

ISD ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY
December 9, 2016

Members Present:

Deborah Beranek
Deb Gossrow
Jerry Covell
Susan Dramin-Weiss
Michelle Brown
Paula Chance
Gwenn Eyer
Matt Fraas
Kris Smith
Serena Preston
Sheri Cook

Members Absent:

Corey Axelrod
John Miller
Ben Lachman

Others Present:

Charlene Hicks
Elaine Cady
Tom Chance
Ken Weiss
Deloris Summers
Angie Kuhn
Christine Good-Deal
Sheila Stephens
Ed Hoyt
Karen Garrett
Jonathan Bordean
Kitty Aubry

Gwenn welcomed everyone to the meeting and roll call and an introduction of visitors was completed.

Student Presentations:

Demetri C., Aleah A., and Phyllis A. presented on their Thanksgiving Feast and their use of Thinking Maps. The students also discussed their upcoming fundraising project of baking Christmas cookies that were preordered.

Isaiah R., Valerie E., and Jon S. presented the videos they created for the Chicago Deaf Film Festival and told about the awards/prizes they won.

Approval of September 9th meeting minutes:

Paula suggested corrections to the minutes. Since the correction suggested pertained to John Miller, Gwenn suggested they table the approval of the minutes until they can talk to John about them. Susan made a motion to table the approval of minutes and Jerry seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ISD Advisory Council Chair Report:

Gwenn talked about the importance of keeping this a professional working council that shows respect for one another. She wants to be able to show the council's progress and what is being done by the council.

There are two upcoming vacancies on the council, as Gwenn and Paula's terms will end in May 2017. Gwenn suggested that they make anyone who might be interested in serving on the council aware of the upcoming vacancies so that they can start collecting applications.

DHS/DRS Director Report:

Serena introduced Kris Smith prior to her report, announcing that Kris would be retiring at the end of December after 30 years of service. Kris was presented with a gift from the Advisory Council. Kris expressed her gratitude and said that she is proud of both ISD and ISVI and what they have accomplished. She said she is going to miss everyone and hopes to come back to visit.

Kris reported that two candidates for the ISD Superintendent position have been interviewed and that the information has been turned into Secretary Dimas' office. She explained that the Secretary will make a recommendation to the Governor's Office and that the final decision will be made by the Governor's Office. She reminded everyone that the Superintendent position is a Governor appointed position and has to be confirmed by the Senate.

Kris also reported that she is working to get her position filled prior to her leaving. She said this will more than likely be an interim position at this point, but she does plan to meet with whoever takes over her position.

Kris stated that she has enjoyed working with everyone and thanked everyone for their support.

Student Body Government Representative:

SBG did not meet this week, so they were not prepared to present anything and were not present at the meeting.

Budget Update:

Serena reported that the stopgap budget was put in place to pay FY 2016 bills. She said the schools FY 2016 bills have been paid and they are processing the FY 2017 bills. She reported that there is still no permanent budget in place so we just have to wait and see what happens with this.

Personnel Update:

Serena reported that the personnel department is in the process of filling several positions that will be left vacant due to people retiring at the end of December. There are two people from the business office and a bus driver retiring, as well as a vacant housekeeping position. She also reported that they are starting the process to hire Residential Services Workers (RCWs). There are also four vacant high school teaching positions.

Sheri stated that through her position with Gallaudet she could send out the vacancies to several entities in several different states. Kris explained the CMS hiring process and Serena suggested that people interested in positions at the school should contact the ISBE regarding the process and the state requirements. Matt stressed the importance of only posting positions that are needed and not just positions we would like to have. He feels that trying to hire more than is needed is a hard sell to the taxpayers and the Governor. Serena stated that we need to look at the number of students as well as the subject that needs to be taught when considering rather or not to fill a position, as our classes are tailored to meet individual educational needs. Gwenn stated that as a parent she appreciates the educational experience and instruction her daughter receives at ISD.

Written Departmental Reports:

The question was raised about the number of students at ISD.

The principals reported that there are currently 53 PK-8 students, 65 High School students, 31 TLP students, and 53 students being served in the 0-3 program.

Matt suggested that the council should maybe look at ways to increase the Outreach Program to provide services to students who attend public schools.

Paula asked how it is determined if a student is an ISD student when that student divides their time between ISD and a public school. Angie explained that a student has to attend 50% of the school day at ISD to be considered an ISD student. Christine said that Jacksonville School District 117 has been very gracious about taking ISD students who are not actually Jacksonville residents and allowing them to take classes at Jacksonville High School.

Serena gave a report about one of the ISD teachers who applied for a grant and also mentioned the generosity of IFDC in donating funds to make improvements to the dorms.

Serena also mentioned that Elaine Cady had recently informed her that 2018 will mark 200 years of ASL. They are in the process of working on a celebration for this milestone.

School Issues:

Serena reported on the newly created School Climate Committee. She stated that she had staff members express concerns about outside forces making statements about ISD that they felt were untrue and were having a negative impact on the school. The Climate Committee was formed with a variety of people who work at ISD. Several buildings and departments are represented on the committee. So far, the committee has held a slogan writing competition for the students and has also put out a staff survey.

New Business:

Serena addressed the recruiting of deaf and hard-of-hearing teachers and administrators and the struggles in finding teachers that are certified in deaf education. Gwenn suggested the group brainstorm ways to move forward in a positive manner regarding recruiting of qualified staff and the overall climate of the school.

Brainstorming ideas:

- Universities that offer deaf education programs could work with the community colleges in encouraging their ASL interpreting students to move on to the deaf education programs at the universities. Jerry stated that he would be willing to go talk with the students at Richland Community College about the deaf education program at MacMurray College.
- Grant writing. Serena stated that the advisory council doesn't have the authority to write a grant. An individual could write a grant, but not as a representative of the council.
- Address the rumors and focus on improving ISD reputation
- Address the misunderstandings and misrepresented concepts regarding cued speech
- Make further updates to the ISD website
- More postings on the ISDAA and PTSO Facebook pages

Gwenn asked everyone to continue thinking of things that can be used to help rebuild ISD's reputation and be used as tools to recruit students and staff members.

Stakeholder Reports:

Deb gave a PTSO presentation. She said that several projects were completed over the summer. A PTSO Facebook page was created for all parents, staff, and friends of the school. The PTSO membership application was updated this year. The PTSO is currently selling spirit wear and anyone interested in purchasing something can contact Deb and the order form in on the PTSO website. PTSO collects box tops and they earn about \$100 every six months. Deb informed everyone that there is a new app that will put points into ISD's account when the box tops are scanned. Gwenn reported that the PTSO recognized the teachers and gave out grants. They have also asked the principals to submit a wish list. It was also announced that Deb applied for and received a grant through Shopko and would be using this grant to purchase items for Santa's Cottage.

Paula had a letter that Corey Axelrod had sent since he was unable to attend the meeting. Paula read a portion of the letter, but due to the length of the letter it was recommended that Corey email the letter to the council members as individuals.

Paula made a motion to meet with the new superintendent prior to the next Advisory Council meeting. Jerry seconded the motion. After some discussion, it was decided that the council should wait until a new superintendent is in place before calling a special meeting.

Agenda items for the next meeting:

Outreach program

Public Comment:

Charlene Hicks, an ISD graduate, expressed concern over cleaning up the rumors regarding cued speech. She feels the complaints and protests over the use of cued speech is what started the problems. She said that after visiting the PK-8 program, she was impressed with the progress of the students' communication skills and she thinks that should be presented as a positive thing.

Elaine Cady announced that ISDAA will have alumni shirts for sale for \$20 or \$25.

Jerry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Deb seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.