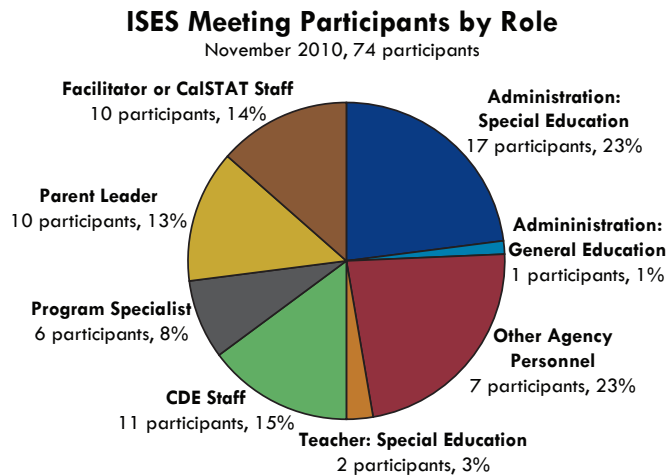


Improving Special Education Services (ISES)

November 2010

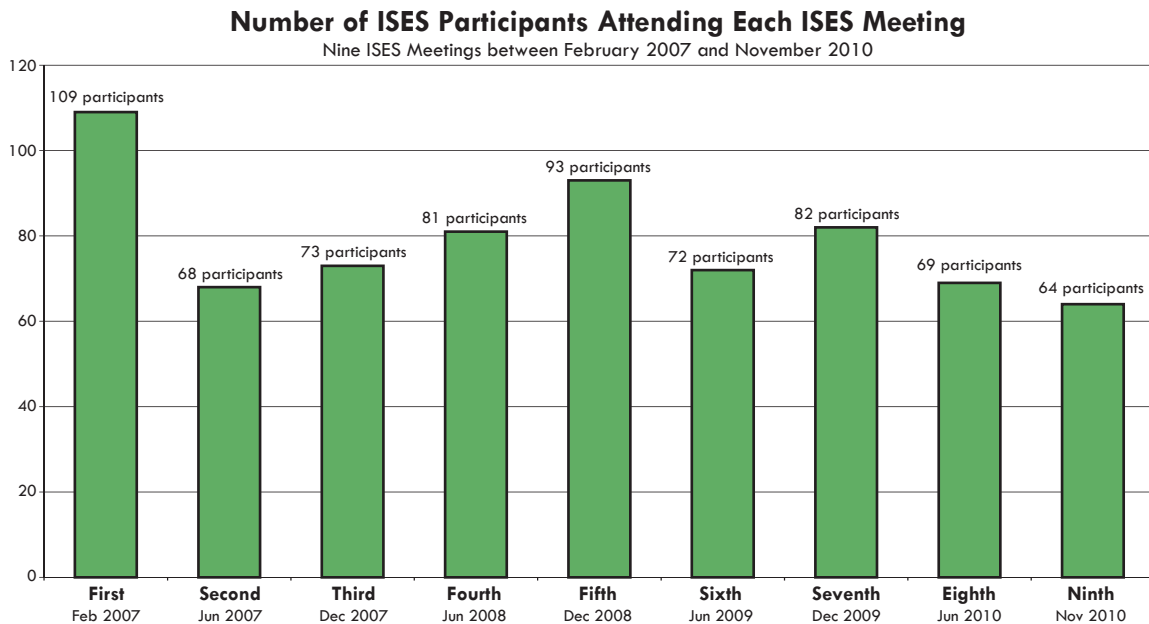
Improving Special Education Services (ISES) is a collaborative stakeholder group convened by the California Department of Education, Special Education Division. The State Performance Plan (SPP), Annual Performance Report (APR), and State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) are guided by these stakeholders 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 November 16, 2010, and the next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2011.



November 2010's meeting had a typical number of participants, with 64 stakeholders supported by 10 workgroup facilitators or CalSTAT staff members.

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



The meeting included three major activities:

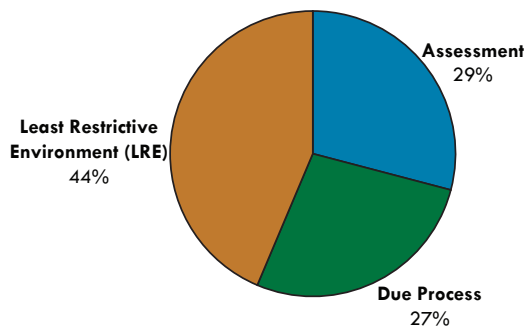
- **Welcome and Framing**, a brief discussion of the day's activities with Janet Digmon, followed by a welcome and updated from the Director of the Special Education Division, Dr. Fred Balcom. Dr. Balcom also took the opportunity to share updates on the status of recommendations from the previous ISES meeting.
- **Updates and current issues**, rounded out the rest of the morning session. This included an overview of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)'s recent verification review with Chris Drouin, Associate Director, an overview of the Parent Survey with Susan Henderson, and a discussion of SPP-APR Submission Requirements.
- **Indicator workgroups** to facilitate small-group discussion of SPP indicators and generate recommendations. 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

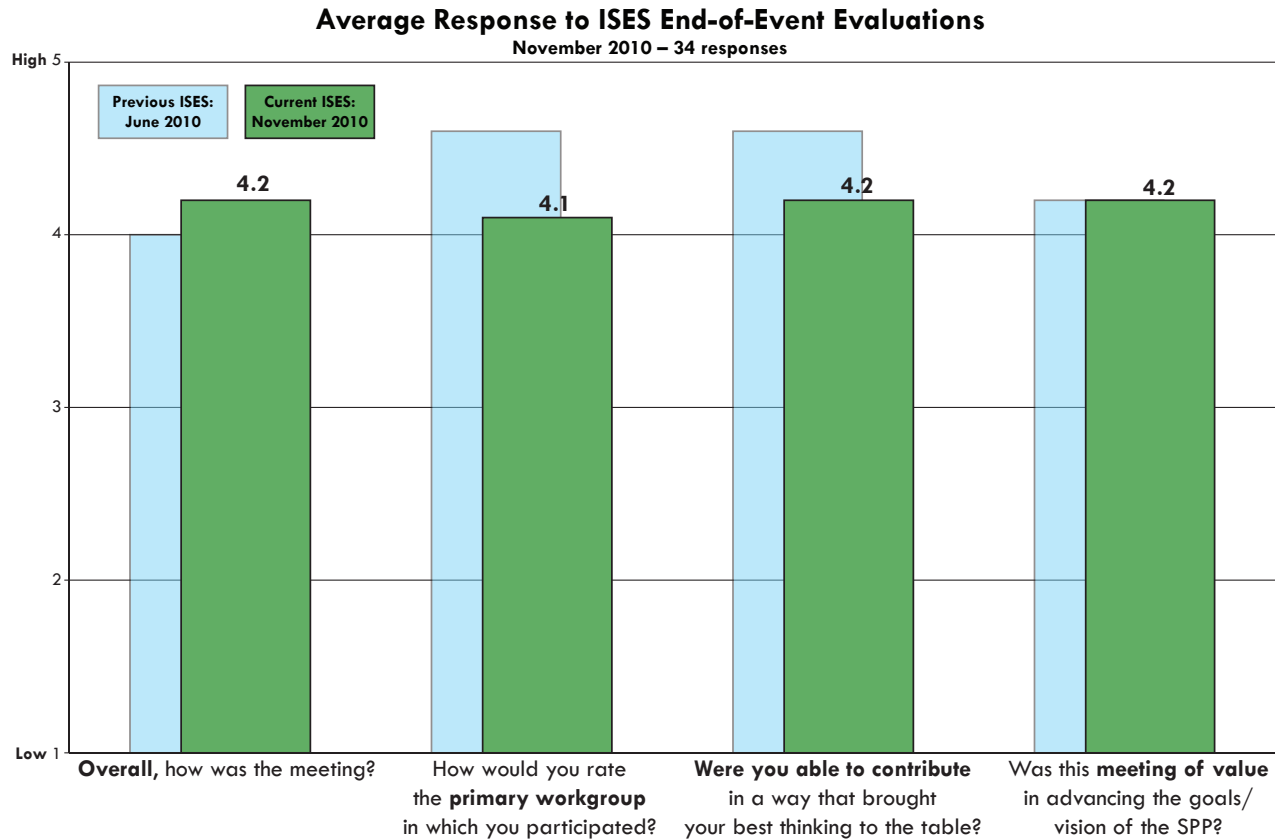
- Workgroup #1 **Assessment:** SPP Indicators #3 and #7, facilitated by Meredith Cathcart and the Desired Results Access Project Staff
- Workgroup #2 **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** SPP Indicators #5 and #6, facilitated by Kathleen Halvoron, Dona Meinders, and Supporting Early Education Delivery Systems (SEEDS) Project Staff
- Workgroup #3 **Due Process:** SPP Indicators #17, #18, and #19, facilitated by Karen Allen and Stacey Wofford

ISES Participants by Workgroup
November 2010 – by percent based on an approximate headcount



- The LRE workshop attracted the most participation, but all three workgroups offered collected 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 64 participants who registered, 34 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 more than 50% among other participants.



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, “How would you rate the primary workgroup in which you participated?” and “Were you able to contribute in a way that brought your best thinking to the table,” did not demonstrate the very high 4.6 average response that each item received in June 2010.
- 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). Additionally, the assessment workgroup ultimately did not generate a recommendation, which some commenters made note of as well.

Number
of
Comments

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

- 8 **“Updates and Current Issues” Presentation with Chris Drouin**
“Update from Chris Drouin was very helpful. It’s important to have clarity and shared understanding of what OSEP requires of CDE and districts.” “Update on OSEP monitoring visit.” “Chris’s overview.”

- 6 **Sharing Information and Ideas, Diversity of Participants**
“Participation of a wide range of professionals with parent leaders.” “Great input from a variety of parties.” “Good interaction. Everyone felt safe to share ‘challenging’ info—all perspectives were valued.”

- 5 **Updates and Dissemination of Information**
“The state of the state. Need to know where we are before we can know where we want to go.” “Clearer understanding of DRDP Access and influence on data collection.” “I reviewed valuable information.”

- 5 **Workgroups**
“Small group work.” “Very lively discussion. Karen [Allen] and Stacy [Wofford] are very good facilitators.” “Participants were able to ask questions to ensure their understanding of state data.”

- 3 **Networking**
“Networking.” “Seeing my colleagues.”

- 3 **Other Positive Comments**
“Enjoyed the presentations and workgroup.” “Opportunity for people to express their opinions and frustrations about OSEP requirements vs the “real world” in which we operate.”
“Working with CDE/LEAs to develop and implement strategies to improve resolution sessions and mediation.”
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Number
of
Comments

How could we improve future meetings?

- 6 **Provide More Time for Discussion**
“LRE group spent WAY too much time giving program overview. We only had 20 minutes for discussion.”
“More time to talk in small groups. We only had 30 minutes to give recommendations to the plan.”
“Need MUCH more time for group discussion to develop realistic, well thought-out recommendations.”

- 5 **Provide Materials in Advance**
“Provide advance reading for workgroups so time for discussion is expanded.”
“Provide access to all relevant documents BEFORE the meeting.”

- 4 **Problematic Documents**
“The parent survey report PowerPoints were unreadable. Perhaps the four slides per page option would have worked better.” “Tables could have been clearer for subgroups.”

- 3 **No Recommendation Developed in Assessment Workgroup**
“No recommendation developed. Encourage facilitators to lead group discussion that leads to measurable and actionable recommendation.” “Seems a little pro forma. No recommendations? Really? NONE?”

- 8 **Other Suggestions and Comments**
“Use a microphone.” “It is difficult to give recommendations that don’t cost money or staff time.”
“Coffee! More info from Fred, ‘state of CDE’ address.” “Less paper/more electronic media/handouts.”
“Current data, correct APR.” “Divide future workgroups so that there was equal representation of CDE, LEA, FEC, PTIs and SPRC in each breakout session.”
“Recommendation should be wrapped up with group time as much as possible.”
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