

**Announcing the *Special Education Supports Module***

**April 1, 2009**

WestEd and the California Department of Education (CDE) announce an expansion of the *California School Climate Survey (CSCS)* to include a ***Special Education Supports Module (SESM)***.

The 24-question SESM is designed to be answered by staff who have responsibilities for teaching or providing related support services to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). It provides data about the perceptions and concerns of school personnel to guide program and service improvement, particularly in understanding how to:

- (1) effectively meet the needs of students with IEPs; and
- (2) create a supportive, positive working environment for all staff.

Recruitment and retention of teachers and other personnel has become a major barrier to efforts to meet the needs of youth with IEPs. Research conducted by the National Center on Educational Statistics and in California has suggested that workplace conditions, control over the workload, and perceptions about administrative support are highly correlated with teacher attrition rates.

This new module, combined with new questions related to closing the racial/ethnic achievement gap, significantly enhances the value of the CSCS to assist schools in improving the learning environment for all students and the working environment for all staff.

In addition, districts that administer the CSCS will also now receive a supplementary report comparing all survey results provided by staff who serve students with IEPs with all other staff. This report, funded by CDE, will provide a better understanding of staff perceptions on how well schools are implementing programs and services for students with IEPs.

Below is an overview to the SESM's content. For further information, call the CSCS helpline at 1.888.841.7536.

## **The CSCS Special Education Supports Module**

### ***1. Addressing Bureaucratic Barriers to Effective Service Delivery***

- This school works to reduce interruptions to instruction for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- This school takes steps to minimize required paperwork.
- This school effectively schedules legally mandated special education activities (e.g., assessments, behavior supports, mandated meetings with parents).

### ***2. Integration and Collaboration between Special and General Education***

- This school integrates special education into its daily operations.
- This school encourages teaming between general and special education personnel.
- This school provides sufficient time to collaborate with colleagues regarding services to students with IEPs.
- This school views service to students with IEPs as a shared responsibility among all staff.
- This school promotes personnel participation in decision-making that affects school practices and policies.

### ***3. Expectations and Supports for Special Populations***

- This school sets high expectations for students with IEPs.
- This school provides effective supports for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students with IEPs.
- This school provides effective supports for students needing alternative modes of communication (e.g., manual signs, communication boards, computer-based devices, picture exchange systems, Braille).
- This school provides complete state adopted instructional materials for students with IEPs.
- This school has sufficient resources to support special education programs and services.

### ***4. Personnel Supports***

- This school provides a positive working environment for staff who serve students with IEPs.
- This school acknowledges the responsibilities for staff who serve students with IEPs.
- This school provides relevant training for paraprofessionals.
- This school has a climate that encourages me to continue in my role of service to students with IEPs.
- This school provides adequate access to technology for staff who serve students with IEPs.

- This school has good communication with district personnel to support students with IEPs.
- This school offers adequate compensation (e.g. salary, fringe benefits and retirement) to support my continued employment at this school.