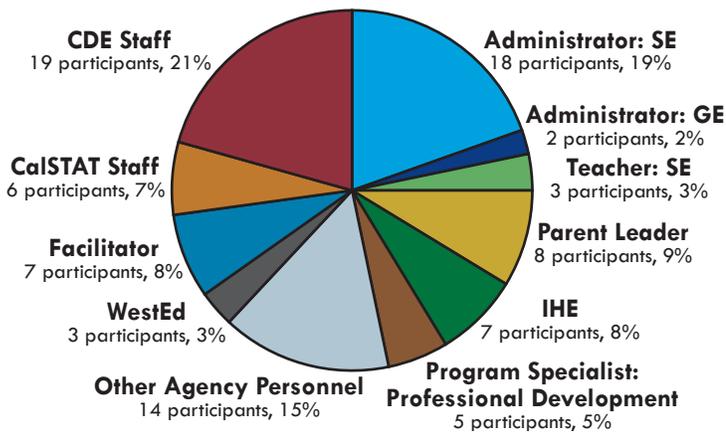# Improving Special Education Services (ISES)
June 2012

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 June 7, 2012.

ISES Meeting Participants by Role
June 2012, 92 participants

- **CDE Staff** 19 participants, 21%
- **Administrator: SE** 18 participants, 19%
- **Administrator: GE** 2 participants, 2%
- **Teacher: SE** 3 participants, 3%
- **Parent Leader** 8 participants, 9%
- **IHE** 7 participants, 8%
- **Program Specialist: Professional Development** 5 participants, 5%
- **Other Agency Personnel** 14 participants, 15%
- **WestEd** 3 participants, 3%
- **Facilitator** 7 participants, 8%
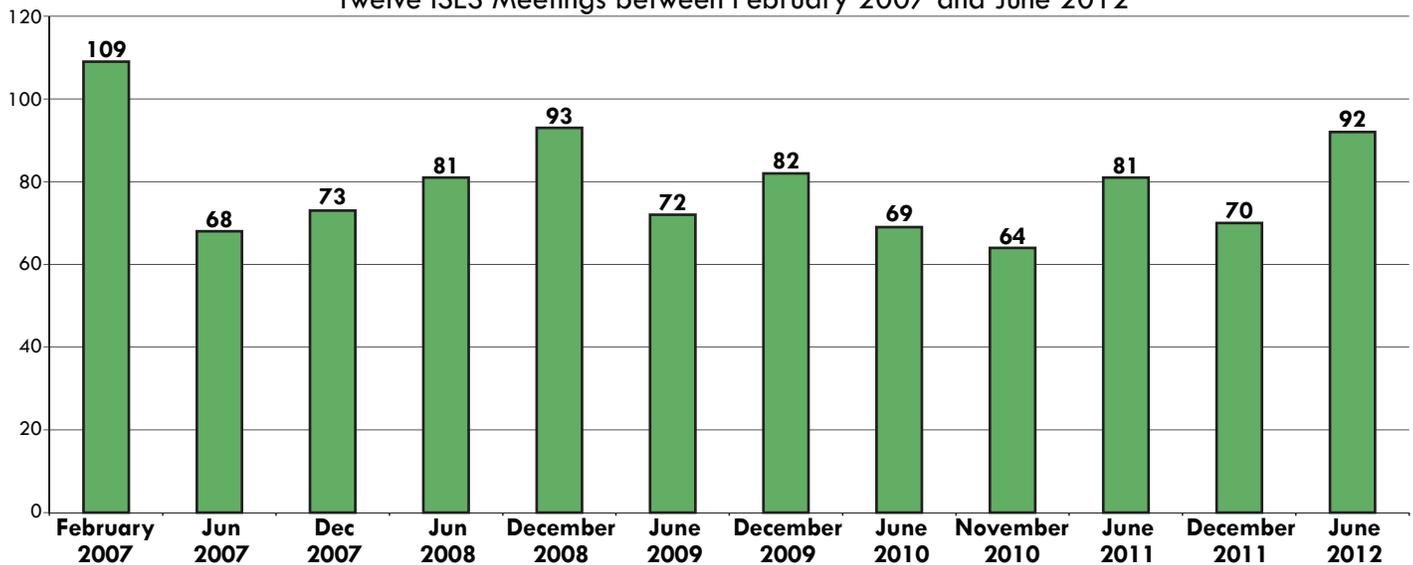- **CalSTAT Staff** 6 participants, 7%

June 2012's meeting had a large number of participants, with 79 stakeholders supported by 7 workgroup facilitators and 6 CalSTAT staff members.

Most participants were administrators, CDE staff, or personnel with other agencies.

Number of ISES Participants Attending Each ISES Meeting
Twelve ISES Meetings between February 2007 and June 2012

Meeting	Participants
February 2007	109
Jun 2007	68
Dec 2007	73
Jun 2008	81
December 2008	93
June 2009	72
December 2009	82
June 2010	69
November 2010	64
June 2011	81
December 2011	70
June 2012	92

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,** with Associate Director Chris Drouin.

➤ **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).
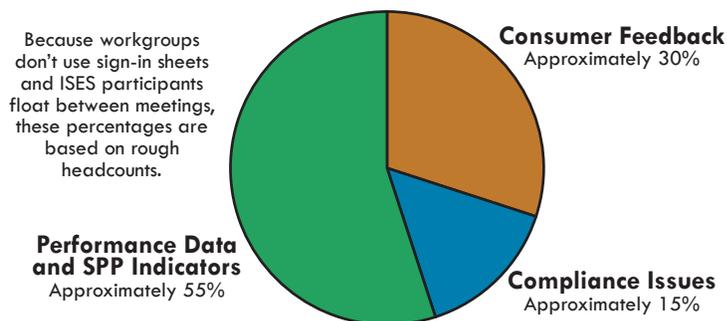
Indicator workgroups are a focal point of the ISES meeting, where participants discuss progress and collaborate to generate recommendations. Recommendations are reported out to all ISES participants in a final group session, are posted online, and inform development of the SPP and implementation of improvement strategies.

Workgroups	Topics Discussed in the Workgroups
Workgroup #1	**Compliance Issues** facilitated by Alison Greenwood (an administrator with Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistance Unit IV), Jill Larson and Shiyloh Becerril (Consultants).
Workgroup #2	**Performance Data and SPP Indicators** facilitated by Kathleen Halvorson (Consultant) and Bruce Little (Consultant and WestED staff for the LRE Contract).
Workgroup #3	**Consumer Feedback** facilitated by Jane Canty (an administrator with Procedural Safeguards and Referral Service) and Meredith Cathcart (Consultant).

ISES Participants by Workgroup Participation
June 2012

Because workgroups don't use sign-in sheets and ISES participants float between meetings, these percentages are based on rough headcounts.

Consumer Feedback
Approximately 30%

Compliance Issues
Approximately 15%

**Performance Data and SPP Indicators**
Approximately 55%

➤ The Performance Data and SPP Indicators workgroup attracted the most participation.

Anonymous end-of-event surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning of the event and collected at the end. Of the 92 participants who attended, 20 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 33% among the 60 participants in other roles.

This is an unusually low completion rate compared to other ISES meetings and may be related to a change in venue for the June 2012 meeting. In the usual meeting location in the Health and Human Services building, there is a single exit point from meeting rooms which has been used to collect survey responses as participants leave. Additionally, workgroup discussions had to be located in separate locations, making it more difficult to collect surveys from participants leaving early.

Average Response to ISES End-of-Event Evaluations
June 2012, 20 responses
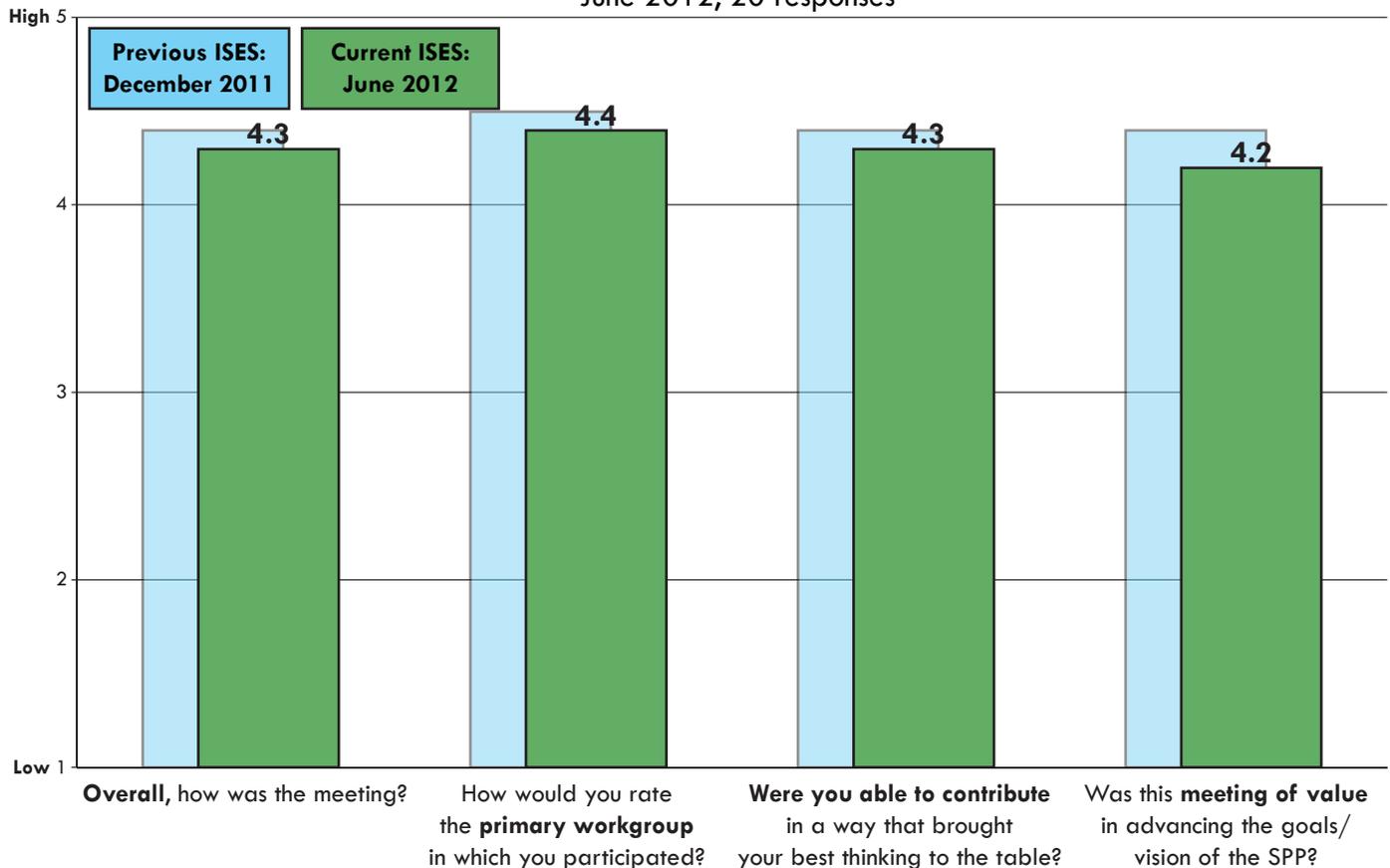
Participants rated the meeting from one ("poor"/"no") to five ("great"/"definitely") in response to four questions. The June 2012 meeting had responses between 4.4 and 4.2, down slightly from 4.5 and 4.3 the previous December. Individual survey responses ranged from 3 to 5, with no respondent rating any item with a 1 or 2.

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 Discussion** *"Collaboration and to speak directly with those at CDE implementing the process."* *"The ability to have in-depth conversations." "Lively discussion as always."*
3	**Contributions, Comments, and Input** *"Hearing ideas and contributions from everyone." "Comments were welcome/opportunities for input."* *"Gathering ideas from the small group LRE discussion."*
3	**Brainstorming and Developing Ideas** *"Developing recommendations for next steps." "Thinking of new ways to get to positive outcomes."* *"Brainstorming with others on positive outcomes and how to measure them."*
3	**Networking** *"Netowrking and small group discussion." "Networking, CDE updates." "Group work/networking."*
4	**Other Comments** *"Active participation—nice use of technology." "Opening session." "Future work."*

Number of Comments	**How could we improve future meetings?**
4	**Use of Meeting Time** *"Shorter formal presentations—they were too long and of minimal relevance—should be summarized, highlighted with implications. Increase group discussion and input time, with a clearer sharper focus."* *"I just wish we could move the process at a faster rate." "More time!"*
3	**More Meetings, Possibly in Other Formats** *"Perhaps this would be more effective if we were able to meet more frequently—I understand what a challenge it is." "Use other modes between meetings."* *"Form some committees to get work done in between the biannual meetings."*
2	**Difficulty Seeing Outcomes** *"As a person from the parent, not professional educator role, it's difficult to assess how helpful this is in the field work." "Are we improving the outcomes for students in California?"*
2	**Materials Available Prior to Meeting** *"Have PowerPoints available prior to meeting." "Sharing results prior to meeting."*
5	**Other Suggestions or Concerns** *"Always too many acronyms, people's names, departments, etc. For those of us who don't live and breathe SPPs on a daily basis, it makes the meeting less accessible."* *"When the topic is very narrow it helps us really dig in (eg indicator for LRE), but when that topic is prescribed, it doesn't necessarily fit for everyone."* *"Continue small groups—do another resource fair with various professional development agencies and organizations."* *"Snacks—meeting room cold." "Warmer room!"*