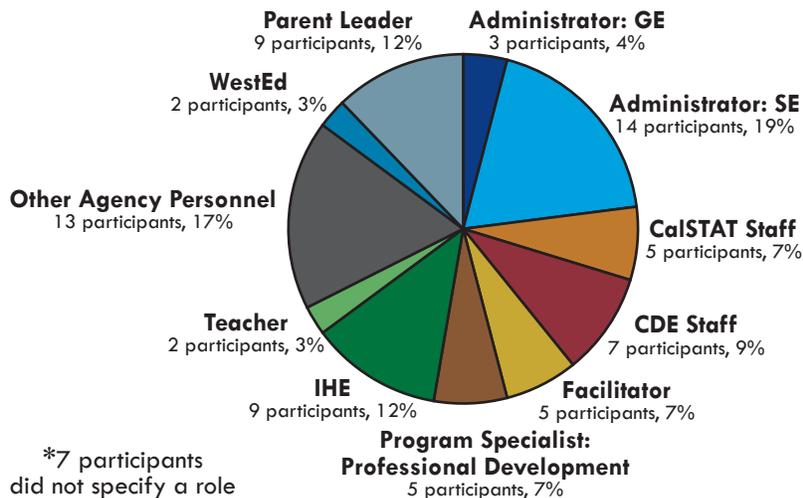# Improving Special Education Services (ISES)
June 2011

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 June 9, 2011, and the next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2011.

ISES Meeting Participants by Role
June 2011, 81 participants*

Parent Leader
9 participants, 12%

WestEd
2 participants, 3%

Administrator: GE
3 participants, 4%

Administrator: SE
14 participants, 19%

CalSTAT Staff
5 participants, 7%

CDE Staff
7 participants, 9%

Other Agency Personnel
13 participants, 17%

Teacher
2 participants, 3%

IHE
9 participants, 12%

Program Specialist:
Professional Development
5 participants, 7%

Facilitator
5 participants, 7%
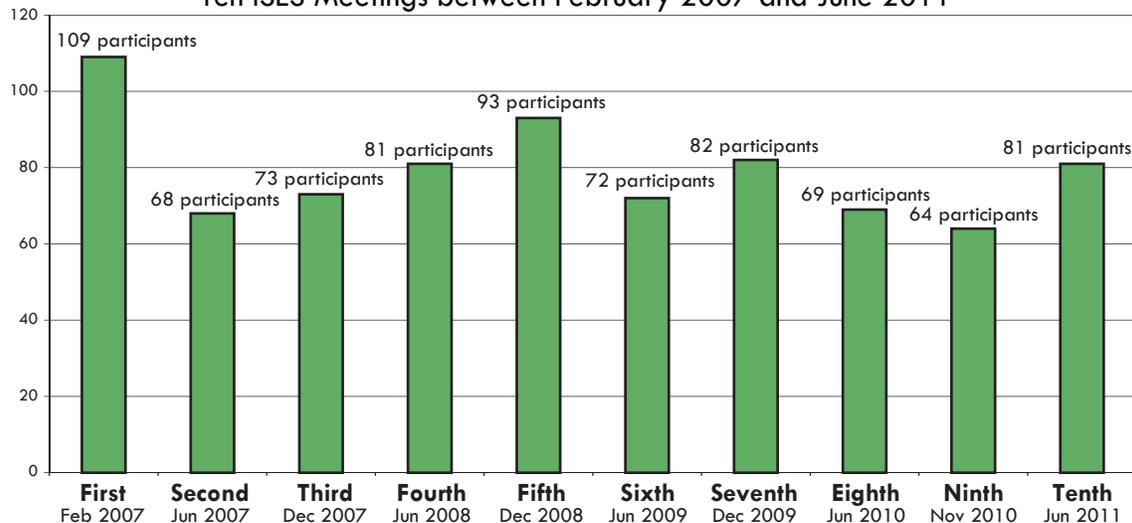
*7 participants
did not specify a role

June 2011's meeting had a typical number of participants, with 71 stakeholders supported by 5 workgroup facilitators and 5 CalSTAT staff members.

More CDE staff attended than were recorded due to a large number of unregistered attendees who walked in.

Number of ISES Participants Attending Each ISES Meeting
Ten ISES Meetings between February 2007 and June 2011

109 participants	68 participants	73 participants	81 participants	93 participants	72 participants	82 participants	69 participants	64 participants	81 participants
First Feb 2007	Second Jun 2007	Third Dec 2007	Fourth Jun 2008	Fifth Dec 2008	Sixth Jun 2009	Seventh Dec 2009	Eighth Jun 2010	Ninth Nov 2010	Tenth Jun 2011

The meeting included three major activities:

➢ **Welcome and Framing,** a brief discussion of the day's activities with Janet Digmon, followed by a welcome and update from the Director of the Special Education Division, Dr. Fred Balcom.

➢ **Updates and current issues,** rounded out the rest of the morning session. This included an update on the outcome of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)'s recent verification review and discussion of disproportionality measures with Chris Drouin, Associate Director. Valodi Foster also provided an overview and update of after school programs.

➢ **Workgroups** to facilitate small-group discussion of SPP indicators and generate recommendations. There was also a workgroup dedicated to discussion of the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). The workgroups were rated with an average of 4.1 (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	**Disproportionality:** SPP Indicators #4, #9 and #10, facilitated by Patricia Skelton, Ralph Scott, Dough McDougall and George Triest.
Workgroup #2	**Transition and Postsecondary:** SPP Indicators #12, #13 and #14, facilitated by Meredith Cathcart, Jill Larson, and Dan Boomer
Workgroup #3	**SPDG** facilitated by Janet Digmon, Anne Davin and Li Walter

ISES Participants by Workgroup
June 2011, by percent based on approximate headcounts

Disproportionality 28%
SPDG 44%
Transition and Postsecondary 38%
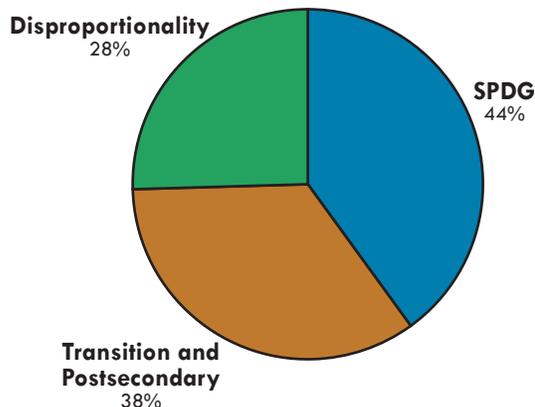
➢ The SPDG workshop attracted the most participation, but all three workgroups were attended by large discussion groups.

Anonymous end-of-event surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning of the event and collected at the end. Of the 81 participants who registered, 33 completed end-of-event surveys. Due to the fact that many of the facilitators and CDE staff feel completing a survey would be inappropriate, this number suggests a response rate of roughly 50% among other participants.

Average Response to ISES End-of-Event Evaluations
June 2011, 33 responses
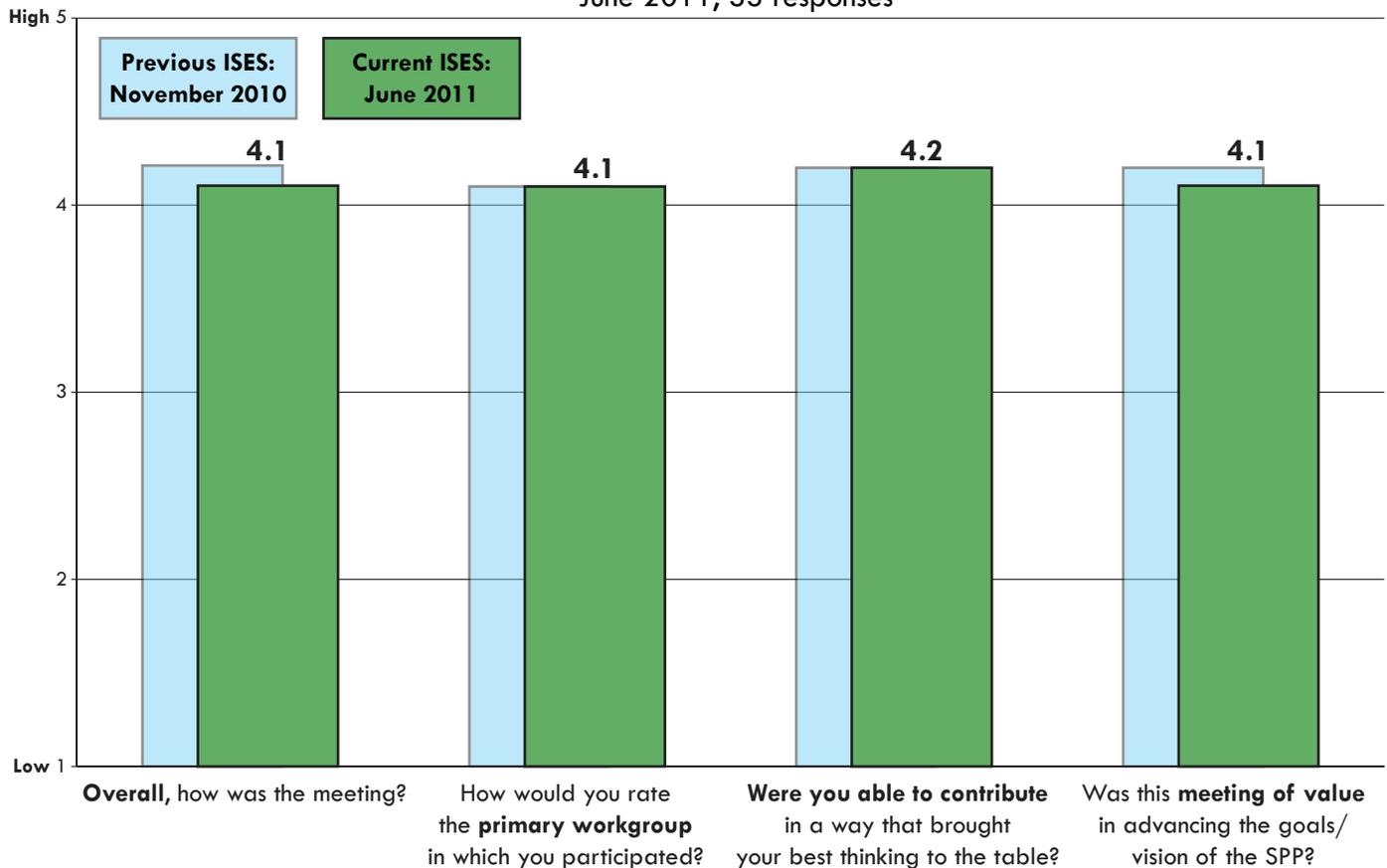
Participants rated the meeting from one ("poor"/"no") to five ("great"/"definitely") in response to four questions. Responses ranged from 1 to 5, with an average response between 4.1 and 4.2. Participants were also invited to respond in more detail to the open-ended questions which are summarized on page 4.

➢ While these scores are broadly consistent with past ISES meetings, it is noteworthy that two items, "Overall, how was the meeting?" and "Was the meeting of value in advancing the goals/vision of the SPP," were slightly lower than at the previous ISES meeting. This reflects an ongoing, general trend of ISES meeting responses slipping slightly lower at each meeting.

➢ Leading participant suggestions for improving the meeting revolved around providing more time for discussion and distributing materials and documents in advance (to save time in the meeting).

Number of Comments	What were the most positive aspects of this meeting and why?
11	**Discussion, Brainstorming and Opportunity for Input** *"Discussion, ideas for improvement." "Time for focused, small workgroup discussions." "Another great opportunity to a large group of stakeholders to discuss these important issues that affect us all!"*
9	**Updates and Dissemination of Information** *"Listening to the work that has been done so I can take that back to constituents at home." "Latest on APR." "Learning how the SPDG and CalSTAT work and how goals are developed." "The ability to synthesize the amount of information into specific presentations that help guide the discussions and workgroups."*
5	**Leadership and Facilitation** *"Great facilitators and morning presentation." "Assignment of good leadership." "Chris Drouin's review."*
4	**Networking** *"Networking and collaboration." "Connections."*
3	**Workgroups** *"Discussion in small group." "Group work." "The afternoon session."*
5	**Other Positive Comments** *"Overall, productive meeting." "Keep doing what you're doing." "Nametags are great, thank you." "We hope so—need to implement recommendations!" "Great day! Thank you!"*

Number of Comments	How could we improve future meetings?
5	**Suggestions Around Workgroups** *"More workgroup time." "Too much in the beginning—more worktime." "Liked three sessions versus more sessions."*
4	**Post Materials for Review Sooner** *"If possible, post materials for review earlier." "Potentially sending out information (studies, research, articles) ahead of time to help prepare the participants on the topics (if able and available)." "Have PowerPoint info available BEFORE meeting so that time is better spent brainstorming."*
3	**Provide Previous Recommendations for Review** *"Have last year's recommendations available with online materials to refresh our minds and check progress." "In workgroup, last year's recommendations should be available during discussion*
3	**Provide Specific Information Around SPP and SPDG** *"Focus on aligning SPDG and SPP and using student data and evaluation on effectiveness of IDEA funded activity." "Make goals available earlier so purpose of task is more clearly defined."*
2	**Distribute PowerPoints** *"Have all PowerPoints materials in the hand-outs." "Provide PowerPoints at meeting."*
2	**Use Microphones** *"A microphone should <u>always</u> be used in large groups. There were a number of hard-of-hearing people in the audience who could not really hear everything." "Use a mic all the time (universal accommodations)."*
2	**More Emphasis on Parents** *"Re-visit parent involvement with all aspects of grant/program." "Need more parent representation, advocates."*
4	**Other Suggestions and Comments** *"More discussion of indicators focused upon update of projected planning." "Better speaker." "Combo of pre-school transition and post-secondary transition somewhat odd. Pre-school not my area of experience/interest." "Sometimes it feels like we have been working on the same issues year after year."*