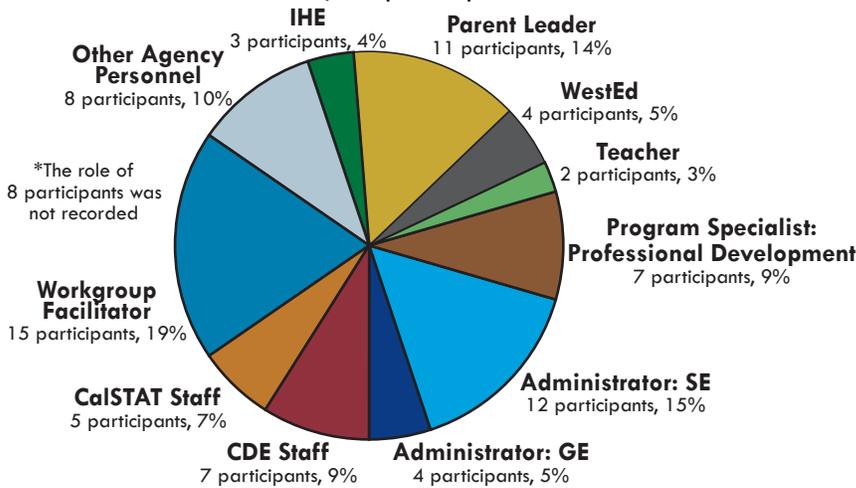# Improving Special Education Services (ISES)
June 2013

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. 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 5, 2013. The next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2013.

ISES Meeting Participants by Role
June 2013, 86 participants*

- IHE — 3 participants, 4%
- Parent Leader — 11 participants, 14%
- WestEd — 4 participants, 5%
- Teacher — 2 participants, 3%
- Program Specialist: Professional Development — 7 participants, 9%
- Administrator: SE — 12 participants, 15%
- Administrator: GE — 4 participants, 5%
- CDE Staff — 7 participants, 9%
- CalSTAT Staff — 5 participants, 7%
- Workgroup Facilitator — 15 participants, 19%
- Other Agency Personnel — 8 participants, 10%

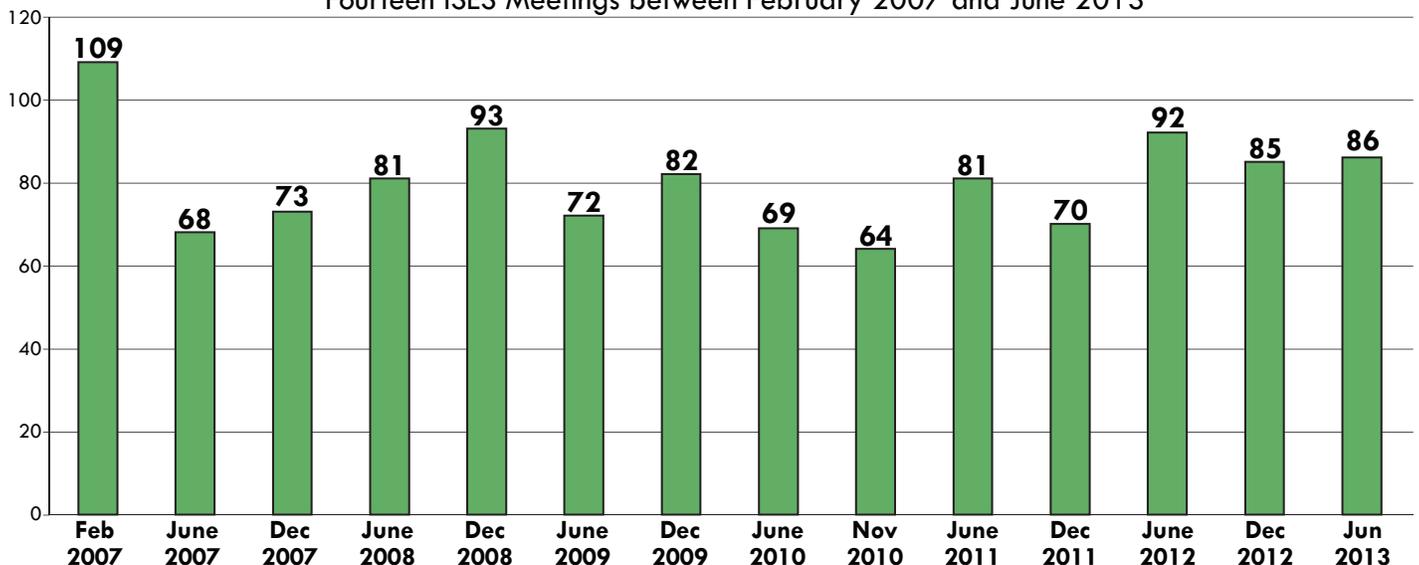*The role of 8 participants was not recorded

June 2013's meeting was attended by 66 stakeholders supported by 15 workgroup facilitators and 5 CalSTAT staff members.

There were many more facilitators at this ISES meeting, supporting separate workgroup topics in morning and afternoon sessions, a significant change in this ISES meeting's format.

The number of stakeholders increased as well, from 60 in December to 66 in June. Additional stakeholders participated online.

Number of ISES Participants Attending Each ISES Meeting
Fourteen ISES Meetings between February 2007 and June 2013

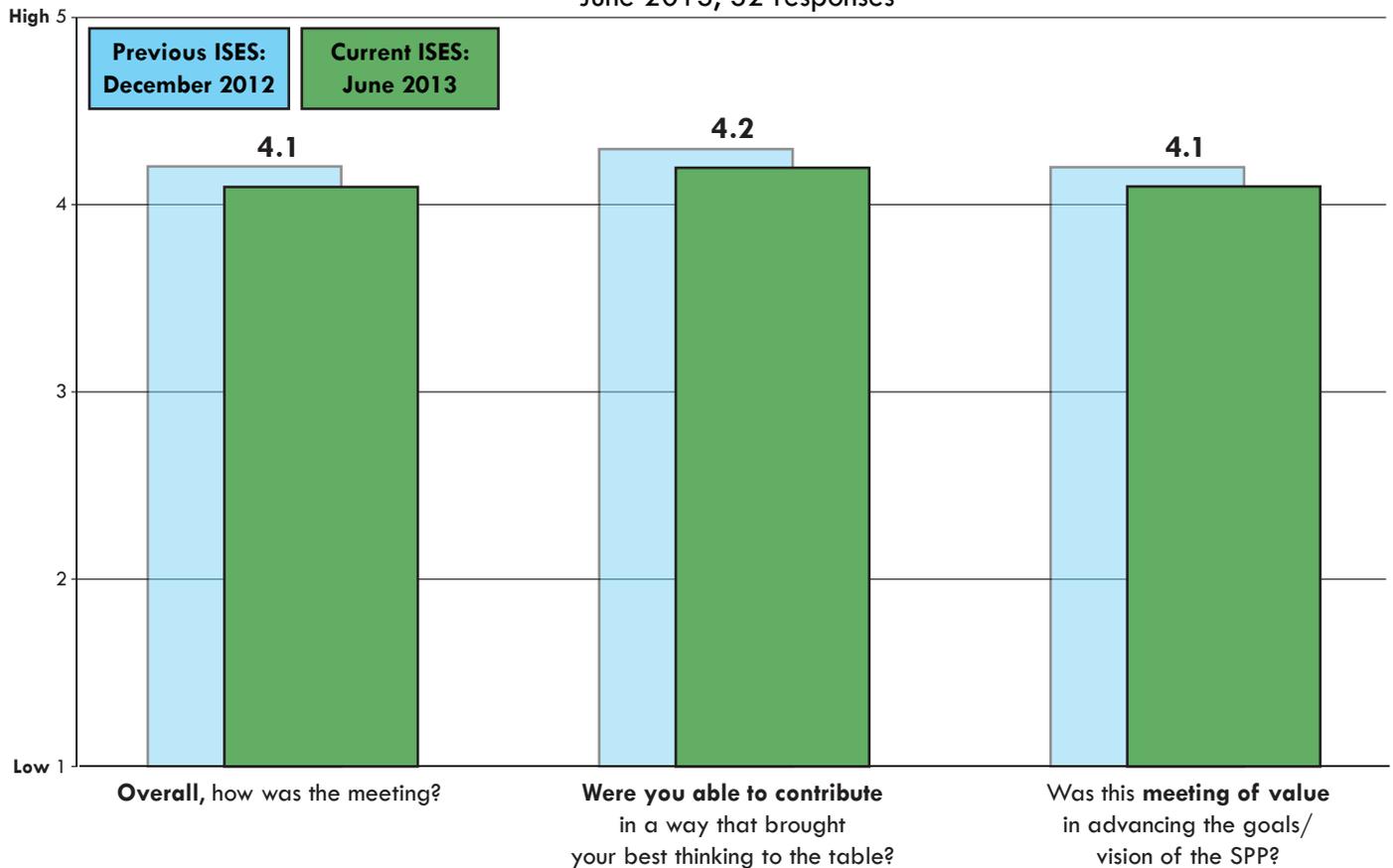| Meeting	Participants
Feb 2007	109
June 2007	68
Dec 2007	73
June 2008	81
Dec 2008	93
June 2009	72
Dec 2009	82
June 2010	69
Nov 2010	64
June 2011	81
Dec 2011	70
June 2012	92
Dec 2012	85
Jun 2013	86

Anonymous end-of-event surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning of the event and collected at the end. Of the 86 participants who attended, 32 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 54% among the 59 participants in other roles.

Participants rated the meeting from one ("poor"/"no") to five ("great"/"definitely") in response to three questions. The June 2013 meeting had average responses down slightly from the previous December.

Average Response to ISES End-of-Event Evaluations
June 2013, 32 responses

Previous ISES: December 2012   Current ISES: June 2013

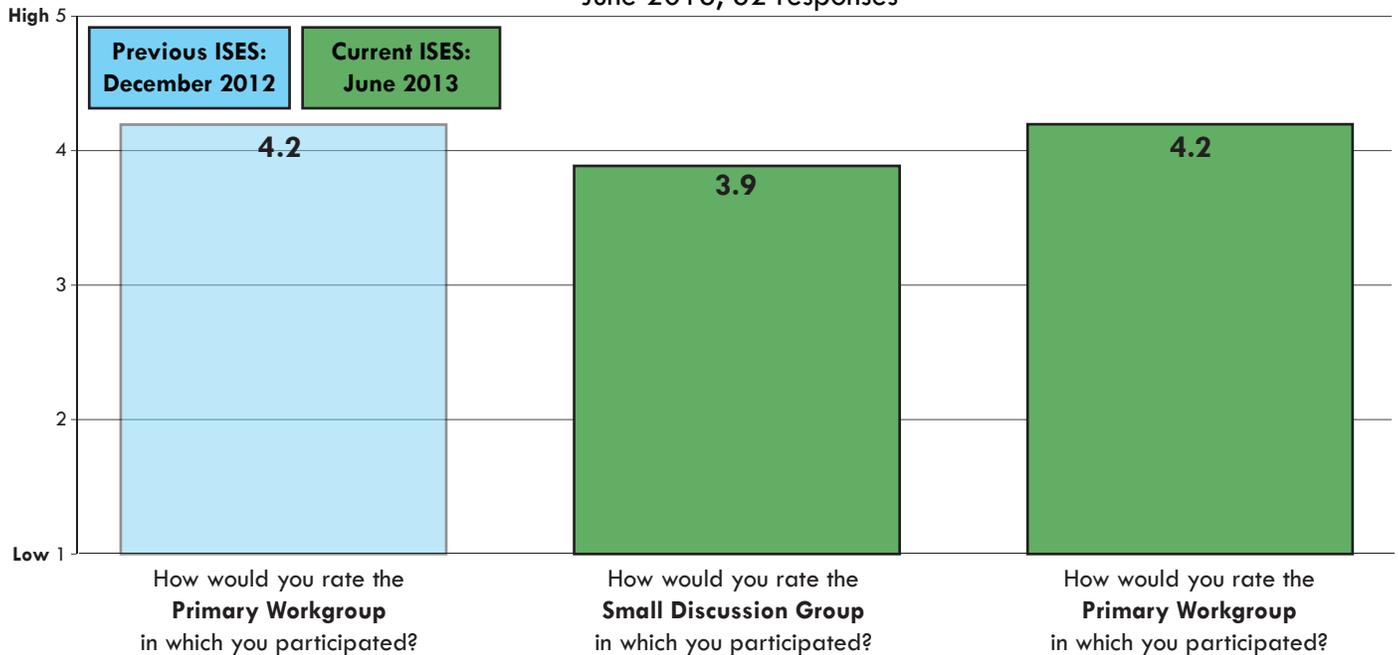|	Overall, how was the meeting?	Were you able to contribute in a way that brought your best thinking to the table?	Was this meeting of value in advancing the goals/ vision of the SPP?
Value	4.1	4.2	4.1

Participants also rated their workgroup experiences. 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. There were separate Small Session Groups in the morning (1 hour each) and Primary Workgroup in the afternoon (1 hour, 45 min). In the past, ISES meetings have only had a Primary Workgroup, continuing from a morning session into the afternoon. Workgroups are summarized on page 3.

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

Average Response to Workgroup Evaluation Items
June 2013, 32 responses

The Small Sessions were not as highly rated as the Primary Workgroups. The response scale (1 to 5) for the Small Session survey item was aligned incorrectly, possibly leading some inattentive respondents to mark "4" when they meant to mark "5," resulting in the lower rating. However, open-ended comments noted that some Small Sessions were overcrowded and didn't share recommendations with the full meeting.

Small Session Groups
1. **Common Core State Standards and Special Education** with Kristen Brown (Consultant, CDE)
2. **Compaints and Due Process** with Bob Morgan, Martin Miller, and Jane Canty (Administrators)
3. **Compliance** with Ken Freedlander and Alison Greenwood (Administrators, Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistance Units)
4. **Preschool** with Pam Quiroz (Consultant, Special Education Division (SED))
5. **Fiscal Compliance** with Chris Essman (Consultant, SED)
6. **Parent Involvement** with Allison Smith (Consultant, SED)

Primary Workgroups
1. **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** with Linda Qyatt (Consultant, SED) and WestED staff for the LRE Contract
2. **Transition to Adult Life** with Jill Larson and Dan Boomer (Consultants, Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistance Unit IV)
3. **Disproportionality** with Jan Digmon and Steve Perez (Consultants, SED)
4. **Assessment and Results Driven Accountability** with Patricia Skelton (Administrator, Assessment Evaluation and Support Unit)

Number of Comments	**What were the most positive aspects of this meeting and why?**

7 — Opportunity to Provide Input
"Really seeking input/feedback from educators/field." "Having input listened to and considered."
"Opportunities to share ideas." "Interactive discussion."

7 — Stakeholder Roles, Diversity, and Perspectives
"Interesting with such a rich diversity of folks!" "All the different demographics present, a lot of perspective!"
"That a variety of stakeholders continue to work on these issues." "Provided a new perspective on recommendations."
"Opportunity to learn about work of different groups because it helps frame big picture."

6 — Information
"Good breakdown of information." "Hearing where the state is in regard to all the issues discussed."
"As always, Chris's cartoon videos! And of course the opportunity to hear what's going on."

5 — Workgroups
"Choice of break-outs." "We had small enough groups to participate." "Useful breakout." "Small group."
"Love that there will be opportunities to work on things throughout the following months."

3 — Organized
"Well organized." "Planning." "Organization of it."

5 — Other Comments
"Great to get together to discuss SPP – should be quarterly." "Good to record meeting online." "Collaboration."
"Enjoyed all aspects." "Great meeting."

Number of Comments	**How could we improve future meetings?**

4 — Post Materials in Advance
"Provide background info ahead of time. Giving us time to prepare for the meeting. If we can read up on topic ahead of time, we'll be better able to participate." "Provide more info and not just numbers, percents."
"Have folks get documents in advance for discussion groups—being asked to give feedback in the moment when there has not been adequate time to process thoughtfully." "Post Materials in advance."

3 — More Opportunities for Input/Collaboration
"More opportunity for input." "Share out from morning sessions, too."
"We need communication among the discussion groups between meetings."

3 — Facilities
"Facilities were inadequate. General session and Common Core group were overcrowded."
"Even with maps, difficult to find/access meeting rooms." "Larger setting."

2 — Longer Workgroup Sessions
"Longer session with clear info. Too many unanswered questions in Common Core. Transition data was confusing."
"The discussion groups aren't long enough."

2 — Additional Tech Support
"Technology needs to work better. Maybe have an IT person going to different rooms."
"Hook up LDC in small groups so you could see input included."

6 — Other Suggestions or Concerns
"More networking opportunities. I know it takes time, but a quick around-the-room for who-is-who would be helpful."
"Groups should be limited to about fifteen individuals to promote discussion." "Not during graduation time."
"Is there a way to highlight ISES activities and materials, finding on the website?" "Missed the attendance list."
"Some presenters need to improve microphone skills. Way too close to the microphone."