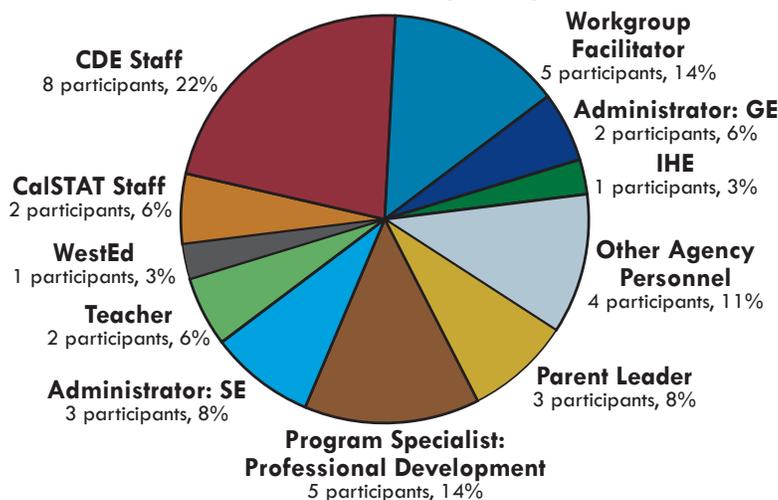# Improving Special Education Services (ISES)
December 2013

Improving Special Education Services (ISES) is a collaborative stakeholder group convened by the California Department of Education, Special Education Division. The State Performance Plan (SPP), Annual Performance Report (APR), and State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) are guided by these stakeholders in addressing issues such as personnel development, statewide assessment, and progress monitoring through a unified planning process. The committee is a broadly diverse and representative group of individuals involved in, or concerned with, the education of children with disabilities.

ISES meets twice annually. This meeting was December 3, 2013.
The next meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2014.

ISES Meeting Participants by Role
December 2013, 36 participants

Pie chart labels:
- **Workgroup Facilitator** — 5 participants, 14%
- **Administrator: GE** — 2 participants, 6%
- **IHE** — 1 participants, 3%
- **Other Agency Personnel** — 4 participants, 11%
- **Parent Leader** — 3 participants, 8%
- **Program Specialist: Professional Development** — 5 participants, 14%
- **Administrator: SE** — 3 participants, 8%
- **Teacher** — 2 participants, 6%
- **WestEd** — 1 participants, 3%
- **CalSTAT Staff** — 2 participants, 6%
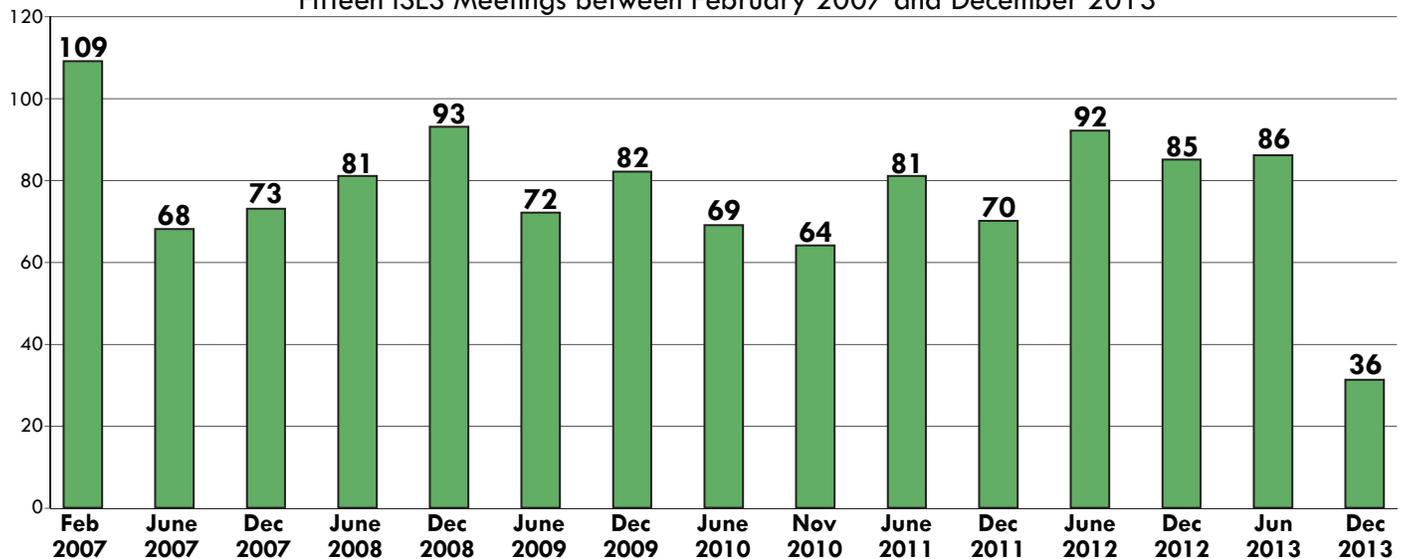- **CDE Staff** — 8 participants, 22%

December 2013's meeting was attended by 36 stakeholders supported by 5 workgroup facilitators and 2 CalSTAT staff members.

There were roughly half the usual number of ISES stakeholders attending the December 2013 meeting because it occurred during another important special education conference, the **2013 Secondary Transition Institute: Building a Bridge to the Future** in San Diego (held December 2 to 4).
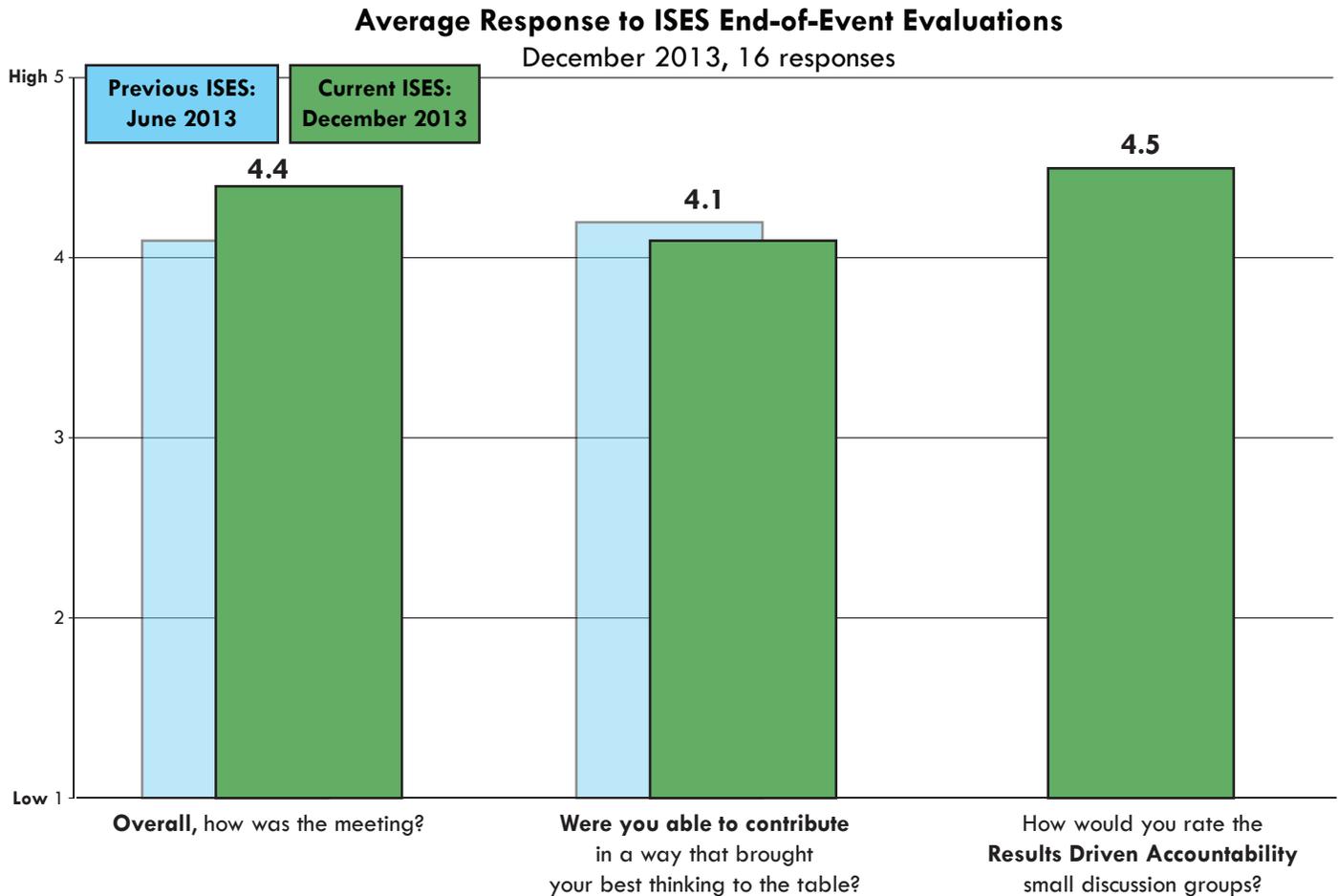
Number of ISES Participants Attending Each ISES Meeting
Fifteen ISES Meetings between February 2007 and December 2013

Meeting	Participants
Feb 2007	109
June 2007	68
Dec 2007	73
June 2008	81
Dec 2008	93
June 2009	72
Dec 2009	82
June 2010	69
Nov 2010	64
June 2011	81
Dec 2011	70
June 2012	92
Dec 2012	85
Jun 2013	86
Dec 2013	36

Anonymous end-of-event surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning of the event and collected at the end. Of the 36 participants who attended, 16 completed end-of-event surveys. Due to the fact that many of the facilitators, CalSTAT and CDE staff feel completing a survey would be inappropriate, this number suggests a response rate of roughly 76% among the 21 participants in other roles.

Participants rated the meeting from one ("poor"/"no") to five ("great"/"definitely") in response to three questions. They were also asked to rate Poster Sessions they participated in, which are summarized on page 3.

Average Response to ISES End-of-Event Evaluations
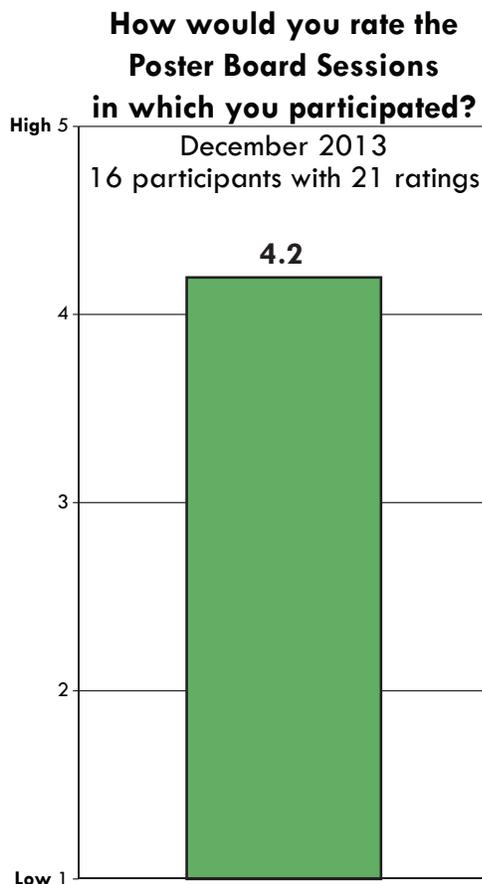December 2013, 16 responses

> ➢ Overall, the meeting was rated much more highly than the previous meeting. This very high 4.4 rating may be related to the smaller meeting size, which allowed for more active participation in group conversations.

> ➢ In response to the question, "Were you able to contribute in a way that brought your best thinking to the table?" responses were down slightly, with 4.1 compared to 4.2 in the June 2013 meeting.

> ➢ Another portion which was new in the December 2013 meeting was Results Driven Accountability small discussion groups, which received a very high rating of 4.5.

Poster sessions were also presented to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to speak with the SPP work group leads regarding the improvement activities underway in five key areas.
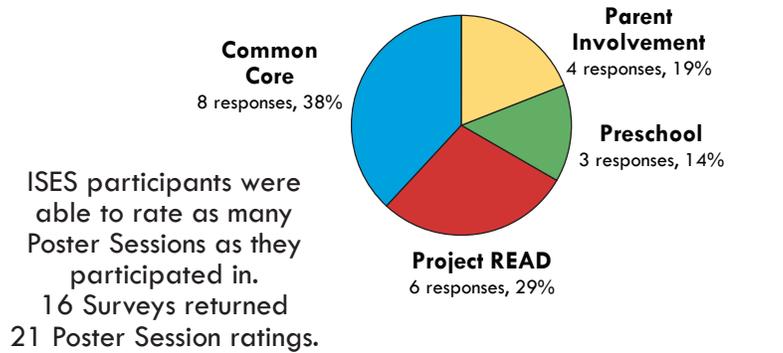
Poster Sessions
- **Common Core State Standards and Special Education** with Kristen Brown, Consultant, CDE Special Education Division (SED)
- **Project READ** with Janet Digmon, Consultant, CDE SED
- **Preschool** with Meredith Cathcart, Administrator, CDE SED
- **Secondary Transition** with Lisa Stie, Administrator, CDE SED
- **Parent Involvement** with Kristen Wright, Consultant, CDE SED

ISES participates were free to circulate between the five poster sessions, so participation was not directly recorded. However, on end-of-event surveys, participants were given an opportunity to rate as many poster sessions as they participated in. As a result, the 16 end-of-event surveys completed yielded 21 ratings, with individual poster sessions collecting between 3 and 8 ratings each. The exception is the Secondary Transition poster session, which had no ratings. The **2013 Secondary Transition Institute** in San Diego appears to have drawn away most ISES participants with a primary interest in Transition topics, along with many other special education stakeholders.

How would you rate the Poster Board Sessions in which you participated?

December 2013
16 participants with 21 ratings

4.2

High 5 / 4 / 3 / 2 / Low 1

ISES Participant Ratings by Poster Session
December 2013, 16 participants with 21 responses

Common Core
8 responses, 38%

Parent Involvement
4 responses, 19%

Preschool
3 responses, 14%

Project READ
6 responses, 29%

ISES participants were able to rate as many Poster Sessions as they participated in. 16 Surveys returned 21 Poster Session ratings.

➤ The average of all poster sessions ratings was 4.2, with averages for individual sessions ranging from 4.3 (Preschool) to 4.0 (Project READ).

➤ The Common Core and Project READ poster sessions received the most feedback.

Participants were also invited to respond in more detail to two open-ended questions, which are summarized below.

Number of Comments	What were the most positive aspects of this meeting and why?
5	**Information** *"Gaining info about RDA." "All were informative and critical information." "Great information." "Very informative." "Updates of indicators and where other states compare to California."*
3	**CDE / Chris Drouin Updates** *"We had a great group. Very nice presentations by CDE staff. Thanks! Far and away this is the strong point."* *"Chris Drouin and his information." "CDE updates."*
3	**Discussions** *"Great prompts ⇨ great conversations." "The dialog-discussion." "Discussions."*
2	**Interactive Components** *"Interactive piece." "Small group work."*
4	**Other Comments** *"Acronym-free zone was a big plus. Also the overview of the SPP indicators."* *"Jokes/cartoons/collaboration."* *"Most interesting meeting. Small group in preschool poster session but able to share resources with those who needed them." "Thanks!"*

Number of Comments	How could we improve future meetings?
4	**Post Materials in Advance** *"Please consider providing the handouts at least one day prior to the workshop.* *"Materials in advance." "We need all discussion questions in advance to adequately cover topics."* *"PowerPoints and data prior to meetings so that we can be better prepared with questions and do some research."*
2	**Poster Sessions** *"Poster boards really seemed a bit elementary. Why not just have break-outs or table top discussions of the topics?"* *"Clearer explanation on the purpose of the poster sessions."*
2	**More Interactive Components** *"More interactive time." "More small group discussion."*
3	**Other Suggestions or Concerns** *"Thank you! The only other suggestion would be to increase the time of the meeting. Seems to be so much to cover in so little time."* *"Perhaps the graph data could be on one page rather than half page."* *"We need the data from the draft exec summary SPP, especially the information on services."*