

ISD ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY
May 8, 2015

Present: Paula Chance, Gwenn Eyer, Kris Smith, Matt Fraas, Jerry Covell, Juan Bernal, Susan Dramin-Weiss, John Miller, Angela Botz, Ben Lachman, Crystal Schwartz and Janice Smith-Warshaw.

Absent: Sheri Cook

Visitors: Elaine Cody, ISDAA Museum; John Brennan, AFSME Chief Steward and ISD alum and employee; Carol Niemechek Kotlowski, ISD alum and an ASL teacher; Tamara Gaudet, deaf advocate; Joe Duty, deaf advocate; Terry Lowinski, retired Chicago school teacher and a past cued speech user; Charlene Hicks, ISD graduate; Amy Richards, ISBE; Colleen Olson, ASL interpreter; Angela Leptowich, cued language transliterator; Ed Hoyt, ISD Administrative Assistant; Kathryn Surbeck, Evaluation Center Director; Dr. Beverly Trezek, DePaul University; Angie Kuhn, PK-8 Principal; Christine Good-Deal, High School Principal;

Paula opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and reminder them that the plan was to work through lunch and everyone had been asked to either bring their lunch or add their lunch to an order to be delivered by Jimmy Johns.

After introductions of council members and visitors, the council reviewed the summary from the previous meeting. Susan made a motion to approve the summary, and Jerry seconded the motion. The meeting summary was approved.

The council went on to review the March 13, 2015 meeting summary. After making changes, a motion was made a motion to approve the summary. Juan seconded the motion. After consensus from the council, the September 11th meeting summary was approved.

Paula then asked Janice to talk about the OMA (Open Meetings Act). Janice explained that she had asked someone from the OMA to join the meeting to help answer any questions the council members might have regarding the OMA. Janice said she ended up contacting Sarah Pratt who explained to Janice that she thought it would be better for the members to individually contact her with their questions. Paula suggested this be put on the agenda under discussion to be addressed later.

Paula then invited Beverly to go ahead with her presentation. A brief discussion was held regarding the confidentiality issues associated with the research project. Kathryn explained that it would be okay to view the information, but that it would not be appropriate to videotape it and then use clips of it in other settings. Beverly explained that this is unpublished data and that she usually does not let people videotape her presentations or take pictures of her slides. Beverly also explained that the full data was not yet available because they were currently doing the post-testing. She explained that she was going to present what data they had so far and explain the background of her involvement with ISD.

Beverly introduced herself to the group and provided some personal background information. She explained that she attended John Hersey High School in Arlington Heights. She said that this high school has a large deaf education program and this is where she learned to sign. She said that she graduated from high school

with actress Marlee Matlin. She went on to discuss her background teaching deaf and hard of hearing students in Madison, Wisconsin. She stated that she spends a lot of time in classrooms working with teachers. She explained that DePaul University has a clinic where she works with students on reading instructional practices and writing.

Beverly went on to explain that ISD had heard about her work on phonics instruction with deaf students, and in 2007 they invited her to come and help with their literacy program. In 2007, they implemented direct instruction programs using a system called visual phonics. In 2009, direct instruction language and writing programs were added and then added writer's workshop in 2011. Additional programming for math for some high school students was just added this year.

Beverly stressed that a big part of her work at ISD has been with assessments. When she first arrived at ISD there was not an established way of assessing students' progress. They started by using the STAAR reading assessment in 2009, the NWEA assessments in 2011, and the DWA (a writing assessment) in 2012. Beverly stated that while presenting some of the data that they were seeing with the direct instruction programs and visual phonics, some of the educators became interested in cued speech.

Janice asked Beverly to explain what direct instruction means. Beverly explained that direct instruction is a series of programs including curriculum reading, curriculum writing, and curriculum math. She said it is a very scripted and researched-based program. It is an English language curriculum for reading and language instruction and she has worked with other schools, working with hearing students, remedial readers, other deaf schools and public schools programs in implementing this program.

After implementing the program, Beverly explained that they were seeing that the students were making progress in decoding new words, but were struggling with the English language structure. So, although their reading scores were improving, they still struggled with understanding what they were reading and being able to write and express themselves in English. Beverly explained, that after seeing these results, some of the teachers thought that cued speech might help with that. Several pilot studies were conducted and then one classroom with three students had cued speech for reading and language. That was three years ago. Overtime, Beverly explained how they started seeing progress from the students. The students were able to write more, but were still showing a formulaic approach to writing and being constrained by words that they knew or had memorized. Beverly showed the data results after one year of having cued speech in reading and language classes. The data showed more grammatically correct English language structures in their writing samples. Beverly explained that these results were what encouraged the teachers to want to continue using the program and the administration to support that. She stressed that her role has always been to consult on the curriculum and assessments, not to make the decisions about how the program is implemented. She stated that her role is to help the school evaluate what they are doing.

Beverly talked about the assessments given during this school year. She stated that the students who had permission to be involved in the project were given an assessment of their English language abilities through an assessment called the clinical evaluation of language fundamentals. There was also data from the NWEA assessments of reading, language and math. They also looked at how the teachers were using cued speech in the classroom. Beverly went on to explain that the types of assessments included concepts and following directions, word structures, recalling sentences, formulating sentences, word classes and defining words.

Crystal had asked Beverly to explain more about the measurement. She wondered if there was a comparison done between the reading skills of those using visual phonics and those using ASL. Beverly stated that

because this was an assessment of English, the test had to be given in English. The students could choose their response mode, some choosing speech only, others sign-supported speech, and others chose cued speech. Beverly also explained that they created digital recordings of every test to ensure the test was consistently presented to each student and they also had permission to record the students taking the test so they could go back to make sure that they were scoring the test accurately. Beverly stated that the assessments given in terms of reading, language and math are called MAP (measures of academic progress) assessments and these are commonly used assessments in general education and special education classrooms.

Beverly explained that this curriculum provides a lot of interaction between the teacher and the students. The teacher will say something and then the student responds. They did time sampling to determine how much of the time the teacher was using various modes of communication, such how much time was the teacher using cued speech, signed language, or verbal speech. Beverly pointed out that they looked at when the teacher was using the various modes of communication.

Beverly stated that it was the end of the school year, so she would have a busy summer evaluating the data. She said they would look at how students are gaining in their English language abilities using cued speech. She said they would also look to see if there was a relationship between the students' scores and their demographic variables, like degree of hearing loss, age, and presence of an additional disability.

Beverly continued by showing the data results they had so far. She explained the results of testing the English language abilities of the different age levels, 5-9 year olds, 9-12 year olds, and 13-21 year olds. The data showed the students had different strengths across the board and that their receptive skills were stronger than their expressive skills in English. Beverly pointed out that this is not uncommon.

When looking at the assessments of students' academic achievement in reading, language and math, Beverly pointed out the growth in the students over time and how they made progress in reading using cued speech. This was the same for language and math.

Beverly then showed the time samplings that indicated the amount of time the teachers were using the various modes of communication during class time.

Beverly summarized by saying that thus far the students were making progress in reading, language and math. She pointed out that there was a wide range of achievement among the students. She said that we need to look at each student individually and are they showing progress. If not, why and what can be done to evaluate that.

Beverly then asked for any questions. Crystal asked about the measurement and what the scores were compared to. Beverly explained that each student's scores were compared to the scores of other students who took the test as well as to themselves. This shows how the student's English language abilities compare to other students and also shows if the student is making progress.

John asked if the test was only focused on reading, language and math. Beverly confirmed that that was the case and that with the focus on English it makes sense to use cuing in those settings.

Paula asked Beverly about visual phonics and why she decided to drop it and switch to cued speech. Beverly said that she didn't make the decision to switch, that the schools make that decision. She went on to explain

that you can use both visual phonics and cued speech together because they serve different purposes. She used an example to explain that visual phonics does not allow you to communicate an English sentence. They found that visual phonics was helpful for teaching and decoding words, but that is only part of reading. Beverly went on to explain that the educators did not want to use a signed English approach, so they chose cued speech as a visual access to English.

Paula then asked about direct instruction and the increased vocabulary use in just one year. Beverly explained that the educators were finding it difficult to communicate the language used by using sign because many of the signs represented many of the same English words. So, all the types of words listed were words that were either taught through the program or they were acquired by the teacher being able to cue to the students in English.

Ben stated that what Beverly was describing was incidental or contextual learning and asked Beverly to elaborate on that. Beverly used the example of someone saying that they would like to learn ASL. She said they would be told to start with a basic ASL class. Then they would be told to interact with deaf people who use ASL because this is the only way to truly learn the language. She said the same is true with English or any other language. She said that by cuing, they are giving students visual access to English, so that they can acquire the language. She went on to explain that you then have to teach the students to read, decode and spell all of the words they have learned, and cuing allows them to acquire that and how the words are cued gives them the information about how to read and write it.

Susan asked Beverly how she chose the students who would participate in the research study. Beverly explained that she did not pick the students, that that decision was made by the school. Beverly expressed that her role as a consultant is to help the school evaluate the students' progress.

The meeting was interrupted and postponed until a future date.