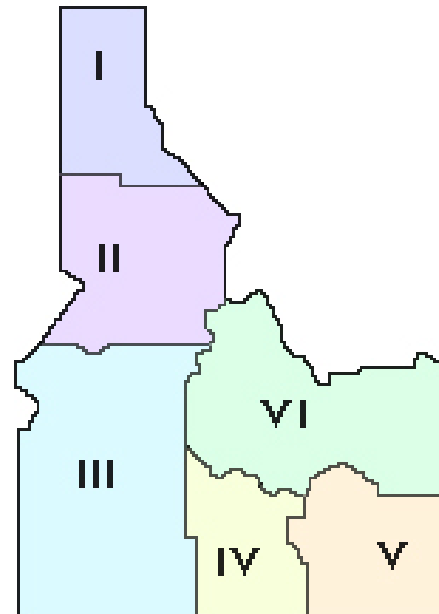
FACILITATORS

18 different facilitators

- range 1-29 meetings each, median = 7
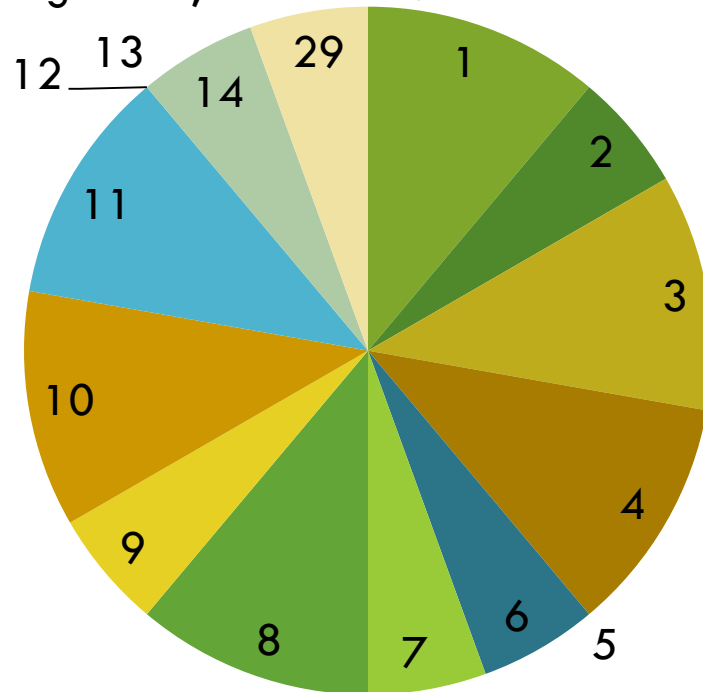
MEASURE: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SURVEY

20 closed and open ended-questions

- Respondent role
- Issue facilitated
- Facilitation (9 questions)
  - Rated on scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*
- Outcome
  - *No decision*
  - *Decision reached, but not all parties agreed*
  - *Some issues were agreed upon, but a final decision was not yet reached*
  - *A final decision was reached where all parties agreed*
- Post-facilitation (5 questions)
  - Rated on scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*
- Reduced future use of dispute resolution processes
  - Yes, No, Unsure,
- Open ended (2 questions): What suggestions do you have for improving the process? Additional comments

FACILITATOR ITEMS

1. The facilitator explained the process and the role of the facilitator.

2. The facilitator established clear expectations for communicating respectfully with one another.

3. I was well prepared to participate in the facilitation process.

4. My opinions were respected during the facilitated meeting.

5. The facilitator made it easy to share information during the meeting.

6. The facilitator kept the focus on the student's needs and the purpose of the meeting.

7. The facilitator did not pressure me to reach an agreement

8. The facilitator was impartial and neutral.

9. Each individual had the opportunity and was encouraged to participate.

Cronbach's alpha =.91

POST-FACILITATION ITEMS

Following the facilitation…

- the student has an educational plan that meets his/her needs.
- I think my views and perspectives are well understood by other participants.
- future disagreements between the school and family will be more easily worked out.
- the relationship between school staff and the family are improved.
- I would recommend the facilitation process to others

STATE MEETING SUMMARY INFO

Status
- Accepted or denied

Outcome
- Successful, unsuccessful, withdrawn

Facilitator

Region

Issues

PROCEDURES

Entered data into SPSS from Survey Monkey from individual links

2nd coder independently checked randomly selected sample of 20% of responses (N=114)
- >95% reliability

Cleaned data and excluded 6 meetings for which no participant feedback data available

Recoded variables
- Issue, participant type

ANALYSES

Calculated descriptive statistics (means, medians, percentages) for meeting characteristics, facilitation quality, post-meeting items, **outcome, improved relationship,** and **reduced probability of other dispute resolution**
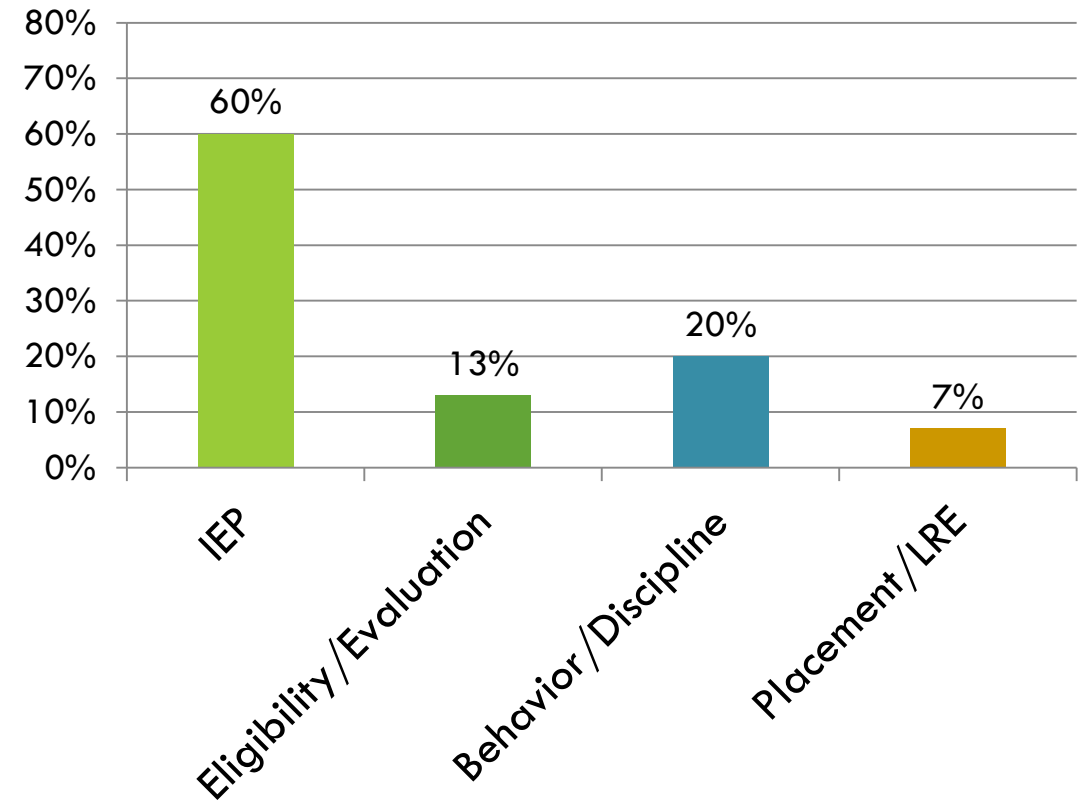
- Compared across participant feedback and state reported data when possible

- Exploratory analyses using chi-square to examine the relation between outcome, improved relationship, and reduced probability of dispute resolution procedures to other variables

PRELIMINARY RESULTS: ISSUE TYPE

Participant Feedback
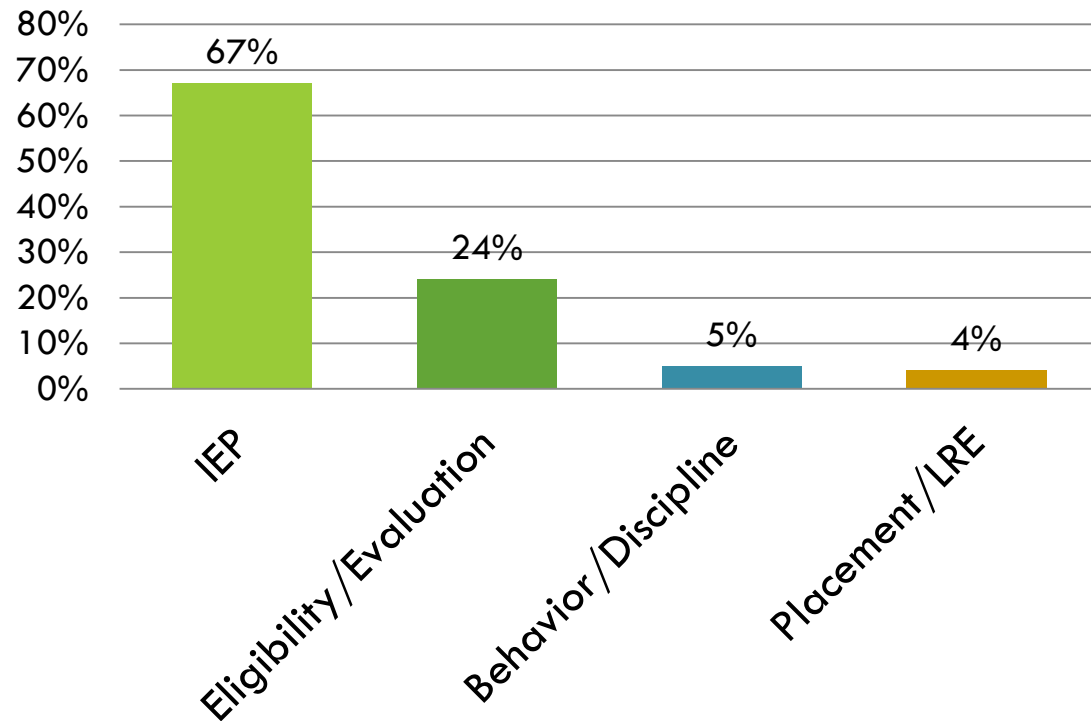
State-Report

PRELIMINARY RESULTS: FACILITATOR QUALITY

Mean of 9 Facilitator items

- Range from *disagree* to *strongly agree*
- Median= 3.67 = *agree* to *strongly agree*

Overall, high ratings of facilitator
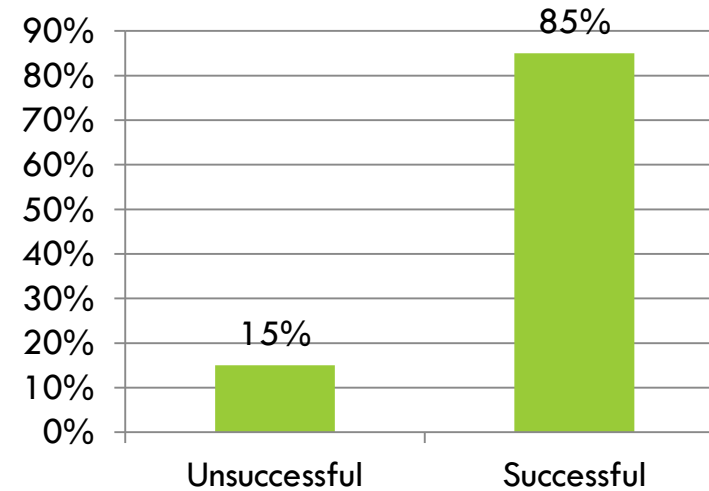
PRELIMINARY RESULTS: POST-MEETING

	Strongly disagree or disagree % (N)	Neither % (N)	Agree or strongly agree % (N)	Median
Educational plan meets needs	7% (37)	21% (110)	72% (383)	3 = *agree*
Views and perspectives well understood	7% (37)	15% (78)	78% (420)	3 = *agree*
Future disagreements will be more easily worked out	20% (105)	44% (235)	36% (191)	2 = *neither agree nor disagree*
I would recommend FIEP to others	2% (12)	16% (85)	82% (441)	*3 = agree*

RESULTS: OUTCOME
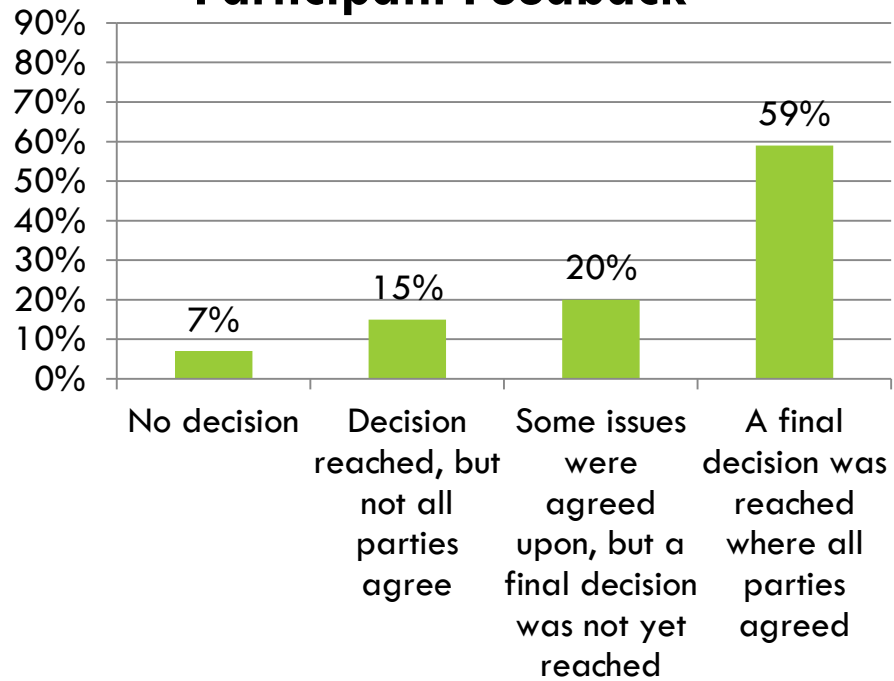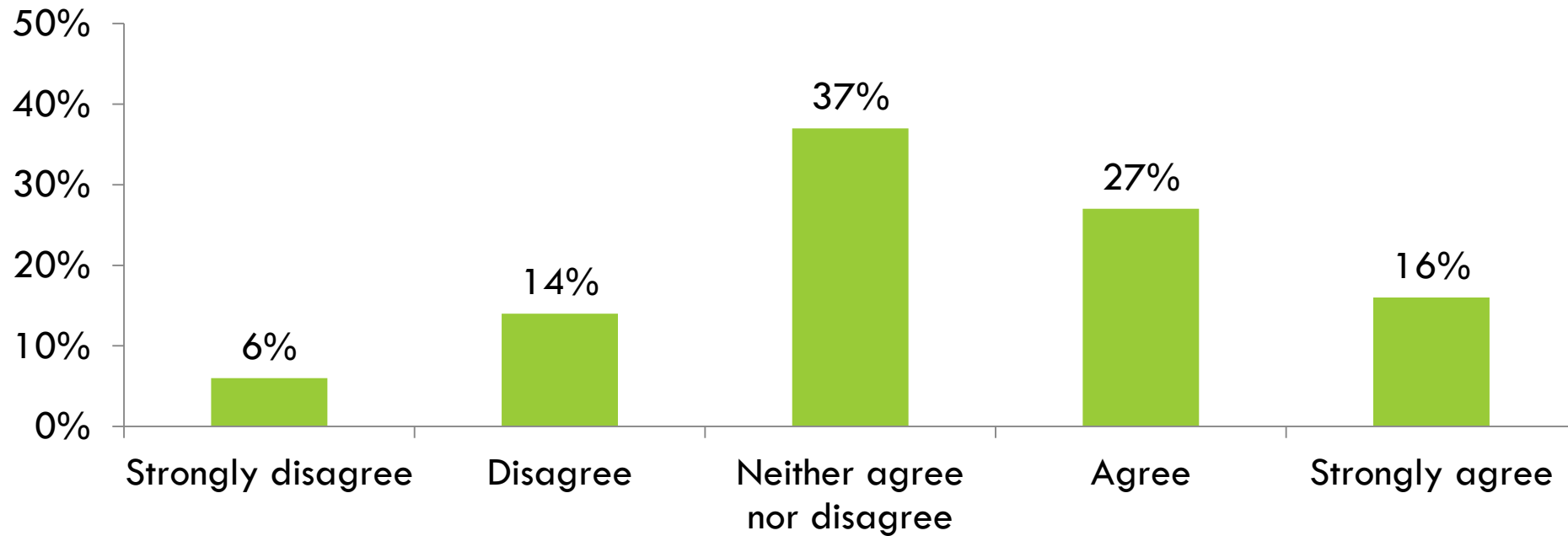
RESULTS: IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP

"Following the facilitation, the relationship between school staff and the family are improved"

RESULTS: REDUCED PROBABILITY OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION

"Did the facilitation process reduce the probability of other processes (e.g., mediation, complaint, due process hearing) being needed to resolve disagreements regarding the student's program?"
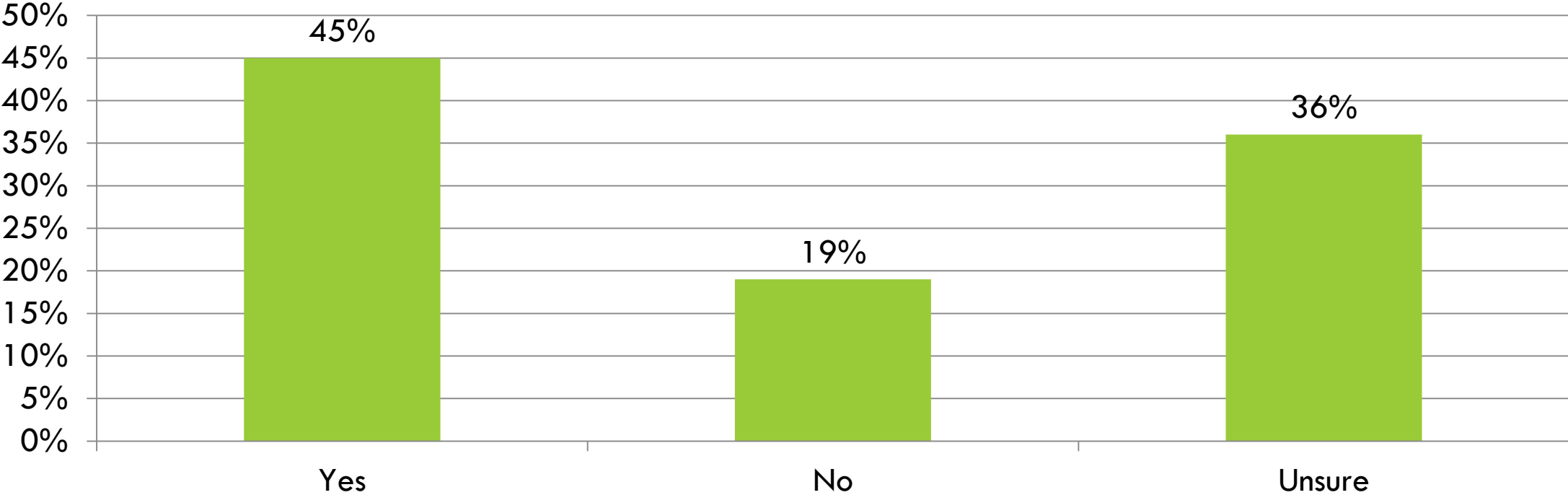
RELATION BETWEEN *PARTICIPANT ROLE* AND OUTCOME?

Improved <u>family school partnership</u>?

- No significant differences
  - School staff= 45% agree or strongly agree with improvement
  - Non-school staff = 34% agree or strongly agree

Report of <u>successful meeting agreement</u>?

- No significant differences
  - 60% of school staff report agreement
  - 55% of non-school staff report agreement

<u>Reduced use of dispute resolution processes</u>?

- No significant differences
  - School staff= 46% yes
  - Non-school staff= 44% yes

RELATION BETWEEN *FACILITATOR QUALITY* AND OUTCOME?

Improved <u>family school partnership</u>?
- Significant differences, χ^2=54.27, p<.001
  - Low facilitator quality: 21% agree or strongly agree
  - High facilitator quality: 50% agree or strongly agree

Report of <u>successful meeting agreement</u>?
- Significant differences, χ^2=16.93, p=.001
  - 82% of meetings that ended in agreement had high facilitator quality, compared to 68% of those that did not

<u>Reduced use of dispute resolution processes</u>?
- Significant differences, χ^2=59.54, p<.001
  - Of those who reported reduced use of other dispute resolution processes, 88% reported high facilitator quality, compared to 49% for those who responded no to this question

RELATION BETWEEN *ISSUE TYPE* AND OUTCOME?

Improved <u>family school partnership</u>?

- No significant differences between IEP related issues and eligibility/evaluation issues

Report of <u>successful meeting agreement</u>?

- No significant differences between IEP related issues and eligibility/evaluation issues

<u>Reduced use of dispute resolution processes</u>?

- No significant differences between IEP related issues and eligibility/evaluation issues

DISCUSSION

Positive outcomes

- Between 59%-85% of meetings successful, depending on definition of success

- 45% reported reduced likelihood of needing to use other dispute resolution processes

- 43% agreed that the relationship between the parents and the school had improved

Higher reports of facilitator quality related to positive outcomes

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Lack of additional information that may relate to outcomes

- Demographics, school info

- Individual differences in facilitators

Need to conduct additional statistical analyses to better understand relation between outcomes and predictors

Likely low response rates

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Encourage SEAs to collect data from <u>representative samples</u> with <u>high response rates</u>, that can be easily synthesized and used to evaluate the effectiveness of FIEP

- Recommendation: Disseminate surveys online
  - Survey Monkey
  - REDCap

- Free online survey software
  - Up to 10 questions, 100 respondents
  - $25 per month for additional features
- Secure for collecting confidential information
- https://www.surveymonkey.com/

REDCap™

Research Electronic Data Capture

- Secure web application for building and managing online surveys and databases
  - Created by Vanderbilt University
  - Currently used by 1,602 institutions in 92 countries
  - Meets compliance standards such as HIPAA, etc.
  - Mobile app for offline data collection

HOW DO I GET IT?

- Free access and support to institutions that join the REDCap Consortium
  - Requires PHP web server, MySQL database server, email server
  - Tech person for installing and maintaining and administrative person to provide assistance to users
  - Requires a end-user license between Vanderbilt and user

HOW DO I GET IT?

- Website and video: http://projectredcap.org
- Free one week trial:
    - https://redcapdemo.vanderbilt.edu/trial/

Thank you!

Questions?

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