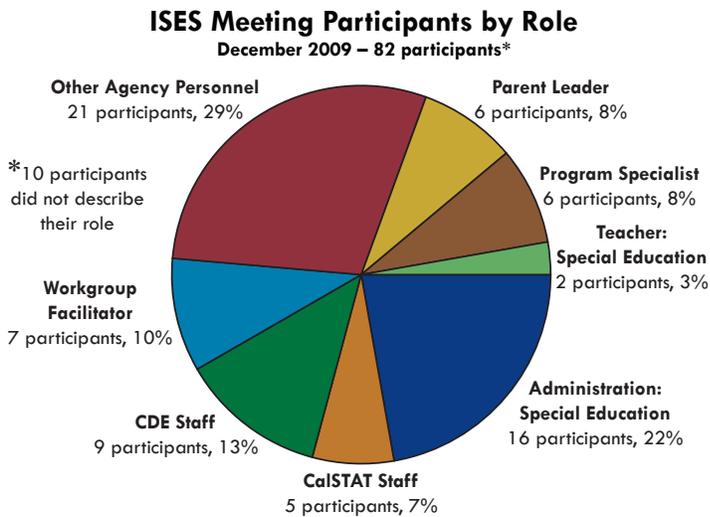


Improving Special Education Services (ISES)

December 2009

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, in June and December. The next meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2010.



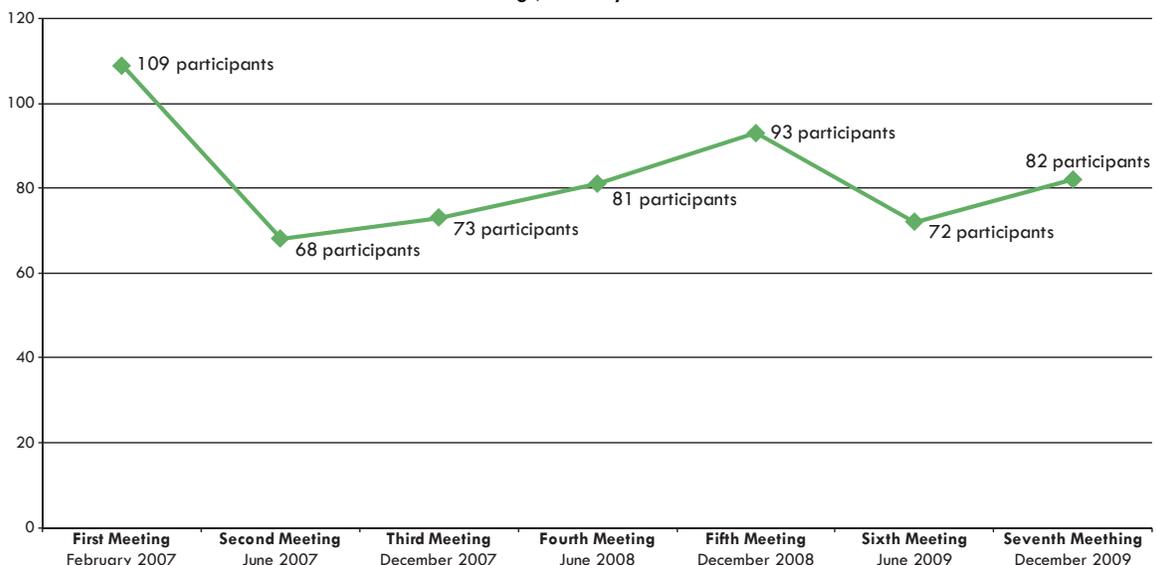
December 2009's meeting had a typical number of participants.

70 stakeholders were supported by 7 workgroup facilitators and 5 Calstat staff members (82 participants total).

Attendees represented a diversity of roles and organizations, including parents, K-12 educators, CDE personnel, and "Other Agency Personnel" (which includes IHE).

Number of ISES Participants Attending Each ISES Meeting

Seven ISES Meetings, February 2007 to December 2009



The meeting included three major activities:

- **Updates on current issues**, including the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) with Chris Drouin, and implications for American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) with Chris Essman.
- A **poster board session** to inform stakeholders about various projects and resources supporting improvement strategies from the SPP. This activity also facilitates networking, sharing and informal discussion.
- **Indicator workgroups** to facilitate small-group discussion of SPP indicators and generate recommendations. The workgroups were rated with an average of 4.4 (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.

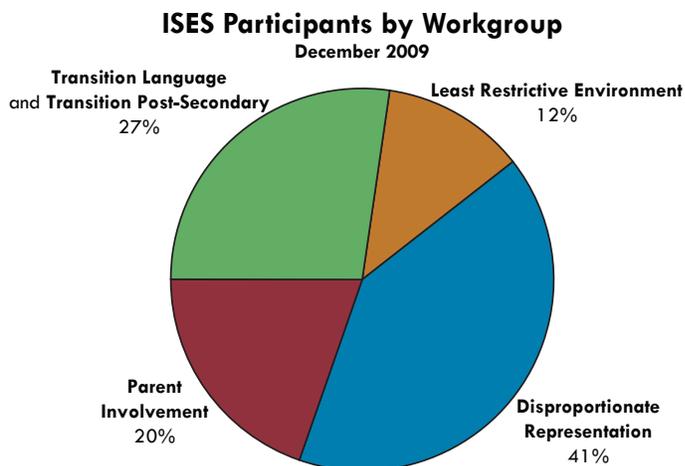
Workgroups Topics Discussed in the Workgroups

Workgroup #1 **Least Restrictive Environment:** SPP Indicator #5, facilitated by Dona Meinders and Georgianne Knight

Workgroup #2 **Disproportionate Representation:** SPP Indicators #4, #9 and #10, facilitated by Janet Canning, Linda Wyatt and Chris Essman

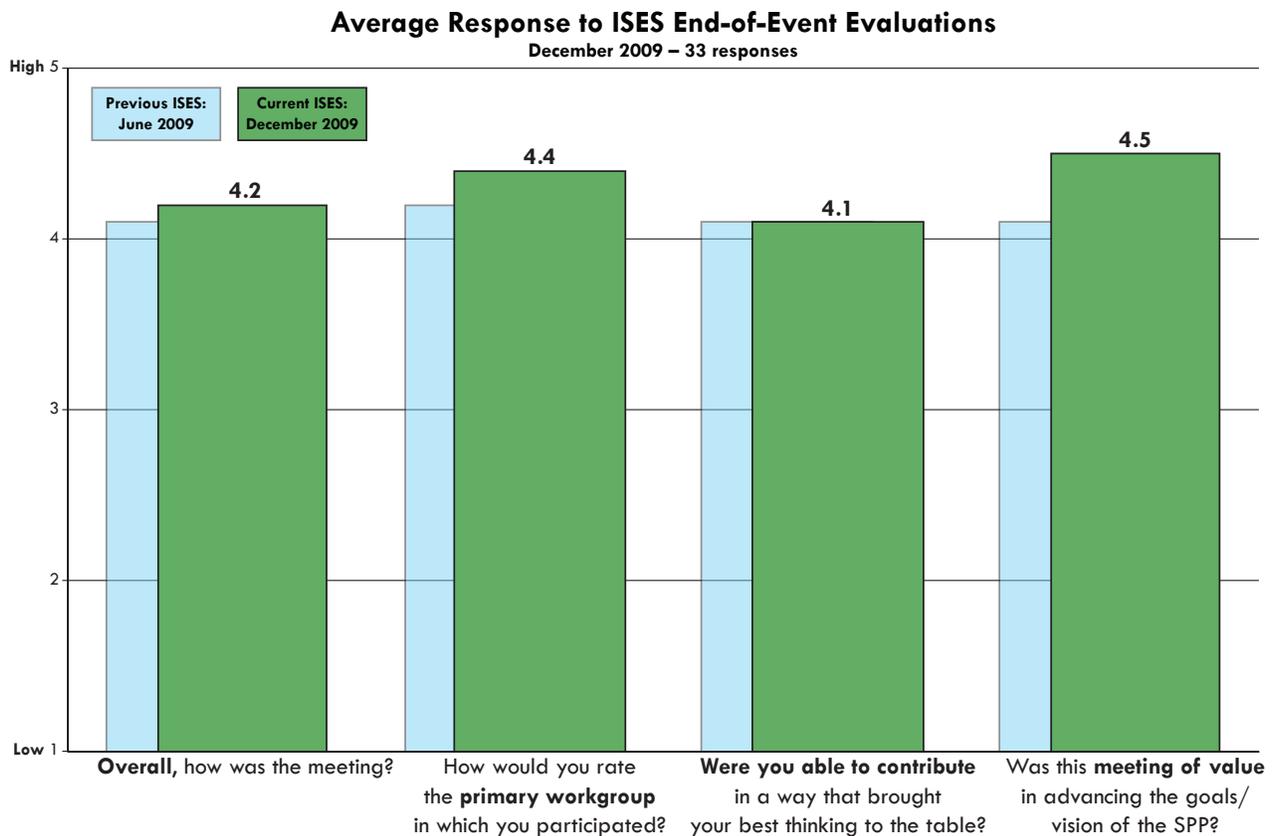
Workgroup #3 **Parent Involvement:** SPP Indicator #8, facilitated by Chris Drouin

Workgroup #4 **Transition Language and Transition Post-Secondary:** SPP Indicators #12 and #13, facilitated by Dan Boomer, Pat Dougan, Jane Falls and Loren Vetter. This workgroup was originally planned as two separate workgroups, but participants of each decided to merge the two into a single workgroup.



- The workgroup discussing disproportionate representation had the most participants.
- After merging, the transition workgroups formed the second-largest workgroup. Some participants commented that the workspace assigned to each group was not large enough to accommodate both together.

Anonymous, end-of-event surveys were distributed to participants at the beginning of the event and collected at the end. Of the 82 participants who signed in at the beginning of the event, 33 completed end-of-event surveys (a response rate of 40%).



Participants rated the meeting on from one (“poor”/“no”) to five (“great”/“definitely”) in response to four questions. **The average evaluation responses to three of the four survey items were higher than in the June 2009 ISES meeting.**

- The largest single increase was in the meeting’s value in advancing the goals and vision of the SPP, from 4.1 in June to 4.5 in December.
- The average rating for workgroups saw a smaller increase, but a similarly high rating of 4.4 (up from 4.2). In response to participant feedback, additional time was allocated for workgroups in this recent ISES meeting, possibly resulting in a higher rating. However, three participants again asked for additional workgroup time, alternately at the expense of the SPP/APR update or the poster session.

Participants are asked to supply additional comments in response to the questions, “What were the most positive aspects of this meeting, and why?” and “How could we improve future meetings?” Sharing information and resources, workgroups, the opportunity to contribute, and networking continue to be most frequently mentioned among ISES’s most-positive aspects. Comments are summarized on page 4.

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

Sharing Information, Resources and Ideas

- 9 *"Great (albeit overwhelming) sharing of information." "Learning about more available resources."
"Open discussion with other professionals, sharing ideas and concerns."*

Workgroups

- 8 *"The depth of knowledge each person on the workgroup holds." "I liked staying in the same group."
"The student outcomes were at the center of the discussion—great group!" "Facilitators."*

Being Able to Contribute

- 7 *"Able to freely ask questions, and ask challenging questions." "Being able to contribute."
"Disproportionality group understood the need to include parent groups' assistance in decision making."*

6 Networking

"Networking opportunities." "Networking—need more time."

Openness to New and Diverse Thinking

- 5 *"Great, open conversation with great contributions from stakeholders." "Diversity of opinions."
"Listening to varying opinions depending on each person's personal focus."*

5 Poster Session

"The number of participants and time allotted for poster sessions was great." "...do it again!"

Chris Drouin

- 4 *"Chris Drouin—he set the topic well for the discussions during the rest of the day in workgroups."
"P.S. Get rid of Chris Drouin's funny films! (Just kidding!!!!)"*

Other Positive Comments

- 5 *"I liked getting the update from the last meeting in my packet." "Brief speakers, to the point." "Location."
"Completing/agreeing to implementation of NCSEAM survey and next steps." "...no wasted time."*

How could we improve future meetings?

Suggestions around Workgroups

- 5 *"Assure group facilitators can keep group on topic, engage everyone." "Do not cancel preschool group."
"Spend more time discussing, agreeing upon how next steps will benefit all groups."
"I would have liked to have attended other sessions—too much to learn."*

Suggestions around Time and Schedule

- 4 *"Reduce poster session, increase reporting out of workgroups at end of meeting."
"Actual time to hear about [workgroup products]." "More time in workgroup, less time in AM large group."
"A lot to cover in one day. Not enough time to have meaningful discussion around key issues."*

Suggestions on Presentation of Information

- 4 *"Provide handouts electronically—even before meeting!" "Refer to document pages when applicable."
"Would be nice to have notification when final copies of documents are posted—results of our work."
"Having more background on indicators at the beginning of each meeting."*

3 Larger Meeting Space for Transition Group

"Probably need to find a larger room for transition group—perhaps switch rooms with parent group."

Other Suggestions and Comments

- 6 *"A faster computer for Chris for the opening presentation [happy face]." "More funny slides and videos."
"ARRA update had nothing new or informative." "Give prizes so people stay to end of meeting."
"Not enough direct impact on kids." "Maintain the effort."*