

Office of the Independent Monitor
October 13, 2014

Survey of the Impact of MiSiS on Students with Disabilities (SWD)

Section 11 of the MCD requires the District to implement an integrated student information system (My Integrated Student Information System, or MiSiS) that all schools, including charter schools, will utilize to create one common data system.

At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, the District rolled out a large bundle of functionality or modules and was to fully implement the use of MiSiS at all schools, including charters. The roll-out resulted in problems with enrollment, scheduling and programming at schools. These problems and its impact were well-documented by the media with corresponding responses from the District. While the District acknowledged problems with the implementation of these modules, it provided conflicting reports minimizing the impact and portrayed a quick resolution of problems¹. Due to these conflicting reports, and feedback provided to the OIM, a telephone survey was conducted at 255 schools to better understand the impact on SWD.

Methods

Schools began utilizing MiSiS functions of Milestone 8 on August 12, 2014 with the commencement of the new school year. To determine the usage and impact of the problems associated with the implementation of the Milestone 8 functions, a telephone survey was designed to identify the following:

- utilization of MiSiS
- impact of the problems on identifying SWD
- impact of the problems on placement of SWD
- impact of the problems on the provision of services
- potential problems to be corrected within MiSiS
- adequacy of training
- if the MiSiS improved the special education programs
- additional problems or concerns

Research assistants were trained to follow a survey protocol and enter data into a database (Attachment A). Contact information from the school for the administrator in charge of the special education program were collected. In some instances, principals and/or support staff participated in the survey. Participants were asked how long they had been in their administrative positions. Schools were contacted multiple times, and five refused to participate, resulting in a 98% response rate. Due to the itinerant nature of the administrators in charge of special education, scheduling information was also recorded to facilitate contact. For participants who reported working at multiple schools, responses were noted for the corresponding schools if they were also part of the sample and the participant acknowledged the same problems and impact.

¹ August 15, 2014, LAUSD Press release *More than 99 Percent of LAUSD Students Registered and in Class*.

The survey was conducted from August 21-September 16, 2014, with over 80% completed within the first two weeks. The survey protocol was piloted over two days, resulting in minor modifications to the survey and database.

Sampling

The sample includes 255 randomly selected schools from a population of 721 schools that are active for the 2014-2015 school year. The population included both District-operated and charter schools, and was comprised of all elementary schools with enrollment of over 400 students, as well as all middle and high schools². The only school types that were excluded were magnet centers and other learning centers, which are typically administered as programs within a larger school community. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the population by service center.

Table 1. Population of Schools by Service Center (N=727)

Service Center	Elementary (N=424)		Middle (N=130)		High (N=167)	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total
East	76	17.9%	14	10.8%	9	5.4%
North	124	29.2%	24	18.5%	15	9.0%
South	100	23.6%	17	13.1%	10	6.0%
West	61	14.4%	13	10.0%	8	4.8%
XP	21	5.0%	19	14.6%	68	40.7%
Charters	42	9.9%	43	33.1%	57	34.1%
TOTAL	424	100.0%	130	100.0%	167	100.0%

Elementary, middle, and high schools were each sampled separately. Span schools that served elementary and middle school students were categorized as elementary schools, since they typically served a greater number of students in the elementary grades than in the middle grades. Similarly, span schools serving middle and high school students were categorized as high schools. Twenty-five percent of the 424 elementary schools that enrolled over 400 students were selected, as well as 50% of the 130 middle schools and 50% of the 167 high schools, for a total sample of 255 schools. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the sample by service center.

² 2013-2014 enrollment data were used for sampling

Table 2. Sample of Schools Selected by Service Center (N=255)

Service Center	Elementary (N=106)		Middle (N=65)		High (N=84)	
	N	% of total	N	% of total	N	% of total
East	20	18.9%	6	9.2%	5	6.0%
North	27	25.5%	15	23.1%	6	7.1%
South	25	23.6%	8	12.3%	5	6.0%
West	18	17.0%	5	7.7%	6	7.1%
XP	5	4.7%	11	16.9%	30	35.7%
Charters	11	10.4%	20	30.8%	32	38.1%
TOTAL	106	100.0%	65	100.0%	84	100.0%

Findings

This section will report the findings of the responses to the scripted questions and relevant open-ended questions which will include the frequency of the response. A complete table of the open-ended question findings can be seen in Attachment B.

Utilization of MiSiS, Alternatives and Problems Experienced

The survey found that 201 of the 250 schools (80.4%) that participated in the survey were using MiSiS (Table 3). All of the 49 schools that reported not using MiSiS were independent charter schools. Thirteen charters reported using MiSiS, however, 12 reported it was only being utilized by their Charter Management Organization (CMO), and not at the site. Since these schools participated for the entire survey, their responses were included.

Schools using the program were asked if they were using any other means for entering and maintaining student data, other than the Welligent IEP system. More than half (56.7 %) noted that they were using alternative methods for maintaining data. The most common alternatives included manually created student rosters (i.e., paper and pencil), school-created databases, and the legacy SIS system. Of those using MiSiS, almost all (98%) reported experiencing problems with the program.

Table 3. Using MiSiS, Alternatives and Problems Experienced

	YES		NO		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Using MiSiS	201	80.4	49	19.6	250	100
Using Alternatives	114	56.7	86	42.8	200*	99.5
Problems Experienced	197	98.0	4	2.0	201	100

*One school did not respond

Impact on Identification, Placement and Service Provision

The majority of schools (82.7%) reported having problems with identifying SWD enrolled at their schools (Table 4). Over two-thirds noted problems with placing students in the correct programs (68.5%) and determining which services students were to receive (69.0%). Many of the respondents stated that while MiSiS created these data difficulties, staff worked diligently resolving these issues. This was also reported by schools that stated that there was no impact on identification, placement and services for SWD. Additionally, some respondents who stated no impact cited reasons such as smaller enrollments of SWD, a high number of returning students and knowing their student populations well.

Participants reported problems with inaccurate enrollment data (n=59) and the inability to run class rosters for students in special education programs (n=80) with the highest frequency. Specifically, problems were noted for new enrollees, which impacted many students in transition grades such as preschool, kindergarten, sixth and ninth grade (n=40). The ability to generate and print SESAC reports (n=28) has also been impacted, as these reports now run through Welligent instead of MiSiS. These reports contain information on the program and services students are to receive.

Problems with the scheduling module were also noted (n=40). Additionally, schools expressed frustration with data entered but not saved or which would disappear (n=31). Participants also noted problems and inaccuracies with the attendance rosters (n=20) that helped them account for students in their classes.

Several respondents noted that providers were not able to find information on the services students were to receive or monitor provision (n=40). Several also mentioned that providers' ability to document service delivery was also impacted (n=8).

Table 4. Impact on Identification, Placement and Service Provision

	YES		NO		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Identification	163	82.7	34	17.3	197	100
Placement	135	68.5	62	31.5	197	100
Services	136	69.0	61	31.0	197	100

Degree of Impact on Identification, Placement and Service Provision

Table 5 shows the degree of the impact MiSiS problems had on the identification, placement and service provision. Enrollment data or knowing the SWD attending their respective schools was reported to have a major (50.9%) and moderate (42.9%) impact. A small percentage of schools believed these issues resulted in minor (5.5%) to no impact (0.6%).

Placement problems were reported as having a moderate (47.4%) and major impact (40.7%), while 11.9% noted a minor impact. The majority of schools described the ability to identify

which services students were to receive as being a moderate (41.2%) and major (40.4%) impact. Some reported a minor (16.2%) impact, or no impact at all (2.2%).

Table 5. Degree of Impact on Identification, Placement and Service Provision

	Major Impact		Moderate Impact		Minor Impact		No Impact		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Identification	83	50.9	70	42.9	9	5.5	1	0.6	163	100
Placement	55	40.7	64	47.4	16	11.9	0	0.0	135	100
Services	55	40.4	56	41.2	22	16.2	3	2.2	136	100

Problem Fixed Identification, Placement, and Service Provision

The majority of respondents reported that the program and/or data issues had not been resolved or were unsure of any resolution (Table 6). Some noted that the issues had been resolved through the efforts of staff and work-arounds such as going through hardcopies of IEPs, and contacting parents’ and students’ previous schools for resolving these issues.

One of the factors that may affect these responses is the timing of the survey. While most schools were surveyed within the first two weeks, ITD was resolving bugs to the program on a daily basis.

Several participants noted that help desk support for the problems was inadequate and slow (n=6).

Table 6. Problem Fixed Identification, Placement, and Service Provision (N=163)

	Yes		No		Don’t Know		N/A		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Identification	20	31.8	91	55.8	51	31.3	1	0.61	163	100
Placement	18	13.3	77	57.0	39	28.9	1	0.74	135	100
Services	10	7.4	85	62.5	40	29.4	1	0.74	136	100

Adequacy of Training and Improved Special Education Program

The majority of respondents reported receiving inadequate training (35.7%) or not participating in training (55.7%) at all (Table 7). Few participants found the training to be adequate (7.9%) or more than adequate (0.05%).

Respondents noted that the training received was inadequate due to the use of handouts and demonstrations by instructors with no hands-on experience (n=42). Some noted that the training environment was not ready, citing software that was incomplete or unstable (n=7), and instructors were not prepared to answer questions (n=4). Participants reported learning the use of the functions through trial and error (n=22). Several people mentioned wanting more trainings available (n=13).

When asked if MiSiS had improved their special education system, the majority stated it had not (73.6%) or were unsure (19.9%). Some expressed optimism for the system once the problems were resolved.

Table 7. Adequacy of Training and Improved Special Education Program (N=201)

	Adequate		Inadequate		No Training		More than Adequate	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Training	16	7.9	71	35.3	112	55.7	1	0.05
	Yes		No		Don't Know		Blank	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Improved SPED	12	5.9	148	73.6	40	19.9	1	0.5

Charter Schools

As noted earlier, one of the 62 charter schools in the sample was actively using MiSiS. While twelve others reported using MiSiS, participants clarified that the “use” referred to the CMO or main office entering data but the program was not being utilized at the site. Schools not using MiSiS reported the following reasons for not implementing the program: the CMO decision to not use MiSiS (n=17), using another system (n=7), awaiting data validation and further direction from the District (n=9). Two refused to provide a response.

Several charters cited a lack of awareness of the MiSiS roll-out (n=7), with two noting that they had recently adopted a student information system.

Additional Findings

Many of the participants noted one of the primary issues that resulted from the roll-out of Milestone 8 was the interface problems between MiSiS and Welligent (n=64). While this contributed to different difficulties for users, the data transfer issues impacted the ability to accurately identify SWD and their programs and services attending their schools. Participants reported not having access to students’ IEPs in the Welligent system (n=14) since these students did not show up as being enrolled. Participants also mentioned problems with being able to see IEP due dates and 30 day IEP timelines (n=7).

Additional problems include difficulties with reporting of data related to English Learners (EL), Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), and student records (transcripts and grades) (n=19). Difficulties in accessing MiSiS such as a poor response time, log-in and password problems also were reported (n=14).

Conclusions and Next Steps

The survey was conducted to identify the potential impact of the MiSiS Milestone 8 rollout on SWD at a sample of 255 schools. The survey found that almost all schools using the system reported experiencing a variety of problems with MiSiS. The implementation of the program was characterized by many schools as having a moderate to major impact on their school's ability to identify: students attending their school, the correct special education placements, and services students were to receive. The majority of respondents reported not receiving training or believed the training was inadequate. Other concerns included a lack of readiness of the program during the training and hands-on experience. Lastly, a variety of data problems were reported that impacted the enrollment, placement and service provision of SWD.

These findings validate the concerns and impact on schools reported by the school personnel, professional organizations and as reported by the media during the beginning of this school year. These findings contradict the District's assertions that the majority of problems with MiSiS had been resolved. This lack of transparency presents challenges for the monitoring of the MiSiS Implementation Plan. Further, the lack of acknowledgement of problems and their impact questions the efforts to resolve these issues. While the survey obtained general information of problems, it was not intended to differentiate between the sources of these problems. Therefore, some may have been an indirect result of the Milestone 8 rollout. Regardless, these reported issues should be examined and findings should be provided to the Parties. Additionally, progress on the implementation of MiSiS should be periodically reported and shared.

To determine if these problems continue to impact SWD, the OIM will do another survey during the fall and spring semesters.

Office of the Independent Monitor

Survey Protocol

Interview

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the Office of the Independent Monitor for the Modified Consent Decree.

(If an Elementary school): What is the name of your APEIS or the administrator in charge of special education? [**RECORD THE NAME and POSITION (AP, Principal, Bridge Coordinator, Other – Type in) IN CONTACT INFORMATION**] *(If no AP is available, ask to speak to the Principal)*

May I please speak to him or her [NAME]?

If Middle or High school: What is the name of your assistant principal in charge of special education? [**RECORD THE NAME IN CONTACT INFORMATION**] *(If no AP is available, ask to speak to the ridge coordinator or Principal)*

May I please speak to him or her [NAME]?

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling from the Office of the Independent Monitor for the Modified Consent Decree. We are conducting a brief confidential survey of school administrators. We would like to get some feedback from you on the implementation of MiSIS (My Integrated Student Information System). This information will be combined with survey results from schools throughout the District and be provided to the Independent Monitor, Information Technology Division (ITD) and the Division of Special Education for review. Your name and your school will not be identified. Do you have 10-15 minutes to talk me?

IF YES: [Check the Called Box, Enter the Name of the Person in Contact Information Area and Begin Survey]

IF NO: When would be a good time to call back? [Check the Called Box, Enter the Name of the Person in Contact Information Area]

0	How long have you been in your current position?	Select the most corresponding response: 0, 1, 2, 3+
1	Is your school using MiSIS?	If Yes, select "YES" and go to question #1A. If no, select "NO" and go to question #2.
1A	Other than Welligent, are you currently using any other tools to manage student records?	If yes, select "Yes" go to #3, if no, enter information in text box.
2	Why is your school not using MiSIS?	Enter comments into the text box. Then, Go to Question #2A
2A	What is the name of the Student Information System your school is using?	Enter the name in the text box.
3	During this school year, have you,	If Yes, select "YES", go to question #4. If

	or any other staff in your school encountered any problems when using MiSIS?		no, select "NO" and go to question #9
4	Have these problems impacted the ability of your school to accurately identify students with disabilities attending your school?		If YES, select "YES" and go to question #4A. In no, Select "NO" and go to question #5
4A	To what degree have these problems impacted your ability to accurately identify students with disabilities attending your school?		Please select one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Impact • Minor Impact • Moderate Impact • Major Impact
	Has THIS problem been fixed in MiSIS?		Enter the corresponding response "Yes," "No" or "Don't Know (DK)" in Box #7
5	Have these problems impacted the ability of your school to ensure the correct placement as specified in students' IEPs? (<i>Special day program, RSP, Gen ED</i>)		If YES, select "YES" and go to question #5A. In no, Select "NO" and go to question #6
5A	To what degree have these problems impacted your ability to ensure the correct placement of your students with IEPs?		Please select one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Impact • Minor Impact • Moderate Impact • Major Impact
	Has THIS problem been fixed in MiSIS?		Enter the corresponding response "Yes," "No" or "Don't Know (DK)" in Box #7
6	Have these problems impacted the ability of your providers to deliver services as specified in students' IEPs? (<i>Speech, OT, RSP, PT, etc</i>)		If YES, select "YES" and go to question #6A. In no, Select "NO" and go to question #7
6A	To what degree have these problems impacted your providers' ability to deliver services as specified in students' IEPs?		Please select one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Impact • Minor Impact • Moderate Impact • Major Impact
	Has THIS problem been fixed in MiSIS?		Enter the corresponding response "Yes," "No" or "Don't Know (DK)" in Box #7
8	Are there additional problems with MiSiS that have impacted your ability to serve students with disabilities at your school?		Enter narrative into text box. Go to question #9
9	Has the MiSiS improved the administration of your special education program?		If yes, select "Yes," if no, select "No," if Don't Know select "DK"
10	How would you describe the		Please select one of the following:

	adequacy of the training you received for implementing MiSiS?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did not receive training • The training was inadequate • The training was adequate • The training was more than adequate
11	Do you have any additional comments or feedback regarding the implementation of MiSiS that you would like to give to us?		Enter narrative into the “General Comments” text box.

IF SURVEY IS COMPLETE, CHECK COMPLETED SURVEY BOX

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey. If you have additional questions or feedback you may contact the Office of the Independent Monitor at (213) 241-1797. Goodbye.

Office of the Independent Monitor

Open-ended Responses

Open-ended Responses and Frequency of Comments

Code	Charter Schools	Number
C1	District did not make a sufficiently coherent effort to let charters know MiSIS was coming and required	7
C2	Uploaded data, waiting for validation, or CMO using but not school	9
C3	No access or log-in to MISIS	3
C4	CMO decision to not use	17
C5	Charter refuses to provide answer why not using	2
C6	Charter not running MiSIS - Using another system	7
	Data Issues	
D1	Parent contact information attached to the wrong students	8
D2	Can't find service info or monitor service delivery	28
D3	Can't find new enrollees, pre-school, kinder, 6, 9, grade students	40
D4	Can't see IEP dates or 30 day IEP dates	7
D5	Can't access IEPs on Welligent due to students not enrolled in MISIS therefore can't have access to their IEPs until they are	14
D6	Generating and printing SESAC reports	28
D7	Providers can't log service delivery	8
D8	Data interface issues between MiSIS and Welligent	64
	MiSiS Issues	
	Enrollment issues in MiSIS, students created in Welligent (e.g. those coming from out of the District) don't populate in MiSIS and student placement is difficult or impossible due to enrollment issues	
M1	Inaccurate enrollment data such as students don't show up or show up more than once, wrong school	59
M2	Unable to run an in-depth Special Ed roster from MiSIS	80
M3	Scheduling problems including master schedule	40
M4	Enter data into MiSIS and it is not saved or disappears	31
M5	Reporting is weak (e.g. cannot get ELD data), GATE, Transcripts, report cards	19
M6	Difficulty getting in to MiSIS (no access/log in, password problems) or slow response time	14
M9	Attendance Rosters - Teachers having difficulty with taking attendance and/or accounting for students who are supposedly in their class	20

	Quality Assurance	
Q1	MiSIS testing should have revealed the problems in advance, and problems should have been fixed before implementing	16
Q2	Timing of rollout at beginning of school year was bad for schools, due to many changes at once. Needed a better approach for rollout	41
	Support Issues	
S1	Support for MiSIS is inadequate and slow	6
	Training	
T1	Would like more hands-on training dates available (e.g. weekends)	13
T2	Poor training approach (PowerPoint and Job Aid), without hands on	42
T3	Trainers not prepared to answer subject matter questions, and not informed as to workflow changes	4
T4	Training environment had software that was incomplete or unstable, so functions could not be accessed, even in demonstration mode.	7
T5	Did not get training, learned by trial and error	22