

# Illinois School for the Deaf Advisory Council

## Meeting Summary

March 15, 2019 9:00 am - 12:30 pm

ISD Main Building First Floor Conference Room

### Members Present:

Gwenn Eyer, Charlene Hicks, Deb Gossrow, John Miller, Julee Nist, and Quinetta Wade

### Members Absent:

Susan Dramin-Weiss, Paula Chance, Karla Giese and Sheri Cook

### Others Present:

Kathryn Surbeck, Angela Leavell, Kelly Harness, Angie Kuhn, Kitty Aubry, Tina Childress, Delores Summers, Ed Hoyt, Carolyn Eilering, Jill Bruington and Dean Olsen (State Journal Register)

### Welcome, Roll Call and Introduction of Visitors:

- Gwenn opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m. and announced that because they did not have a quorum, the council would be unable to hold any votes.
- No Roll call or introductions were completed.

### Review and Approval of December 7, 2018 Meeting Minutes:

- Unable to review and approve the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting minutes.

### New Business:

- Unable to hold the Election of New Council Member to Replace Parent, Michelle Brown
- Unable to hold the Election of New Secretary to Replace Michelle Brown
- Unable to vote on the Communication Policy recommendations

### Reports:

#### *ISD Superintendent's Report (Julee Nist)*

- o Kyle Schultz, the Deaf Ninja visited ISD and gave three presentations.
- o ISD recently celebrated their 180<sup>th</sup> birthday. The ISD baker made cakes that were enjoyed by the staff and students.
- o Senator Steve McClure recently opened a new office in Jacksonville and Julee attended the ribbon cutting ceremony.
- o February was CTE month.
- o A fingerspelling bee was held at ISD on March 14.
- o ISD student Shannon McNeal was selected to participate in the West Central Illinois Boys' All-Star Classic. The all-star basketball game will be held on March 22 at the Jacksonville High School Bowl and tickets are on sale now. In the 20-year history of this all-star game, only four ISD students have been selected.
- o Several high school students recently traveled to Chicago to see a Shakespeare production.
- o Open Communication Movement (OCM) Committee will present to the ISD Administrative Council in April.

- Gwenn asked if the Advisory Council would like the OCM Committee to present to them in May.
- Delores Summers, a committee member in attendance, said it would be possible at the next meeting scheduled for May 3.

#### *DHS/DRS Director (Quinetta Wade)*

- Today is Secretary Dimas' last day. The new Secretary, Grace Hou, will start officially on Monday, March 18.
- DHS goals remain the same and that is that they hope to empower people with disabilities.
- DHS has asked for a maintenance budget, as well as a supplemental budget.
- DHS is trying to fast track the transition program, and teaching job skills is crucial.
- Students are being encouraged to work regardless of their label. If labeled developmentally disabled vs. disabled they are still being encouraged to find some type of work.
- Gwen asked if there is a statewide database. Quinetta explained that there is, but it's not always up to date and it may be easier to reach out to your local offices.
- Gwenn asked if there is a way to link into specific counties and have someone come in and present local resources. She asked if this is something ISD could possibly use on their website. She thought it might be something that could help people who are deaf or hard of hearing prepare for interviews.
- Angie asked how many disabled adults there were in Illinois and what percentage of them were actually receiving services. Quinetta wasn't sure of exact numbers but said that the percentage receiving services compared to the number of disabled people was extremely low.

#### *Student Body Government (SGB) Representative*

- No Report

#### *Other Department Reports*

- No Reports

#### **Presentations:**

##### *Student Presentation*

- PreK-8 ASL students presented a timeline about the history of ISD in honor of ISD's 180<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.

##### *The Statistics of ISD Students (Tina Childress)*

- Tina gave a presentation showing the breakdown of students on campus.
  - When discussing the primary disabilities of our students, John asked the difference between Hearing Impairment and Deafness. Tina explained that it depended on the decibel level that a student could hear at with their hearing device on and where the team decided, as a group, to place them.
  - Gwenn mentioned the situation with her daughter and that sometimes others don't view her as being deaf enough to attend school at ISD. She explained that her daughter can hear fine with her hearing aids, but that she hears very little when she isn't wearing them. She said she often feels that the community doesn't think her daughter should be allowed to attend ISD because she could function fine in a mainstream school. She stated that she has always felt like she has had to fight the outside community for her daughter to attend ISD.
  - Tina agreed, stating she didn't lose her hearing until age 29 and she was also treated as "hearing" although she is profoundly deaf without her cochlear implant.

- Charlene asked why so many students are not ready for work after high school and are coming here for TLP. Tina thought the TLP program offered students an opportunity to learn skills that will help them live successfully on their own. She stated that it is also a good age to leave the home. Carolyn stated that many TLP parents have struggled to let their children leave home. She pointed out that the elementary students that come here are coming because their parents feel that their child isn't getting the education they need from their home school.
- John asked if there are statistics on how the students are doing after they leave the TLP program. Carolyn said that Jill would be the best person to answer that question, but that it is hard to keep track of students after they leave ISD. Angie agreed and stated that surveys have been sent out in the past as part of the CEASD accreditation, but they were rarely returned and with limits on social media it is difficult to keep track of the students after they leave.

### *CEASD Final Report (Julee Nist)*

- CEASD was here in the fall for accreditation. ISD was given accreditation on Standards 2-12 but they did not give us accreditation on Standard 1, Philosophy/Mission. Julee stated that ISD administration is in the process of reviewing it. She has asked to meet with JCCD and with members of the community to help come up with a better mission statement. She asked the council as a group to discuss some ideas.
- The group brainstormed answers to the following questions:
  - What does ISD do well?
  - Why are we here?
  - Who are we and what do we believe?
  - What can ISD improve on?
- Julee is staying in contact with CEASD regarding ISD's progress.
- Julee has consulted with DHS and other Superintendents of Deaf Schools across the country.
- Julee is scheduling small group stakeholder meetings to explain the accreditation findings and discuss ideas.
- Council member Gwenn Eyer stated that as a parent she believes that wording should be changed regarding community influence. She said that the community should be encouraged to support the school, providing educational resources, employment opportunities, etc. She noted, however, that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act entitles students to an education that meets their individual needs, with parents and schools sharing the decision-making responsibilities. She stated that cultural groups and communities should enhance the educational opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

### **Stakeholder's Reports:**

- No reports.

### **Discussion:**

#### *ISD's Mission and Vision (Julee Nist)*

- This was addressed earlier in the meeting when discussing the CEASD Report.

#### *Being Mindful of Our Affiliations with Other Organizations (Deb Gossrow)*

- Some of our council members are members of other boards and/or organizations. Some of those boards/organizations are working with ISD while other are not. If our members are part of an

organization which is condemning ISD, it is a conflict of interest, and as a member, we need to choose which organization to be a part of.

- Members of our council need to advocate for the school and for our students and remain a positive influence.

#### *Vote to Change Title of the “Language Planning Committee” to the “Communication Planning Committee”*

- A vote was not held due to the council not having a quorum.

#### *Add Legal Counsel (John Miller)*

- John questioned who the council should seek out for legal advice. He stated that DHS legal has helped in the past.
- He asked if the council could appoint their own officer regarding the Open Meetings Act. Quinetta responded that she would check with DHS legal.
- John also asked who the council should seek advice from during a meeting. Quinetta stated that if he had said something earlier in the meeting they could have contacted DHS legal for help.

#### *Suggested Agenda Items for Next Meeting:*

- Reading and Approval of December 7, 2018 meeting minutes
- Reading and Approval of March 15, 2019 meeting minutes
- Election of a new council member to replace parent, Michelle Brown
- Election of a new secretary to replace Michelle Brown
- Vote on the Communication Policy recommendations
- Vote to Change Title of the “Language Planning Committee” to the “Communication Planning Committee”
- SBG
- Student Presentation
- Open Communication Movement

#### *Public Comment:*

- No public comments.

#### *Adjourn:*

- No motion to adjourn needed.