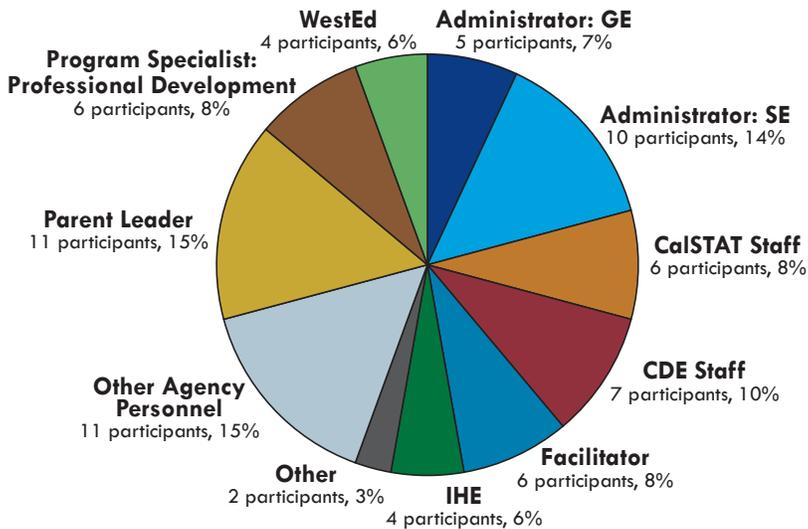# Improving Special Education Services (ISES)
December 2012

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. ISES is the unification of what were previously the Partnership Committee on Special Education (PCSE) and the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) group. 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, 2012.

ISES Meeting Participants by Role
December 2012, 72 participants

- **WestEd** 4 participants, 6%
- **Administrator: GE** 5 participants, 7%
- **Program Specialist: Professional Development** 6 participants, 8%
- **Administrator: SE** 10 participants, 14%
- **Parent Leader** 11 participants, 15%
- **CalSTAT Staff** 6 participants, 8%
- **Other Agency Personnel** 11 participants, 15%
- **CDE Staff** 7 participants, 10%
- **Other** 2 participants, 3%
- **IHE** 4 participants, 6%
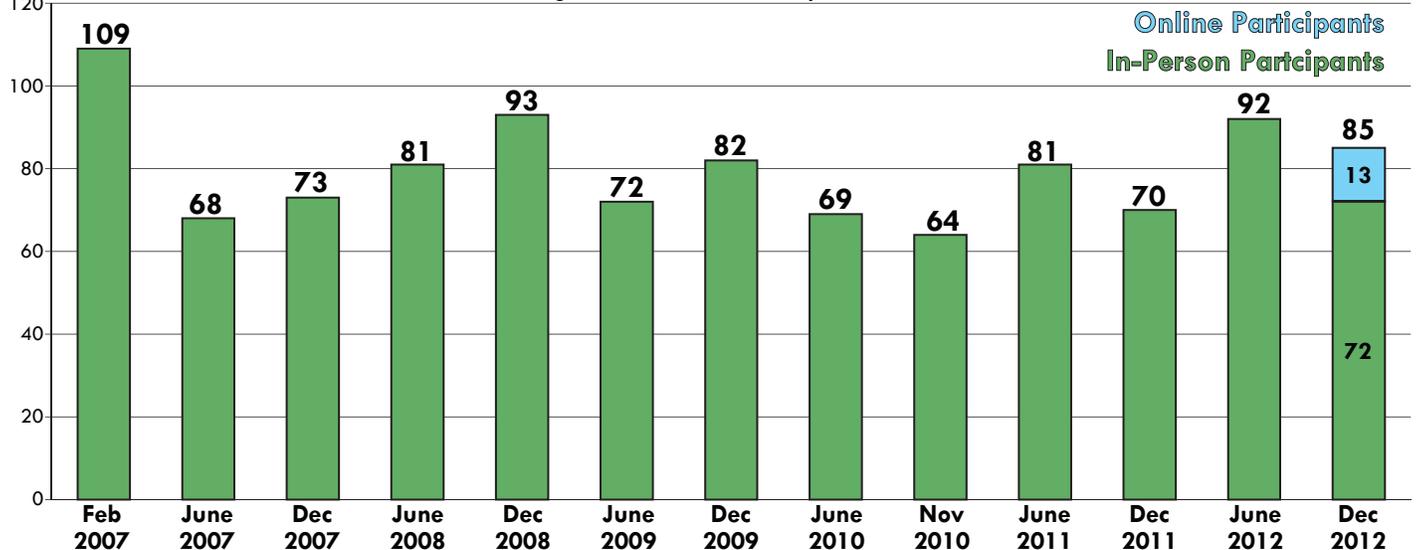- **Facilitator** 6 participants, 8%

December 2012's meeting was attended by 60 stakeholders supported by 6 workgroup facilitators and 6 CalSTAT staff members.

There were also 13 online participants, accessing the meeting through audio and video broadcast online. Of these participants, 8 were CDE Staff, 3 were Other Agency Personnel, and 2 were Special Education Administrators.

Number of ISES Participants Attending Each ISES Meeting
Thirteen ISES Meetings between February 2007 and December 2012

Online Participants
In-Person Participants

Meeting	Total
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 (72 in-person, 13 online)

The meeting included four major activities:

➢ **Updates and current issues,** with Chris Drouin, Associate Director.

➢ **State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Current Results**, with Li Walter, SPDG Evaluator.

➢ **Review of the APR**, with Patricia Skelton, Administrator, Assessment Evaluation and Support Unit

➢ **Workgroups** to facilitate small-group discussion of SPP indicators and generate recommendations. The workgroups were rated with an average of 4.2 (on a 5-point scale).
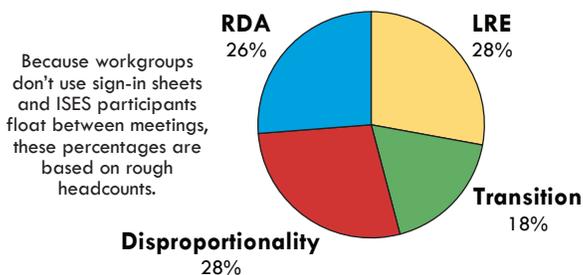
Indicator workgroups are a focal point of the ISES meeting, where participants discuss progress and collaborate to generate recommendations. Recommendations are reported out to all ISES participants in a final group session, are posted online, and inform development of the SPP and implementation of improvement strategies.

Workgroups	Topics Discussed in the Workgroups
Workgroup #1	**Least Restrictive Environment** facilitated by Linda Wyatt (Consultant), Martin Miller (Administrator, Policy and Program Services Unit), and WestEd staff for the LRE Contract.
Workgroup #2	**Transition to Adult Life** facilitated by Alison Greenwood (Administrator, Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistance Unit IV), Jill Larson and Dan Boomer (Consultants).
Workgroup #3	**Disproportionality** facilitated by Patricia Skelton (Administrator).
Workgroup #4	**Results Driven Accountability (RDA)** facilitated by Chris Drouin (Assistant Director, Special Education Division).

ISES Participants by Workgroup
December 2012

RDA 26%
LRE 28%
Transition 18%
Disproportionality 28%

Because workgroups don't use sign-in sheets and ISES participants float between meetings, these percentages are based on rough headcounts.
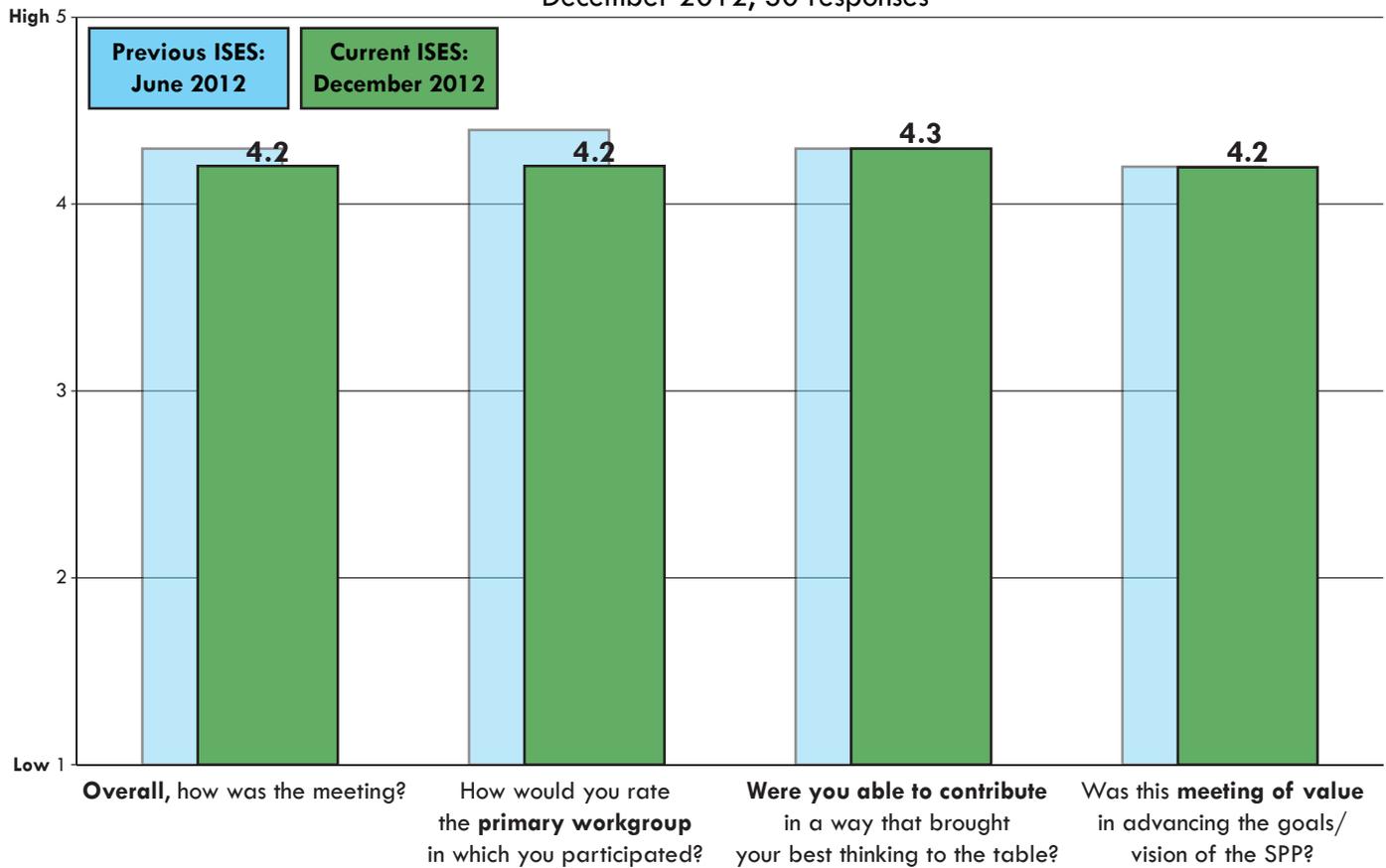
➢ Participation was roughly equivalent across all four workgroup topics.

➢ The online component of this ISES meeting was active for the LRE workgroup, and had as many as 8 users logged in at once during the session.

Anonymous end-of-event surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning of the event and collected at the end. Of the 72 participants who attended, 30 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 58% among the 52 participants in other roles.

Participants rated the meeting from one ("poor"/"no") to five ("great"/"definitely") in response to four questions. The December 2012 meeting had average responses down slightly from the previous June.

Average Response to ISES End-of-Event Evaluations
December 2012, 30 responses

> ➢ The average response to the question "Overall, how was the meeting?" was 4.2 in December, down from 4.3 the previous June.
> ➢ The average response rating the primary workgroup was 4.2 in December, down from 4.4 the previous June. There was one response of "2" to this item, which is notable as ISES survey responses rarely include ratings lower than "3".
> ➢ There were also two responses of "2" to the question about the value of the ISES meeting in advancing the goals and vision of the SPP.

Participants were also invited to respond in more detail to the open-ended questions which are summarized on page 4.

Number of Comments	**What were the most positive aspects of this meeting and why?**
5	**Collaboration and Information** *"Collaboration and dissemination of data/information." "Multiple perspectives and info sharing." "Networking and discussion. Update on info." "Opportunities to Network/share ideas."*
4	**Workgroups** *"Break-out sessions seemed focused on good, focused topics." "Opportunity to be in small group." "Small group work—once we moved to whole group there appeared to be an agenda." "Small group work."*
4	**Participating Stakeholders** *"Working together with professionals and coming up with viable plans." "Great group of stakeholders! Meeting was very organized." "Bringing together many disciplines to discuss a variety of topics."*
3	**Candid Discussion and Brainstorming** *"Candid discussion that lead to realistic meaningful needs statements." "Brainstorming opportunity, discussion, focus." "Very good discussion with good recommendation for Improvement."*
2	**Transition Workgroup** *"Rich and engaging discussion during the transition workgroup." "Further defining transition outcomes…."*
2	**Impact Tool** *"Need and impact worksheet—very useful tool." "It was very useful in analyzing needs."*
7	**Other Comments** *"Introducing everyone helped conversations." "Like having info online prior to meeting." "Data presented in the morning." "Dialogue on focus on teaching/outcomes." "Patricia is an excellent facilitator!"*

Number of Comments	**How could we improve future meetings?**
5	**Facilitation and Time Management** *"Have a time monitor to remind groups and so forth to stay on the timeline with the agenda."* *"If goal is to develop needs statements, facilitators need to understand and help guide group on difference between needs, activities, strategies, etc. Group was meandering/confused, and needed better guidance."* *"Goals/needs basically pre-determined, therefore discussions were too broad and vague to be of much value. Strategic ideas were not dealt with much. More pre-planning needed for a helpful, refined vision."*
4	**More Time for Discussion/Input** *"Allow time for discussion after each work group reports out." Ensure time for public input."* *"A short session on each topic, so we can participate in all areas."*
3	**Start Later (9:30am) to Allow for Air Travel** *"Early flights don't arrive in time for 8:30 start and expensive to spend night, especially Sunday!"*
3	**Materials Available Prior to Meeting** *"Info and documents prior to meeting if possible." "Would be helpful having info online a bit earlier."*
3	**Include Early Childhood, Indicator 8** *"Early childhood was sadly missing. I hope we can get to preschool LRE." "What happened to Indicator 8?"*
2	**More Detail on What ISES Does** *"Just need more follow-up from past meetings. Discussions are good, but it is always a challenge with ISES to see where all this is going." "Talk about…the changes that can be made by our involvement."*
5	**Other Suggestions or Concerns** *"Grow on what was discussed." "This was my first time attending. Wish we would have had the new member orientation so that I didn't feel lost."* *"Could we reformulate an EC subgroup. I think the need, interest, and representation are here."* *"Think forward. Focus on common core/smarter balance. Get ahead of (or caught up with) curve."* *"Parent Involvement and parent education need to be a focus throughout all goals/plans etc."* *"Being a big believer in bringing up more and new people, I felt Patricia could have done a better job of sharing the leadership, by ensuring participants had their input before she answered her own questions, or, for example, by asking for a volunteer to report out. She did a great job but that would have helped participation."*