













believes “the law is definitely moving us in the right direction.” She sees ISES as playing an important role in shaping activities that can help establish a course for that direction, which involves school improvement and student achievement.

Meinders describes ISES as consisting of three groups of critical players: first the parents, teachers, school administrators, and service providers who have a direct investment in what happens to children with disabilities in the schools; then the individuals at the CDE who are part of the Quality Assurance Process (see insert) and other aspects of the state’s monitoring efforts; and finally representatives of the contractors—organizations such as WestED, CalSTAT, and WRRC—that are awarded grant monies to fund training and technical assistance to help the state make the kinds of improvements it defines in the SPP.

Typically, each ISES meeting opens with a presentation on the SPP and the state’s progress as detailed in the APR. The members then form workgroups, each focusing on the particular SPP indicators selected for that meeting.

To comply with IDEA’s requirements for alignment, the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), which replaced the SIG in 2007, must be aligned to the SPP, as well as to the State Plan for No Child Left Behind. So, for example, current SPDG-funded (and earlier SIG-funded) efforts support the dissemination of effective transition programs for students who are leaving school and entering the world of postsecondary education, employment, and/or independent living; Indicator 13 of the SPP addresses “Secondary Transition Goals and Services” and the degree to which individualized education program (IEP) goals and transition services “reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals.” While the activities funded by the state grant are designed to create a system that supports successful transition, the SPP is reporting on how well transitions are happening, and the ISES is watching both sides of the equation.

Another example of coordinated effort within the ISES involves SPP Indicator

5, which focuses on the IDEA mandate of LRE, or least restrictive environment.<sup>3</sup> Indicator 5 charts the percentage of children with IEPs ages 6–21 and the amount of time they are educated in classrooms with their general education peers, as opposed to the amount of time they are educated in separate settings. During an ISES meeting, the group might hear a presentation on this particular indicator and the relevant state data in the morning; then, in the afternoon, group members might sit in a workgroup that discusses the efforts of the LRE Resources Project at WestEd, which is developing resources for school districts and individual schools to support and promote LRE (go to <http://lre2010.weebly.com>).

A third example of alignment centers on SPP Indicators 9 and 10, the disproportionate representation of students of certain ethnicities in special education in general and in certain disability categories specifically. While learning about state-level data on these two indicators, ISES members are currently advising on the creation of a statewide technical assistance system that addresses disproportionality in particular but that is ultimately being designed to provide assistance on all SPP indicators to educational entities that need help in better serving students with disabilities. And because the creation of this TA system is receiving direction from people who know how education works in the state, the system will not be just “one more new thing” but rather a source of support that is seamlessly integrated into the way schools and districts currently work.

While the SPP focuses on student outcomes and does not directly address teacher preparation and retention, it takes no great leap of logic to see the connection between realizing SPP goals and the quality of the teachers working with students, the number of teachers available, and the satisfaction that teachers derive from their work. As a result, “a leadership team was created for implementing the California Strategic Action Plan for the Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention of Special Education

Personnel,” says Lisa Churchill, professor emeritus at California State University at Chico. Originally, the leadership team was a working subgroup of the PCSE, and while the scope and scale of its work has lent it a great deal of autonomy, “this team has always sought advisement and direction from the PCSE and in recent years from the ISES,” says Churchill. As she recounts, the original focus of this group was “on recruitment activities;<sup>4</sup> then the focus shifted to teacher preparation activities [see article on page 9], which involved restructuring the Education Specialist credential. Members of the leadership team provided input into that process. Currently our focus is on teacher retention. We’re working with the federally funded California Comprehensive Center at WestEd to promote participation in the California School Climate Survey and the Special Education Supports Module. The module consists of 20 additional survey questions and is based on recent research about special education teacher retention in California. The purpose of the module is to tap into responses from special educators and all individuals serving students with IEPs in an effort to capture a sense of school climate<sup>5</sup> from varying perspectives.” At the same time “we’re working on a pilot site study to see what can be done with the information we gather. The goal is to move data from paper to action to see how our understanding of the data can change a school’s climate.” Because the effectiveness of teachers is central to the success of special education, “what we are doing is that immediate objective on the path to getting to positive outcomes for students,” says Churchill.

Linda Nimer, a member of ISES representing special educators in the state and CARS+, values her advisory role

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3. LRE obligates school districts to educate students with disabilities in general education classrooms with their peers without disabilities, in the school they would attend if they did not have a disability, to the maximum extent appropriate.

4. See [www.teachcalifornia.org](http://www.teachcalifornia.org).

5. For the *Workbook for Improving School Climate and Closing the Achievement Gap*, go to [www.wested.org/online\\_pubs/WB\\_1221\\_allv5.pdf](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/WB_1221_allv5.pdf).

in the organization. “We can disagree, and we feel listened to,” says Nimer. She acknowledges that not all suggestions that emerge from these workgroups—no matter how beneficial they might be—can be adapted. The simple fact of “financial limitations can get in the way.” Canning Digmon agrees that much “depends on money or staffing.” Even the SPDG’s millions go only so far in a state the size of California.

Much, however, has been accomplished. Bill Tollestrup, Director of Special Education for the Elk Grove School District, gives credit to the SIG- and SPDG-funded activities of the CalSTAT Project for helping his district and others in the state “understand that, in order to see improved outcomes for students with disabilities or students who are in danger of failing, we have to become full partners with general education. Special Education cannot operate in a silo.” Tollestrup sees the federal requirement for all teachers to be highly qualified as adding validity to this direction. “We [special education teachers] are not experts in algebra,” he says. “But we are the people who are supposed to help make the content accessible to all students. This requires a community of both general education and special education teachers who share a sense of responsibility and ownership for all students.” A great deal of the work of the two grants has focused on creating and sustaining these kinds of collaborative efforts within schools and school districts.

Kathleen Lowrance, a member of the original PCSE, now serves on ISES with several other parent-professionals to “make sure that the parent voice is woven throughout.” Lowrance, Executive Director of the Rowell Family Empowerment of Northern California (RFENC),<sup>6</sup> is particularly pleased with the benefits of the Family Participating Fund (FPF), another activity that was started with SIG money and that continues with financial support from the SPDG and direction from ISES. Lowrance calls the fund a “wonderful tool that has encour-

aged parent leadership throughout our region.” Before Lowrance became director of RFENC, she “was a parent first,” and she recounts how her original effort to get involved in the larger system of special education was “overwhelming. It is a large and confusing system, especially for parents. But it all finally came together,” and she is delighted that the FPF is helping other parents find their voice and make a difference within the larger system that has such influence on the lives and futures of their children.

Jane Floethe-Ford, Director of Education for Parents Helping Parents and also a parent-professional serving on ISES, echoes Lowrance’s praise for the FPF and the CDE. The SPDG “is a personnel development grant; it’s not about involving parents,” says Floethe-Ford. “But the CDE saw parent involvement as an important piece that we all wanted to continue. CDE didn’t have to do this,

but they knew it was best practice and wanted to do the right thing. I love it. The more parents are able to attend meetings at any level, the more they understand this very complex system. It helps us all, parents and professional, get outside of our little worlds to better understand other perspectives and, we hope, increase our collaboration.”

Jumbled sets of letters rarely illuminate; but when thoughtfully arranged, they turn into words and meaning, which are vital to creating new understanding and change for the better. This, finally, is what is behind ISES in particular and special education’s alphabet soup in general. Not a mess of letters, but a concerted effort to work together to support student progress and improve schools. ♦

6. See [www.calstat.org/specialEdgeOld.html](http://www.calstat.org/specialEdgeOld.html) for a recently updated directory of California’s parent centers, in the Winter-Spring 2009 issue of *The Special Edge*.

## What Is . . .

### *The Advisory Commission on Special Education?*

Mandated by federal and state statutes, the California Advisory Commission on Special Education (ACSE) provides recommendations and advice to the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the California Legislature, and the Governor on new and continuing areas of research, program development, and evaluation in California special education. The commission is made up of individuals with disabilities, parents of individuals with disabilities, individuals knowledgeable about the administration of special education, teachers, and legislative representation from the State Assembly and Senate. While the ACSE is interested in all topics related to improving special education for children with disabilities, the organization’s specific areas of interest and concern include the State Performance Plan (SPP), response to intervention (RtI), family involvement, teacher credentialing, the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), charter schools, full funding for special education, and special education-related legislation.

Each year the commission also determines the winners of the Grazer Outstanding Achievement in Learning (GOAL) Award, which recognizes excellence in special education programs in the state. Specific information about the GOAL Award, along with a directory of ACSE commissioners, agendas, and minutes of ACSE meetings can be found at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/acse.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/acse.asp). Go to the ACSE Web page at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/acsemtg.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/acsemtg.asp) for meeting dates and times. ACSE commissioners welcome public involvement, and at each meeting they provide an opportunity for input from individuals whose lives are affected by disability. To further the organization’s public reach, ACSE meetings are now available live at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/acsemtgwebcast.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/acsemtgwebcast.asp). Additional information about the work of the commission is provided at length in the organization’s annual report, which can be downloaded from [www.calstat.org/publications/pdfs/edge\\_sum10\\_Eng\\_insert.pdf](http://www.calstat.org/publications/pdfs/edge_sum10_Eng_insert.pdf).

# Commission Makes Changes in Teacher Credentialing

By Staff from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

In 2006, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) initiated a review of the Educational Specialist and Other Related Services credentials, which qualify individuals to teach students with disabilities. The review, supported by the California Legislature as part of Senate Bill 1209 and funded through the 2006–2007 budget, set out to accomplish the following:

- Improve services to students with disabilities
- Assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs, such as school districts) in meeting their need for qualified special education personnel
- Provide more opportunities to become a special educator, while reducing redundancies in teacher preparation
- Improve skill levels and retention rates of teachers
- Align policies of the state and federal governments, and policies of the Commission and the California Department of Education (CDE)

## First Steps

The Commission took a number of immediate steps to begin this important work. Its first action was to require that all Education Specialist programs—those courses of study (usually at colleges or universities) that prepare individuals to become special education teachers—amend their existing programs to include instruction in the areas of literacy and strategies to teach English learners. By January of 2007, all programs had submitted the necessary amendments.

The second step was to convene meetings around the state to explore the concerns of stakeholders (special educators, parents, teachers, community members) about the structure of special education credentials, with a particular focus on subject matter

requirements for the credential, the clear (professional-level) credential requirements, and redundancy issues in the credentialing process. This important step provided a public forum for the field to express any concerns about the current system and have those concerns better inform the process as the Commission moved forward.

The third step involved convening a workgroup to study special education credentials and to make recommendations to the Commission for changes in both structure and process.



## Stakeholders and Workgroups

The Commission sponsored 14 field meetings throughout the state to listen to stakeholders' issues. Approximately 220 stakeholders attended these sessions, with each focusing on issues related to subject-matter competence and professional preparation for teachers. In addition, Commission staff held similar conversations with key members of the California Council on Teacher Education and the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, as well as with participants at the statewide meeting of the Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) directors during the fall of 2006. Staff met with approximately 200 persons from these three organizations.

In December 2006, the Commission announced a nomination process for the workgroup. In early January, 24 at-large members were selected for the group from more than 100 applicants. Nine additional members—representatives of the Association of California School Administrators, California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers, California School Boards Association, and California State University-Chancellor's Office, along with liaisons from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the California Department of Education's Special Education Division, and the Advisory Commission on Special Education—were appointed as well.

Meeting monthly, March through November 2007, the workgroup drew on the expertise of state and national organizations to provide background for its deliberations. The California Comprehensive Center and the National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers made presentations. CDE staff provided insights into federal expectations for teacher preparation, as set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), as well as CDE and State Board of Education implementation of federal requirements.

## Credentialing Changes

In all, the workgroup and affiliated subgroups recommended 25 changes to the structure of and subject matter competence for special education teacher credentials. Based on these recommendations, the Commission, at its December 2007 meeting, adopted the following changes that expand special education services, offer employment options, and provide more credentialing flexibility:

### *Add-on teaching authorizations:*

The Commission approved six new teaching authorizations that can be

*Teachers, continued page 10*

added to an existing special education teaching credential to expand the scope of instruction for current teachers: Autism Spectrum Disorders, Deaf-Blind, Emotional Disturbance, Traumatic Brain Injury, Orthopedically Impaired, Other Health Impaired.

**Preparation to teach students with autism spectrum disorders:** The Commission approved new teacher program standards in special education that include preparation to teach students with autism spectrum disorders; these standards apply across all Education Specialist credential types.

**New Communication Development authorization:** The Commission approved a proposal for a new Communication Development authorization for teachers serving students with special needs who struggle with communication and literacy. Special educators who earn this authorization can provide focused instruction to help students with communication problems that interfere with academic achievement and social interaction. Regulations are forthcoming.

**Comparable experiences and coursework:** The Commission approved a report that provides guidance to special education teacher preparation programs that are considering comparable experiences and coursework as alternatives to their regular course offerings. The goal of the report is to promote flexibility and extend opportunities for credential candidates to demonstrate competencies gained through previous experiences.

**Update teaching authorizations:** The appropriate setting, age, and grade level for each authorized specialty area and the titles of the federal disability categories were updated to align with current modes of service delivery to students with special needs. This created a match between the authorized services and the skills, knowledge, and abilities taught in the teacher preparation program, as well as with the field experiences that candidates completed as part of that preparation.

**Strengthen program standards and reduce redundancy:** The Commission combined the strengths of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Program and the Level II Special Education Preparation Program to require all teachers to complete a Commission-approved special education induction program. The Commission also aligned certification with the requirements of NCLB and the CDE (including subject-matter requirements). Finally, the Commission reduced redundancy and overlap between and among programs.

### Next Steps

In June 2010, the Office of Administrative Law approved regulations pertaining to the implementation of the following: Special Education Authorizations and Assignment Options, Special Education Services Credential, Special Education Credential Requirements, and Added Authorizations to Special Education. The Commission presented a three-hour Webcast on August 10, 2010, on the implementation of the regulations. For the Webcast, go to [www.ctc.ca.gov/live.html](http://www.ctc.ca.gov/live.html); for the presentation's PowerPoint, go to [www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/webcasts-CAW.html](http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/webcasts-CAW.html). Other Webcasts will be presented as needed. Commission staff are also making presentations to various professional organizations. As mentioned, regulations to implement teaching authorizations in Communication Development and requirements and authorization for the Speech-Language Pathology Services Credential are forthcoming.

Program sponsors have been submitting proposed program changes to the Commission for approval in order to transition their current special education programs to the new program standards, or they are submitting proposals for new special education programs.

For more information on special education certification, visit the Commission's Special Education Web site: [www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/special-education.html](http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/special-education.html). ♦

## Legislation Affecting Special Education Teachers

SB 1209 (Scott, 2006) **Teacher Credentialing, Training and Recruitment.** Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to report to the California Legislature and the Governor on the current process and requirements for obtaining a specialist credential in special education and recommend modifications to enhance and expedite these procedures, by December 1, 2007. The 2006–2007 state budget included \$200,000 in federal Title II funds for the study.

AB 131 (Beall, 2008) **Autism Spectrum Disorder.** Provides a temporary assignment option for local education agencies (LEA) and schools (including nonpublic schools) to help meet the needs of three- and four-year-olds with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) until August 1, 2011.

AB 2302 (Bass, 2008) **Autism Spectrum Disorder.** Provides a temporary assignment option for local education agencies and schools to help meet the needs of students with autism spectrum disorder until such time as the Commission adopts regulations to implement the recommendations of the Special Education Workgroup or on August 1, 2011, whichever occurs first.

AB 2226 (Ruskin, 2008) **Coursework Comparability.** Requires the Commission to convene a workgroup of interested parties for the purpose of providing guidance to programs in determining the comparability of coursework or field experience completed in other Commission-accredited special education credential programs and report the workgroup's findings to the Legislature, the Governor, and the Secretary for Education on or before December 1, 2009.

AB 239 (Brownley, 2009) **District Intern Special Education Program.** Allows District Intern Programs to offer Education Specialist credentials in all areas of special education, among other provisions.

AB 2160 (Bass, 2010) **Autism Spectrum Disorder.** Extends to October 1, 2013, a temporary assignment option for local education agencies and schools to help meet the needs of students with autism spectrum disorder.

# School Administrators Work to Support IEPs

**A**t every tier of the state's education system, administrators share both a responsibility and a desire to ensure the best possible outcomes for students with an individualized education program (IEP). They also know that, ultimately, the successful implementation of IEP goals depends largely on what happens in the classroom: Has the student with a disability been placed in the least restrictive environment? Are the proper accommodations and modifications provided? Is the student learning the basic curriculum at the appropriate level? Is he or she demonstrating measurable progress?

That is why, even in an era of fiscal constraints, administrators—school principals, district officials, SELPA directors, and others—are providing as much support as possible to special education and general education classroom teachers involved in IEPs. These administrators are creating opportunities for training, establishing procedures for monitoring IEP goals, providing direct supervision and feedback, carving out time for collaboration, even taking on some non-classroom IEP tasks themselves in order to free up teachers to spend more time with their students. “We are saying to teachers, ‘We care about you; we’re here to support you,’” says Diana Blackmon, Director of Special Services for the Washington Unified School District in West Sacramento.

## Training

“The nuts and bolts of writing an IEP are very complicated,” says Kevin Ogden, superintendent and principal at the Julian Union Elementary School District. That is why he offered a two-hour workshop for teachers “on how to write a compliant IEP that serves the needs of students.”

Ogden's words are echoed by administrators across the state, who offer a

variety of training options. At the Solano County SELPA, for example, Assistant Superintendent Sam Neufeldt used federal stimulus funds to provide training on legal issues.

While IEP forms are now available online, the state does not have a single form that all school districts use; each district is allowed to develop its own, with the approval of its SELPA. There are advantages to having Web-based IEPs, as Karen Knight, principal at Folsom Middle School, notes. “It’s centrally accessible to all staff, and we can project it on the wall at meetings so parents can see it, too.” Adds Jason Stricker, school psychologist at David Reese Elementary School in Elk Grove, “As new IEPs are developed, multiple people can log in and work in the same document.”

But Blackmon worries that “with a Web-based IEP, teachers are too concerned about the form itself.” She does not introduce the form at the start of training. “We want teachers to understand what an IEP is, no matter what the form.” Blackmon's training follows a four-step process: a student assessment that “shows where the child is now,” a determination of the child's needs, the setting of annual goals to meet those needs, and, finally, what services, supports, and placements should be employed to meet the goals.

## Procedures

Making sure that classroom teachers know the strengths and limitations of their students with IEPs at the start of the school year can help to avoid problems later on. At David Reese Elementary, Principal Jenifer Avey says, “all teachers are provided with binders that contain student IEPs and descriptions of generic and specific accommodations the teachers can use.”

At Folsom High, where a high percentage of students with IEPs are mainstreamed for the entire school day (with

special education teachers and aides in the classroom), “every year case managers review each student's schedule, and the general education teacher is given a folder for every student with an IEP,” says Principal Kathryn Allaman.

## Supervision

One way that school principals support their teachers—and monitor implementation of IEPs—is by visiting classrooms, observing special education students in the appropriate setting, and then providing feedback, critiques, and coaching. “At the beginning of the year I ask the special education teachers to give me a copy of their goals for each student,” says JoDee Marcellin, principal of Lincoln Elementary School in the Sanger Unified School District. “That way I can see how the teacher is supporting the students to meet their goals.”

Adds Principal Avey: “I am in classrooms every day, looking for engagement, checking that instruction is appropriate for each student so when we are sitting in IEP meetings, we know from observation what is working.” She might observe, for example, a sixth grade math class where the teacher is leading a grade-level lesson while a student with a disability is accessing his own math level—which may be at second grade—on a computer, as instructed by a teacher.

And Allaman says that either she or one of her two vice principals visit every high school classroom once a week. “We’re out there.”

## Collaboration

All administrators recognize the value of time, and while all say they wish for more, they agree on the importance of setting aside specific periods when teachers can meet away from the classroom for conversations about special education issues in general and to discuss the progress of students with IEPs in particular.

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One of the first items on Avey's agenda when she arrived at David Reese this year was to establish bi-weekly team meetings during which special education teachers could discuss specific students, goals, and placements. "That keeps everyone on the same page" she says. Additionally, general education teachers can invite special education teachers to their monthly grade-level meetings if there is a need to discuss a student with an IEP. For Avey, "creating opportunities for open discussion" is paramount. The speech therapist, school psychologist, special education teachers, and administrators hold case management meetings three times a year. "The [general education] teachers come in, and we review all students. If a student with an IEP is not doing well in class, we can work as a team to collaborate with the teacher." The team may come up with creative approaches to classroom instruction or behavioral issues; it may decide to schedule an IEP meeting.

Ogden also holds student achievement meetings three times a year "to assess progress and evaluate interventions for students with IEPs and English-language learners." Like other administrators, he says that "collaboration time is really critical." As in many schools and districts throughout the state, students at Julian are sent home early one day each week so that teachers have dedicated time to meet. "Grade-level teams meet, and special ed talks to general ed. We're a pretty small district, so teachers know all the kids." If he could somehow buy more time, Ogden says, it would be "to hold IEP meetings without having to pull teachers out of the classroom."

There are other ways to encourage collaboration among teachers outside of formal meetings. At Folsom High, math and special education teachers team up for an "Algebra Ready" class for ninth graders. "The general education teacher brings expertise, and the special education teacher brings strategies," says Allaman. "It's good for both."

And now teachers in the Folsom Cor-

dova Unified School District are collaborating on transition IEPs as students move from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. "We're starting to insist on transition IEPs" says Folsom Middle School Principal Knight. And if there are issues or concerns about a student, staff from her school will go to the feeder school and work with teachers there. At the high school, Allaman sends "two special education teachers to the feeder middle schools, [to meet with the middle school team and work on the transition plans] and both teams work on the IEP."

### Non-Classroom Tasks

Because they understand the value of time, administrators guard the time teachers devote to students. Working directly with parents is one way they can keep teachers in the classroom. "I see myself as a bridge between school and home," says Knight. "If parents need information, I probably can find that for them faster than the teacher can. I return every parent phone call, building trust with the family. It takes time off teachers."

"We don't want to get into an adversarial relationship with parents," says

Blackmon. "If, in spite of our best efforts, the child is not making progress, the parent is not satisfied, I try to buffer the teachers, handle that for them. I listen to families. We all have the same interest: to support the student."

In addition to buying time for teachers, Knight says, "I can find things that help." She cites the example of the *Pre-referral Intervention Manual* by Stephen McCarney, which includes discussions of behaviors that students might exhibit and possible accommodations that teachers can adopt to address those behaviors. There were two manuals on campus when Knight employed her "drip system" theory of change: "You talk to a few people in the hall; they talk to a few more, and so forth. Well, word got around that this was a valuable resource, and now there are 16."

Whatever systems, schedules, and supports administrators ultimately employ to assist the classroom teacher, Jenifer Avey sums up their ultimate goal: "To make sure we are appropriately bringing every student forward." ♦

—Janet Mandelstam

## Leaders, Stand Up!

### Announcing the 2011–2012 CalSTAT Leadership Site Awards

Money and prestige await middle school and high school educators. CalSTAT, a special project of the California Department of Education, Special Education Division, is pleased to announce the 2011–2012 Leadership Site Award program. The award's purpose is to identify California public schools that have created innovative and successful programs focusing on one of the five following areas: general and special education collaboration, transition to adult life, reading, positive behavior supports, or family involvement. Winners of this award will share their work with other educators and be provided with resources that will support continued success in their efforts.

To learn more about the award's benefits—both financial and programmatic—and to find out if your program qualifies, visit the CalSTAT Web site at [www.calstat.org](http://www.calstat.org). Please contact Marin Brown at [marin.brown@calstat.org](mailto:marin.brown@calstat.org) with questions. Applications will be available on the CalSTAT Web site in December 2010.

The RiSE (Resources in Special Education) Library freely lends materials to California residents; the borrower pays only for return postage. The list below features only a few of the resources the library has to offer. Go to [www.php.com/services/libraries](http://www.php.com/services/libraries) to view the library's complete holdings. To order materials, phone or e-mail RiSE librarian Judy Bower: 408-727-5775; [judy@php.com](mailto:judy@php.com).

### New Library Resources: IEPs and Effective Communication

*Culture in Special Education: Building Reciprocal Family-Professional Relationships*, by Maya Kalyanpur and Beth Harry, uses personal anecdotes, case examples, and theoretical discussions to demonstrate the potential impact of cultural assumptions on parent-professional interactions in special education. This book can help teachers become conscious of, and work to set aside, the stereotypes they hold about other cultures, as well as their own—all in the interest of communicating effectively with students and their families. This book also helps teachers understand the importance of developing education plans that will enhance children's learning in light of their culture and beliefs. Call #24186.

*Getting Together: Building Relationships as We Negotiate*, by Roger Fisher and Scott Brown, is a step-by-step guide to initiating, negotiating, and sustaining relationships that involve conflict and difficulty, with the ultimate goal of creating "relationships that can deal well with differences." Call #24183.

*Guía de la Ley de Educacion Especial*, by Randy Chapman, is the Spanish translation of *The Everyday Guide to Special Education Law*. Both the Spanish and English texts are included on every page of this book, which helps parents

get the best education possible for their child with disabilities by providing parents with the information they need to advocate effectively for their child's right to an inclusive education. The book addresses IDEA's Part B, Part C, and Section 504. It is also a valuable resource for teachers and school administrators. Call #24187.

*A Guide to Collaboration for IEP Teams*, by Nicholas Martin, is a practical handbook for managing the complexities, challenges, and emotions that can be involved in IEP meetings. The book is designed to help administrators, teachers, resource professionals, and parents work together as a cohesive team to design, review, and modify IEPs for children with special education needs. The book addresses such topics as effective meeting management, principled negotiations, the role of emotions, and conflict prevention. Call #24181.

*Guide to Writing Quality Individualized Education Programs*, by Gordon Gibb and Tina Taylor Dyches, helps to reduce the complexity of developing IEPs by dividing the process into seven basic steps. The book uses explanations, modeling, practice, and formative feedback so that teachers can improve their IEP efforts on their own or as part of a group effort in professional development. This second edition also provides an overview of special education and the requirements of IDEA 2004 and includes new case studies, with complete IEPs (including transition planning) for four elementary and secondary school students who have mild/moderate and severe disabilities. Call #24182.

*Leading Successful IEP Teams: A Guide to Managing the People and the Process*, by Gerry Klor, provides helpful tools for facilitating effective IEP meetings. The book offers

strategies for handling the challenging legal and procedural issues encountered during the IEP meeting, and it describes the skills needed to work effectively with both staff and parents. The book discusses how to prepare for IEP meetings, manage conflict, review assessment reports, deal with issues raised by parents, and accommodate the interests of both parents and school districts. Call #24180.

*Listening: A Framework for Teaching Across Differences*, by Katherine Schultz, focuses on helping teachers learn how to develop and use the skill of listening and make that skill central to their teaching. "Rather than teaching prospective and experienced teachers how to follow prescriptions," says Schultz, "I suggest that teachers learn how to attend to and respond with deep understanding to the students they teach." Schultz defines listening as "more than just hearing . . . [it is] how a teacher attends to individuals, the classroom as a group, the broader social context, and, cutting across all of these, to silence and acts of silencing." The book guides both new and experienced teachers in developing the ability to use creative, responsive listening to improve their pedagogical effectiveness. The book offers case studies of teachers who use this approach to benefit their students and themselves. Call #24184.

*Rethinking Classroom Participation: Listening to Silent Voices*, by Katherine Schultz, examines the complex role that the silence of students can play in teaching and learning. The author offers real-life examples and proven strategies for "rethinking classroom participation" to include all students. This book redefines participation to include all types of communication styles, explores how teachers can restructure classroom conversations, and examines the multiple meanings of student silence. Call #24185.

### For Everyone

[www.teachervision.fen.com/education-and-parents/resource/3730.html](http://www.teachervision.fen.com/education-and-parents/resource/3730.html)

This Web page, *Teacher-Parent Collaboration*, offers dozens of resources for parents and teachers in support of effective communication that serves the student. The site offers articles and printable handouts on a range of topics: how parents and teachers can prepare for successful parent-teacher conferences, how teachers can host a successful open house, how parents can support their child's development at school, and more.

[www.pacer.org/tatra/resources/studentiep.asp](http://www.pacer.org/tatra/resources/studentiep.asp)

"Student-directed IEPs" is full of practical advice for student involvement in their own individualized education programs (IEPs). The article also provides a list of online resources for parents and teachers who would like to include students with disabilities in developing their own IEPs, as well as resources for students themselves on how to become involved in IEPs and self-directed.

### For Teachers

[www.adi.org/journal/ss05/Graham-Clay.pdf](http://www.adi.org/journal/ss05/Graham-Clay.pdf)

"Communicating with Parents: Strategies for Teachers" discusses how communication occurs and offers a variety of effective strategies that teachers can use to make communication with parents as effective and successful as possible. The article stresses the importance of a thoughtful, planned approach that promotes parent partnerships and, ultimately, the academic success of the student.

[www.calstat.org/iep](http://www.calstat.org/iep)

**IEP Online Training** is a free, online, self-paced training designed to help teachers write measurable, annual IEP goals and objectives that promote student success and that are tied to the California content standards.

[www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/iepresources.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/iepresources.asp)

This California Department of Education Web page, **Resources on IEPs for Children with Disabilities**, features a list of resources designed to improve instruction, assessment, and accountability for students with disabilities.

[www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/ieptraining.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/ieptraining.asp)

**Training on Writing Standards-based IEPs**, a California Department of Education Web page, features links to self-paced training materials that are updated to current IDEA regulations and that focus on how to write IEPs with goals that are measurable, student focused, and tied to standards.

### Don't Forget

[www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/sm](http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/sm)

**The Clearinghouse for Specialized Media & Translations (CSMT)** helps to close the achievement gap by providing accessible versions of textbooks, workbooks, and works of literature in accessible formats to students with disabilities in California.

### For Parents

[www.parenting-ed.org/handout3/Parental%20Involvement/Communicating%20with%20Teacher%20Handout.pdf](http://www.parenting-ed.org/handout3/Parental%20Involvement/Communicating%20with%20Teacher%20Handout.pdf)

**Effective Parent-Teacher Communication**, written by the Center for Effective Parenting, describes some of the common problems in parent-teacher communication and offers six suggestions to communicate effectively.

[www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/parent\\_teacher.shtml](http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/parent_teacher.shtml)

Written by the Child Development Institute, "**Establishing a Parent-Teacher Relationship**" offers suggestions to parents on how to develop positive relationships with their children's

teachers and how to successfully navigate those relationships when problems develop.

[www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguidelindex.html](http://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguidelindex.html)

**My Child's Special Needs: A Guide to the Individualized Education Program**, written by the U.S. Department of Education, is available in its entirety at the above URL. The purpose of this document is to help educators, parents, and state and local education agencies in implementing individualized education programs (IEPs) for children with disabilities, including preschool-aged children, according to the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

[www.nichcy.org/information-resources/documents/nichcy%20pubs/pa9.pdf](http://www.nichcy.org/information-resources/documents/nichcy%20pubs/pa9.pdf)

This invaluable publication, **A Parent's Guide: Communicating with Your Child's School Through Letter Writing**, provides parents with advice and strategies for writing effective letters to their child's teachers and principals. The sample letters include giving positive feedback, discussing a problem, requesting a change of placement, and much more. All of the information in this document can be applied to e-mails. This publication is from the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities.

[www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/504001specedindex.htm](http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/504001specedindex.htm)

**Special Education Rights and Responsibilities**, by Protection and Advocacy, Inc., (PAI) and the Community Alliance for Special Education (CASE), is available at the above Web site in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese. This indispensable guide for parents of children with disabilities addresses numerous questions about how to navigate the system of special education, including early intervention, transition, due process, and more.

## December 8–9, 2010

### Closing the Gap: Using Parent Involvement to Increase Student Achievement

Sponsored by the California Parent Center and the Los Angeles County Office of Education, this training is designed especially for educators from Title I schools and districts and schools in Program Improvement. The event will focus on developing achievement-focused partnerships at all levels to support improved academic outcomes. Costa Mesa, CA. For more information, contact Melissa Popovich at [mpopovich@projects.sdsu.edu](mailto:mpopovich@projects.sdsu.edu) or 619-594-4756; or go to <http://parent.sdsu.edu/services/conferences/default.htm>.

## December 8–9, 2010

### Adolescent Literacy: Equity and Opportunity for All

This Secondary Literacy Summit X, sponsored by the California Department of Education, will highlight best practices for improving adolescent literacy achievement. Keynote speakers, workshop sessions, and school panels will focus on reading, academic vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and content literacy, along with Common Core Standards and response to intervention (RtI). Multiple sessions will address instructional strategies for closing achievement gaps for English learners and students with special needs. Presentations will feature secondary school teams that are improving literacy achievement for all students. Costa Mesa, CA. For more information, contact Sharon Johnson at [shjohnson@cde.ca.gov](mailto:shjohnson@cde.ca.gov) or 916-323-6269; or go to [www.cacompcenter.org/cs/caccl/print/btdocs/caccl/secondary\\_literacy.htm](http://www.cacompcenter.org/cs/caccl/print/btdocs/caccl/secondary_literacy.htm).

## February 23–25, 2011

### Lessons for Leadership

SEECAP, the Special Education Early Childhood Administrators Project, hosts this annual symposium designed to

examine state and federal legislation that impacts service delivery; current, controversial, and critical reoccurring issues in early childhood special education; and research-based practices and staff training options that support quality service provisions. Newport Beach, CA. For more information, contact Kathleen Finn at 760-761-5526 or [kfinn@sdcoe.net](mailto:kfinn@sdcoe.net); or visit [www.sdcoe.net/seecap](http://www.sdcoe.net/seecap).

## March 14–19, 2011

### International Technologies and Persons with Disabilities Conference

This 25th annual conference, sponsored by the California State University at Northridge Center on Disabilities, showcases cutting-edge technology and practical solutions that can be utilized to remove barriers that prevent full participation of persons with disabilities in educational, workplace, and social settings. The event—the largest of its kind in the world—provides an inclusive setting for researchers, practitioners, exhibitors, end-users, speakers and other participants who want to share knowledge and best practices in the field of assistive technology. Northridge, CA.

For more information, go to [www.csunconference.org](http://www.csunconference.org).

## April 4–8, 2011

### Annual Head Start Conference

Designed for parents and early childhood administrators, teachers, and caregivers, this 38th annual Head Start conference offers training and educational opportunities to support the delivery of high-quality services in early childhood settings and to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Conference seminars and workshops highlight evidence-based methods and evolving knowledge in the early childhood field and provide a forum for discussions on a broad range of topics. Kansas City, MO. For more information, contact Angela Smith at [asmith@nbsa.org](mailto:asmith@nbsa.org) or 703-739-7563; or go to [www.nbsa.org/?e=events.detail&event\\_id=78](http://www.nbsa.org/?e=events.detail&event_id=78).

Resources are available for you to deliver high-quality, systemic professional development and training in your area. Visit [www.calstat.org/ri/materials.html](http://www.calstat.org/ri/materials.html) in December to learn more about eligibility requirements and available financial supports.

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## Improving Special Education Services: ISES

**S**ome people call them acronyms, others insist they're initialisms, and still others simply refer to these clusters of letters as the inevitable "alphabet soup" of education. Whatever the label, abbreviations of all kinds seem to crop up regularly, particularly in special education: IDEA, PCSE, KPI, SPP, ISES—the list goes on, and the danger is not just in the chance that so many letters may cause confusion, but in the possibility of an incomplete understanding of the important work that is behind them.

Take ISES. This Improving Special Education Services Stakeholders Group was formed to help improve special education in California. What specifically does this mean, and why should anyone care? According to Valerie Johnson, a member of ISES representing the state's three Diagnostic Centers, people should care because "it's all about improving performance for students with disabilities. The special education process is complicated and can be overwhelming. However, it is important to gather data and examine it so that we can tell whether or not students with disabilities are being well served in schools. This is the kind of work we do in ISES—figuring out activities to implement in order to improve special education in the state and looking at the data to see how we are doing, and then making additional improvements."

Behind the ISES story there are more initials. While ISES was formed in 2008, the organization had its genesis almost a decade earlier with IDEA '97, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. This radical piece of legislation re-envisioned the delivery of special education. Prior to the law, schools were considered to be

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doing their job if they simply provided access to education for their students with disabilities. But according to IDEA '97, access was not enough. Schools needed to demonstrate that the education was actually benefiting students—in short, that students with disabilities were learning and progressing along a defined educational path.

In addition to this shift in focus from access to benefit, the law insisted that special education was not a place—a special day class, or a resource specialist class—where students with disabilities were taught apart from their general education peers. In fact, in the language of the law, "The term 'Special Education' means specially designed instruction" [Section 1401 (a)(16)], not a place, a program, or even a system of service delivery."<sup>1</sup> This was not so much a shift as a sea change in how special education was to be "done."

Enter another acronym: the SIG, or State Improvement Grant from the federal government. California was awarded this grant on the basis of a very ambitious proposal that refocused special educa-

tion on that mandate of educational benefit. But how exactly was this benefit to be realized? How do you break down traditional ways of doing things and help school districts focus less on place, program, or system of service delivery—which had been the approach for longer than two decades—and more on "specially designed instruction." And what does this effort look like in the initial stages?

This is where the Partnership Committee on Special Education was born. Essentially one of the two "parents" of ISES, the PCSE was a group of individuals who were deeply invested in improving the state's system of special education. They were parents of children with disabilities, special education teachers, school administrators, therapists, and university professors who were teaching the next generation of special education teachers; they were individuals who were experienced in and knowledgeable about

*ISES, continued page 6*

1. James Tucker, "Special Education: The Premise and the Promise," *The Special EDge*, Summer 2002.