

Illinois School for the Deaf Advisory Council

Meeting Summary

December 8, 2017 8:30 am - 1:00 pm
ISD Main Building First Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Sheri Cook, Gwenn Eyer, Michelle Brown, Paula Chance, Corey Axelrod, Susan Dramin-Weiss, Deb Gossrow, Julee Nist, Quinetta Wade, Shavon Tate, and Michael Lapa

Members Absent: Matt Fraas, Deborah Beranek, Jerry Covell, and John Miller.

Others Present:

Kathryn Surbeck, Karen Garrett, Angela Leavell, Tammy Miner, Ed Hoyt, Angie Kuhn, Jill Bruington, Kitty Aubry, Jonathan Bordean, Christine Good-Deal, Tom Chance, Elaine Cady, Eloise Brewer, Kevin Ryan, Desa Johnson, Glenn Eyer, Curt Kuhn, and Joe Vieira.

Welcome, Roll Call and Introduction of Visitors:

Sheri called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Roll call and introductions were completed.

Reading and Approval of August 25, 2017 Meeting Minutes:

Paula made a motion to approve the August 25, 2017 minutes with three corrections. Michelle seconded the motion. The August 25, 2017 meeting minutes were approved with corrections.

Student Presentation(s):

Michael Lapa and Shavon Tate gave a presentation on the LEO Club and the many activities and events they have held or participated in this school year. They also talked about upcoming activities that the club has planned.

Reports:

ISD Advisory Council Chair – Sheri provided a power point presentation. She talked about the National Outreach Conference and how ISD's Outreach Program was involved with this conference. She also talked about the Battle of the Books sponsored by Gallaudet University and ISD's participation and successes in this competition. She discussed the format of the Academic Bowl and ISD's successes in this competition. This year's competition will be held at the Iowa School for the Deaf on February 15-18, 2018.

Sheri reminded the council members that the goal of the council is to help promote ISD. She pointed out that the council does not have any legal authority, but only works in an advisory role. Sheri talked about a clip from the California School for the Deaf that promotes their school and suggested that maybe this is something ISD could do. Corey agreed with this suggestion and said that he has been suggesting something like this for the past two years, but there always seems to be roadblocks to making this happen. He suggested that something be done to remove the roadblocks.

ISD Superintendent's Report – Julee provided folders containing her report and newsletter articles about ISD to each council member.

She reported that ISD has 40 new students this school year and that they continue to be contacted by families who are interested in possibly sending their child to ISD.

Julee also reported on the trainings that have been provided to staff and students this year. She stated that there have been some changes to the trainings and that everyone has received the new training on what to do in an emergency situation.

Julee reported that ISD received a \$10,000 donation this year. Julee and the principals discussed the possible uses for the money and they gave those ideas to the donor. The donor then chose how they would like the money to be spent. The money will be put towards numerous projects, including new carpeting in the PK8 School, updates to the CTE kitchen, gym floor improvements, and gym equipment.

Julee explained that the theme for this school year is “Time to Shine”. Julee reported that she receives several emails each week from staff letting her know what other staff members are doing that makes ISD shine.

Julee reported that she and several of the principals recently attended professional development training and that she plans to attend CEASD in Florida this spring.

Susan asked a question about the hiring process at ISD. Angela Leavell explained the process and answered numerous questions from the council.

Corey wanted to know if there were deaf people involved in the interviewing process. Julee explained that there is a training program that must be completed before someone can be part of the interviewing process.

Quinetta explained that unless you report directly to an elected official, there is an interview process that has to be followed and it is handled by the Bureau of Recruitment Selection (BRS). ISD does have opportunities to provide questions for positions that are specific to ISD, but interview questions for positions that are offered throughout the state are developed at the state level.

Corey said he would like to have a list of jobs that are specific to ISD and who develops the interview questions for those jobs.

Sheri asked that this discussion be put on hold until the next meeting.

Julee continued with her report by asking the principals to provide reports.

Angie reported that the 2nd-6th grade students worked on a class project about being nice and belonging and that they made posters that have been displayed around campus.

Paula questioned the use of cued speech on the posters, arguing that cued speech is not a language but is a tool for learning within the classroom.

Angie stated that the use of cued speech has not been a problem at ISD. She said that the point of the project was that the students have a variety of needs and means of communication and that the project was for them.

Michelle point out that the poster is about beauty and kindness, and that not everyone has to be the same to be beautiful. She stated that she is tired of the competition between Cued Speech and ASL and she would like it to stop.

Angie talked about how ASL, Cueing, and Speech are all used to as teaching tools in the classroom.

Angie talked about the movie Wonder and the field trip that was part of that unit. She also discussed a math program that ISD is looking at the possibly of purchasing.

Christine talked about the recent student teachers they've hosted. She said they have worked with students from MacMurray, Illinois State University, Augustana, South Missouri State and Northern Illinois University.

Christine also reported that the ISD high school students will take field trips to Chicago to see Hamilton and Shakespeare in the Park.

Jill announced that the cookies provided for the meeting were prepared by the cooking class. She reported that they have made more than 2000 cookies for the holidays.

She also announced that Michael Lapa won the Citizenship Award for the Daughters of the American Revolution and that she and Michael attended the reception.

Jill reported that there are two new programs at CTE, a Nutrition and Culinary Arts Class and a Child Care Course. Jill stated that the Nutrition and Culinary Arts Class will offer classes I and II as well as an occupational class for this program. She explained that the students who pass the test will receive a food handler's certification which will be beneficial to them when applying for jobs.

Jill also reported that they are now offering a web design class for the high school students. She said it is an online course, but ISD will have a teacher that will help the students with the course. Jill explained that this is a pilot program and that there have been some struggles with accessing the class, mostly due to bandwidth issues.

Jill also reported that CTE now has a laser engraving machine that was purchased with CTE grant money. She showed the council a cutting board that one of the students made as a Christmas gift.

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Paula stated that she would like to see the web design class work on the ISD website.

Corey questioned the quality of education students are receiving at ISD and stated that the Governor's Office should be educated on this issue. He stated that he was referring to accessibility issues.

Quinetta commented that if there is an issue with the accessibility at ISD then that needs to be brought to the attention of DRS and it will be addressed.

Gwenn explained that both she and her husband have backgrounds in education and that they chose to enroll their child at ISD because of the opportunities she receives here.

Michelle explained that her child came to ISD with no language and is now reading and has developed language skills. She said that he is improving and the support he receives at ISD has been wonderful.

Corey stated that he sees other states that are thriving. He acknowledged that some students at ISD are doing well, but that only seems to be within the vocational program. He stated that other state budgets provide more for their deaf schools.

Sheri stated that she has visited other state schools as well and that ISD is faced with the same challenges these schools face. She pointed out that more than 85% of deaf/hard of hearing children in the US are now mainstreamed, and that is a dilemma all state schools deal with. Sheri mentioned ISD's enrollment is stronger than many of the other state schools in the Midwest. She commented that she sees a lot of positive things happening at ISD and she feels that the staff members and teachers are working very hard.

Student Body Government (SBG) Representative – Michael Lapa talked about SBG and the activities they have been involved in such as homecoming and the blood drive. He explained that they currently have 6 members and have had two meetings this school year.

DHS/DRS Director – Quinetta reported that in October at the statewide supervisors meeting the theme was "Community and Accountability". She explained that it is their endeavor to improve all programs, including ISD. She asked that all concerns be addressed through the proper channels.

Quinetta reported that they recently hired a Client Assistance Program Manager and that anyone having problems seeking services can access this program. She said they are currently recruiting candidates for RCD positions.

Quinetta addresses the possibility of hosting advisory council meetings remotely. She reported that she could secure remote locations and that people planning to attend the meetings would need to sign up in advance. She said any interpreter costs would come out of ISD's budget.

Corey commented that he would like for hearing people to stop making decisions for deaf people and that the deaf community should be equally involved. Sheri asked Corey to make a list of his specific goals and bring them to the next meeting.

Membership Report – Susan reported that there are four meetings set up for the year and that three council members have already missed the first two meetings. The council agreed that the three council members did not meet the requirement of attending three out of the four scheduled meeting.

The council decided that there were now four vacant positions on the council. The council discussed having Susan read just the qualifications of each applicant or the qualifications as well their name. Paula made a motion that only the qualifications be read. Corey seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Susan read the applications for council membership and the council members then voted to fill the vacant positions.

The first vote was for a deaf expert and there was only one applicant. Corey made a motion to accept the applicant. Michelle seconded the motion. The motion passed by majority vote and Karla Giese was accepted to the council to fill the remainder of Deb Beranek's term.

There were three applicants for a deaf representative and those qualifications were read by Susan. The open 3 year position was voted on first. The first vote ended in a two-way tie. The candidate with the lowest number of votes was removed and the top two candidates were placed up for a second vote. Shelley Williams was the candidate with the most votes.

The remaining two candidates were put up for a vote for the remaining term that was previously held by Jerry Covell. April Maman was the candidate with the most votes.

There was some discussion about John Miller's position on the council. Gwenn stated that the council would have to go into closed session to remove a member and that would have to have been on the agenda. She suggested it be added to the next meeting agenda.

Corey made a motion to discuss John's position on the council during a closed session at the next Advisory Council meeting. Susan seconded the motion. The motion passed and will be added to the next meeting agenda.

Gwenn stated that thank you letters would need to be sent to the people who are no longer on the council and that a welcome letter, meeting calendar and the by-laws should be sent to the new members. She also stated that the membership list would need to be updated.

Corey made motion to extend the meeting until 1:00 p.m. Paula seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Corey made a motion to amend the agenda to move the public relations and perception section up on the agenda. Paula seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Corey showed a YouTube video to the council.

Corey then talked about the deaf community's perception about what's going on at ISD. He asked that everyone think about what is best for the students. He explained that it's not about language, but about oppression. He expressed concern that standards are being set lower for deaf students. He said he has asked for data on the progress of ISD and

its students, but that it has not been made available to him. He also questioned the amount of money being spent on bilingual pay. He said he would like to see DRS have less control over the money and how it is used at ISD. He said he feels that his constitutional rights are being oppressed and he sees this happening in the Governor's Office and it has trickled down to ISD. Corey also questioned the caliber of students that are coming to ISD. He explained that the council receives an enrollment number of new students, but they do not receive those students' background information. He said that the deaf community wants Governor Rauner to start paying attention to the deaf and hard of hearing people.

Quinetta responded that they all need to work together, but that people can't come to each meeting with something new when the issues from the previous meetings have not been completed. She expressed that there are a lot of options to consider and opportunities to work together.

Gwenn stated that the council needs to look at what they can deal with and that they need to use data and their experiences to solve problems. She said that to be effective, the council needs to know what kind of data they want and then get that data.

Sheri stated that she agreed with the use of data.

Deb described her experience with her son and his home school district. She stated that the school district felt that sending her son to ISD was an advancement for him.

Sheri suggested that the council look at what their goals are and what they want to work on.

Paula said that maybe bring in successful deaf people would be a good idea, such as the upcoming visit by Bobbi Cordano. Michelle suggested they could use someone like Lana Shea who does so much for the students.

Corey suggested that the Governor visit ISD.

Michelle made the recommendation that the council focus on what they can control and stay focused on the students.

Departmental Reports:

ISD Technology and Web Design Class Presentation (9:30 am): The students showed a presentation of what they are learning in Web Design Class. The students talked about their work with robots and shared their web design YouTube video.

Angie Kuhn and Kathy Mansell thanked Lana Shea for all she does for the students. She works several hours a day with the students on a volunteer basis.

Gwenn made a motion to suspend the remainder of the agenda to a future meeting. Paula seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Corey made a motion to change the meeting times to 6 hours. Paula seconded the motion. The motion did not pass.

Sheri announced that the next meeting would be scheduled from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm.

Stakeholder's Reports:

Unfinished Business:

Remote Video Conferencing –

Educational Advocates Committee -

Bilingual Pay Policy for ISD Staff –

Listening Tour Update -

New Business:

Suggest Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

Student Presentations

Listening Tour

Closed Session to discuss John's position on the council

Public Comments:

Susan moved to adjourn the meeting. Deb seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.