

Improving Special Education Services (ISES)

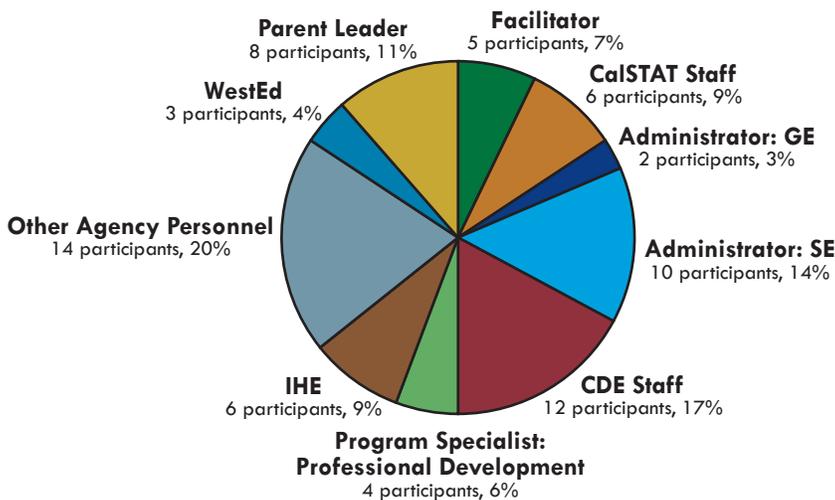
December 2011

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 December 9, 2011, and the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 7, 2012.

ISES Meeting Participants by Role

December 2011, 70 participants

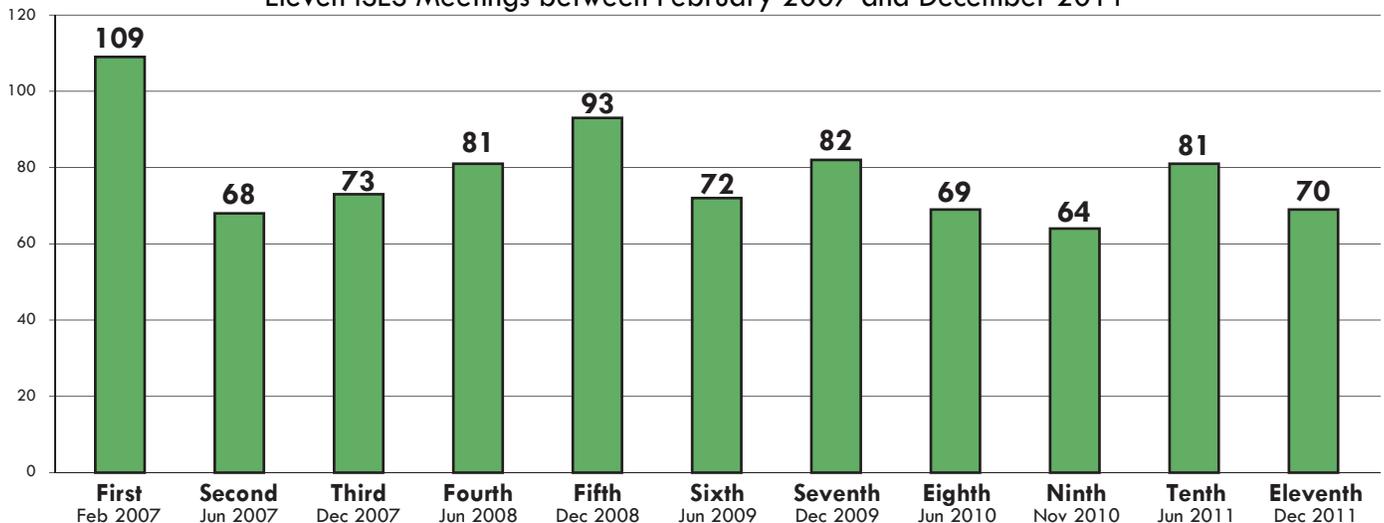


December 2011's meeting had a typical number of participants, with 59 stakeholders supported by 5 workgroup facilitators and 6 CalSTAT staff members.

There was also an interactive online component for participants to participate remotely. Between 17 and 21 people were logged on at any time throughout the meeting.

Number of ISES Participants Attending Each ISES Meeting

Eleven ISES Meetings between February 2007 and December 2011



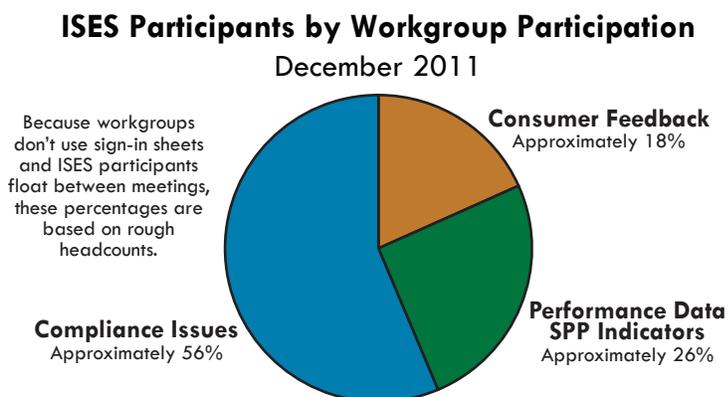
The meeting included four major activities:

- **Welcome and Framing**, a brief discussion of the day's activities with Associate Director Chris Drouin (filling in for Janet Digmon, who was ill), followed by a welcome and update from the Director of the Special Education Division, Dr. Fred Balcom.
- **Updates and current issues**, with Chris Drouin, discussing progress working with SPP Indicator data and announcing new ISES telecollaborative activities that will be held throughout the year to collect stakeholder feedback.
- **Overview of SPDG and New Competition**, with Li Walter, the SPDG Evaluator. She introduced and described the purpose of the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and the upcoming grant award competition which California will participate in. Her overview focused on basic expectations of the SPDG proposal, new objectives being discussed by the federal grantors, and principles of the SPDG.
- **Workgroups** to facilitate small-group discussion of SPP indicators and generate recommendations. The workgroups were highly rated with an average of 4.5 (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

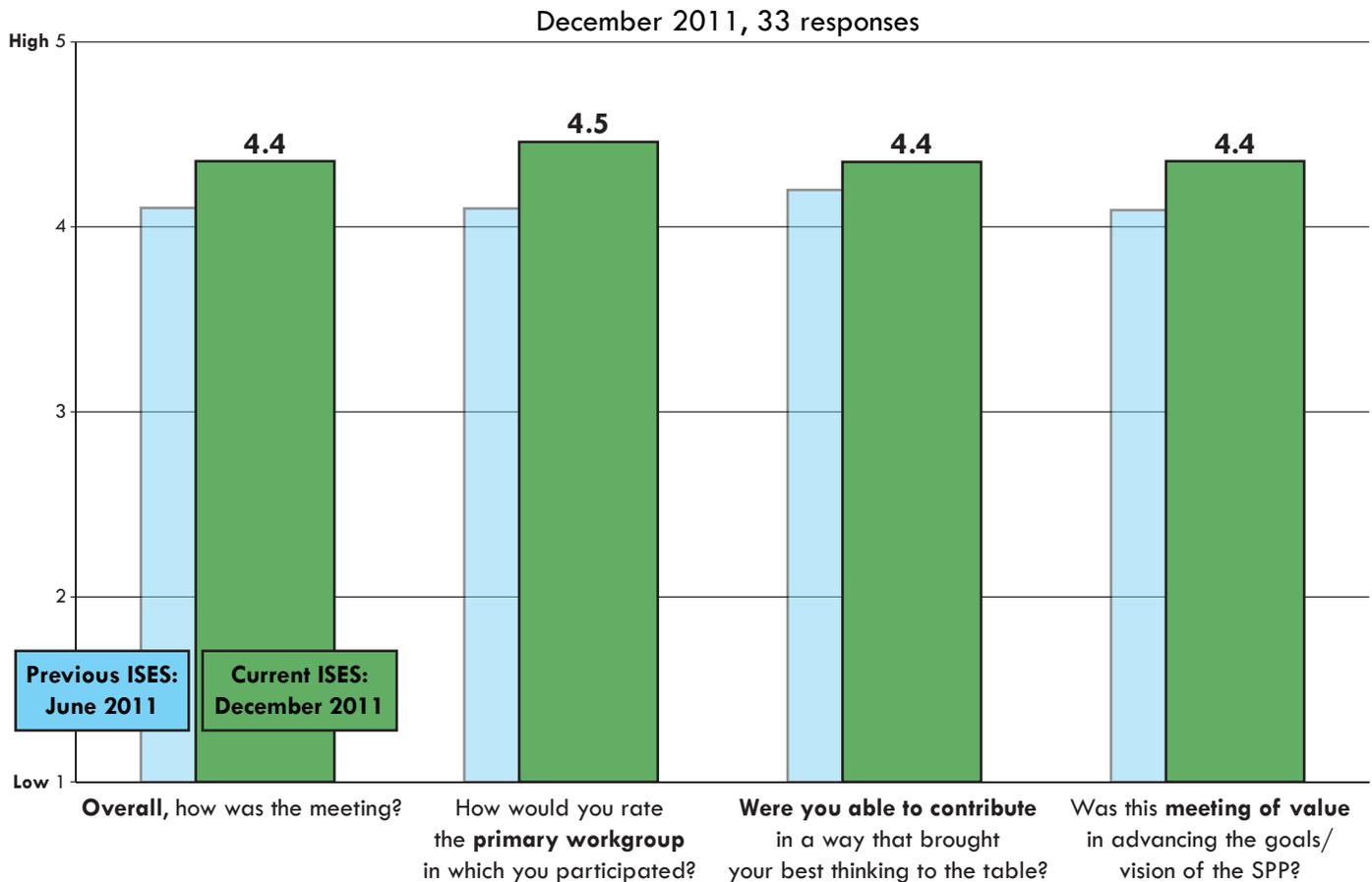
- Workgroup #1 **Compliance Issues** facilitated by Chris Drouin.
- Workgroup #2 **Performance Data and SPP Indicators** facilitated by Patricia Skelton of the Administrator Assessment, Evaluation and Support Unit.
- Workgroup #3 **Consumer Feedback** facilitated by Alison Greenwood, an administrator with Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistance Unit IV.



- The Compliance Issues workshop attracted the most participation. The online component of the meeting focused on this meeting as well, and while teleconference lines were offered for the other workgroups, no one used them.

Anonymous end-of-event surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning of the event and collected at the end. Of the 70 participants who attended, 33 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 70% among the 47 participants in other roles. This would be an unusually high completion rate compared to other ISES meetings.

Average Response to ISES End-of-Event Evaluations



Participants rated the meeting from one (“poor”/“no”) to five (“great”/“definitely”) in response to four questions. The December 2011 meeting had some of the most positive responses of any ISES meeting, with an average response between 4.4 and 4.5, up from 4.1 and 4.2. With one exception, the other 32 survey respondents rated the meeting with a 4 or 5 overall.

- The largest rating increase was on workgroups. The morning agenda items finished ahead of schedule and the balance of that time was spent on workgroups; as Chris Drouin noted aloud, participants often ask for more workgroup time.

Participants were also invited to respond in more detail to the open-ended questions which are summarized on page 4. Comments also reflected these more-positive responses, with 10 approving of changes in the format and 4 stated explicitly that this was the best of all eleven ISES meetings.

Number
of
Comments

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

Changes to the Meeting Format

- 13 *"Keep the format." "Fewer breakouts, more focused, better explanation of why we're meeting."
"Being able to spend more time in groups. Groups being more populated (more groups = less participation)."
"Feels more proactive—was getting no feeling of forward movement in past meetings."*

Availability and Use of Data or Information Resources

- 13 *"A lot of good information—examination of data." "The info was pertinent and clear." "Having data sheets."
"Looking at the data then discussing ways to make the needed improvement across the state."
"An excellent review of compliance data." "Good facilitators! Good data!"*

Collaboration between Diverse Stakeholders

- 10 *"Different stakeholders have viewpoints from different angles. Collaboration results in a more viable course of action. We truly collaborate." "Opportunity to hear from various perspectives."
"Sharing of ideas and brainstorming—free flowing." "Very good interaction."*

Best ISES Meeting Yet

- 5 *"This was, by far, the best over a ten year period." "Actually, this ISES was much improved from those past."*

Meeting Facilitation

- 4 *"Chris is a great presenter—clear, easy to understand, and also entertaining."
"Reminded of how the state is in good hands with such talented people looking out for the interests of children and youth with disabilities." "Please remember to show humorous videos and forward to all."*

Number
of
Comments

How could we improve future meetings?

Agenda and the Focus on Outcomes

- 9 *"Provide outcomes desired at the beginning of the workgroup session. Not sure where the discussion was going in the workgroup. Still not sure if the group accomplished what was desired or needed. Provide big picture up front. Meeting outcomes. The meeting outcomes on the agenda, as stated, were not addressed." "I'm still confused how outcomes are used, but I felt engaged." "And those topics? Does it just go away?"*

Post Materials for Review Sooner

- 7 *"Handouts available online prior to meeting." "Provide large docs in advance for review. Executive summary of state annual performance report."*

Provide More Data, Maintain Focus on Data

- 4 *"Maintain focus on data driven policy direction." "More data."
"Identify areas where data is misleading or doesn't fully inform."
"It seems as if the small group presenter was not fully informed of the data tables provided."*

Recruit More Stakeholders from General Education

- 2 *"It would be great to have SE and GE teacher, and GE admin representatives."
"Where are the Gen Ed stakeholders?"*

More or Longer ISES Meetings

- 2 *"Meet more often and move forward." "Continue to provide ample sharing time."*

Shorter ISES Meetings

- 2 *"We could get future meetings down to two or three hours and do just fine." "Start later."*

Other Suggestions or Concerns

- 3 *"Have coffee and cookies!" "Have coffee/water on site." "Room was too cold."*
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