

Illinois School for the Deaf Advisory Council

Meeting Summary

May 4, 2018 8:30 am - 12:30 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, John Miller, Karla Giese, Julee Nist, and Quinetta Wade.

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Kathryn Surbeck, Angela Leavell, Karen Garrett, Laci Kennedy, Ed Hoyt, Angie Kuhn, Jill Bruington, Sheila Stephens, Christine Good-Deal, Kitty Aubry, Jonathan Bordean, Tammy Miner, Deloris Summers, Elaine Cady, Eloise Brewer, Kevin Ryan, Dana Craig, Tonia Bogener, Shelley Williams, Charlene Hicks, Carrie Tucker, Officer Gaines, Curt Kuhn, Tracey Patterson, Glenn Eyer and Juana Medina (via phone).

Welcome, Roll Call and Introduction of Visitors:

- Sheri called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
- Sheri welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that everyone express themselves respectfully and be aware of their facial expressions. She reminded everyone to use the interpreters and that there be no side conversations happening while someone is speaking.
- Roll call and introductions were completed.
- Paula asked about the committee meeting to discuss the Communication Policy being held without an agenda being posted. It was determined that the meeting could not be held and would be cancelled.
- Paula stated that meeting dates for next year should be discussed during this meeting. Sheri agreed and thanked Paula for the reminder.

Review and Approval of March 9, 2018 Meeting Minutes:

- Revisions to the meeting minutes were discussed. Susan made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as revised. Karla seconded the motion. The March 9, 2018 meeting minutes were approved with corrections.

New Business:

Concerns about current members

- Sheri explained that she didn't feel she would return for another term on the council if the current membership remained the same. She stated that she didn't like the comments she had read on line and she read one of the comments posted on the IAD website. She suggested that Corey not continue serving on the council.
- Sheri made a motion to dismiss Corey from the council and Michelle seconded the motion. Michelle stated that the "Hearing Knows Best" video was discriminatory and that council members should be supportive of the school.
- Paula questioned this motion happening during an open session and it was determined that it was not a violation to hold the discussion during an open meeting and that a closed session was not required.
- Gwenn stated that she has tried to work diligently and professionally for this council but has constantly felt threatened. She expressed feeling a climate of unprofessionalism and stated that she was in support of removal of council members.
- Deb stated that she has been waiting patiently for an entity of authority to step in and put a stop to all of this and that the posts on the IAD Facebook page seems to be based more on opinions than facts. Deb explained that she sent the blogs and newspaper articles to her home school district administrator and that administrator was surprised that there has not been a lawsuit. Deb was told by the administrator that if this was a school board, the person would be removed. Deb stated that she feels no one who signed the IAD letter should be allowed to serve on the council.
- Corey thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve on the council. He stated that he knew what the vote would be and he wasn't going to fight it. He said that he hopes the council will continue to listen to the deaf community. He said he was sorry if the council members disagreed with what he has been saying, but it's how the deaf community feels and he's afraid this will cause a division within the community.
- Paula questioned the comment about no one from IAD being allowed to serve on the council. Deb stated that she felt anyone whose signature is on the IAD letter should not be allowed to participate on the council because the letter expresses condemnation of the school.
- John stated that his first response to the IAD letter was shock. He said the mission of the Advisory Council is to advise and guide the school and there is a problem with people who sit on the council using the IAD letter to express their concerns.
- Susan explained that her signature was on the letter as a representative of the people in her area.
- Corey stated that he stands by IAD because they have a right to express their concerns. He said that he has brought his concerns to the council but has not seen any action, and he feels that ISD employees are targeting IAD.

- Gwenn questioned if all Chapters of IAD signed the letter. Corey stated that all active Chapters signed the letter. Gwenn also stated that Corey's comments over the years have been considered and discussed during the meetings. She explained that IAD can bring ideas to the council, but that it can't be done for a personal cause by members of the council.
- Julee reminded Corey that the two of them have met and discussed issues several times. Corey apologized for his statement about no action being taken and said that he was thinking about correspondence between IAD and ISD prior to the current administration. He stated that some of his concerns have been considered and that he has recently seen some changes.
- Sheri stated that it seems evident that Corey's affiliation with IAD and the Advisory Council is a conflict of interest.
- Deb said that she was considering not returning for another term because she thinks maybe there are others who would have more to contribute. She said she would not remain on the council if some of the current members remained because she doesn't feel the council has been constructive and she doesn't feel safe.
- Paula made a revised motion to give Corey an oral reprimand rather than removing him from the council. Susan seconded the revised motion. The council voted on the revised motion. The motion did not pass.
- A vote was held on the original motion to remove Corey from the Advisory Council. The motion passed by a majority vote.

A short break was held.

Membership Report

- Susan reported that Gwenn, Michelle, and Deb fill the positions of parents on the council. Gwenn's term will expire in 2019, Michelle's term will expire in 2020 and Deb's term expires in 2018. Susan and John fill the positions of a person with a disability and both of their terms will expire in 2020. Sheri, Paula and Karla fill the positions of experts in deafness. Sheri's term expires in 2018, and Paula's and Karla's terms will expire in 2019.
- Susan reported that there is one vacant seat on the council for a person with a disability. Deb's and Sheri's positions are expiring and they both stated that they were willing to serve for another term. The council voted and by majority vote, both Deb and Sheri will remain on the council for a third term.
- Susan read the names and resumes of the six applicants for the vacant position of a person with a disability.
- Sheri instructed the council that they could only vote one time and the applicant with the most votes would be appointed. Charlene Hicks received the majority of votes and was appointed to the remainder of Corey's term. Susan announced that this is Charlene's first term and it will expire in 2020.
- Gwenn asked the guests in the room to continue attending the meetings and giving their public comments.

- Sheri thanked the guests for coming and said that their involvement is appreciated.

Elections of Member(s)

- Sheri announced that officers would be discussed at the next meeting. Gwenn explained that Sheri would set up a nominating committee and establish the list of officers, and then a vote would be held.
- Sheri explained that according to the by-laws a nominating committee should consist of the chairperson and two members whose terms are not up for re-election. The chairperson will chair the nominating committee and publish a slate of officers 20 days prior to the vote.
- Sheri asked for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee. Susan and Gwenn volunteered. Sheri asked the council members to let Gwenn, Susan or herself know if they are interested in serving as chairperson, vice-chairperson or secretary.
- It was determined that a committee of three would be a majority so if the nominating committee would need to meet or have a discussion, they will need to create an agenda and announce the meeting in advance.
- The council set the dates for next year's meetings. Advisory Council meetings will take place on August 24, December 7, March 15, and May 3. The meetings will be held at ISD from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Reports:

ISD Superintendent's Report

- Julee provided each of the council members with a folder that included her report and numerous articles regarding events at ISD.
- Julee reported that she recently attended CEASD. She took a cutting board that was made by ISD students with her to be auctioned off at CEASD. The cutting board sold for \$200 and ISD was the only school to provide something for the auction.
- Julee announced that ISD's Academic Bowl Team went to the national competition in Washington D.C. and one student received an all-star award.
- Julee also announced that eleven middle school students recently went to visit their legislators in Springfield and she provided pictures from that trip.
- Julee reported that ISD recently started a deaf arts project and it's currently on display in the dining hall. A couple of staff members have provided artwork for the display and Julee is trying to convince other artists on campus to display their work as well.

- Julee announced that an ASL Celebration was recently held on campus and an article about the celebration was provided in the folders.
 - Julee announced that graduation would be held at Marshall Gym on May 25 at 11:30 a.m. She reminded council members that they were all invited and would have special seating for the ceremony.
 - Julee also announced that approximately 23 outside tours had been held, that end of the year testing was currently happening, and that she has been working with Melvin Long and Eloise Brewer on ISD's 180th Birthday Celebration.
 - Sheila reported that the Literature teachers recently taught a unit on poetry. The students were asked to pick out a picture and write different types of poems related to that picture. The students shared their poems at a Poetry Café and poet Aubrey Barnes performed poetry for the students.
 - Angie reported that on May 24, the PK-8 Spring Program would be held at 10:00 a.m. and the 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony would be held at 1:30 p.m.
- Student Body Government (SBG) Representative*
- No report

DHS/DRS Director

- Quinetta informed the council that the Bureau of Blind Services have been in discussions with Deaf Services about combining their agencies. She also reported that the budget is in the House and Senate Appropriation Committees and that at this point it is still business as usual for ISD. She explained that this meant continuing trying to cut costs and save money.
- Paula asked about the DHS/DRS policy of asking employees to report any outside memberships they are involved in. Quinetta reported that this is not a new policy and that every state employee has an obligation to report any secondary employment or membership association. Quinetta explained that this is not to say that people can't be involved in organizations, but it serves as a precaution to make sure there is not a conflict of interest in those memberships.

Questions, if any, on Departmental Reports

- Angie explained that all students are required to participate in state mandated testing. She explained that the PARCC test requires students to take the test on grade level unless they qualify to take the DLM (Dynamic Learning Map), a test for students with learning disabilities. She said the PARCC test is very hard for all students and that the educational team understands that it will not provide them with much information to use for a student's learning and IEP decisions. She explained that this is why they use the NWEA.
- Paula asked about the continuing education plans for the current seniors. Sheila reported that several students have been accepted to Gallaudet and RIT, but no final decisions have been made.
- Angie added that she has been very impressed with the NWEA scores from many of the new students. She said this was the first year that these students have taken the tests and that one student started at a 1st grade

reading level and is now at a 4th grade reading level. Another student moved from a 2nd grade level to a 3rd grade level. She said she was very proud of the students and their reading improvements and that she will have a full report in the fall.

- Paula commended ISD on how they recently handled the death of a student. She asked about having a Clinical Psychologist or mental health staff person on campus 24 hours/7 days a week. Christine explained that because the students go home every weekend, mental health services are provided in their local/home areas. However, ISD does provide counselors and mental health support services and students who receive these services have it documented in their IEPs. Sheri applauded the school for handling the situation quickly and appropriately.

Student Presentation(s):

- There were no student presentations.

Parent Presentation: Carrie Tucker

- Carrie gave a presentation about her daughter who is a student at ISD. Her presentation focused on her daughter's communication issues and her improvements in that area. Carrie reported that her daughter's speech has improved due to cued speech. She applauds the different communication tools and appreciates the services and support she has received from ISD staff.
- Sheri suggested the council discuss the teacher shortage and then move to the public comments. The remaining agenda items will be held until the next meeting.
- Paula made a motion to renew the IHSA contract for another year. Gwenn stated that they are not a school board and really don't have anything to do with the IHSA contract. The forms will be sent to Quinetta's office for signatures.

Discussions:

Teacher Shortage

- Deb provided a report regarding the vacant teaching positions at ISD. She explained that to be a substitute teacher you must have a teaching license. She said that the basic skills test is very difficult and that only 21% of testers are passing the test. She suggested changing the teaching license to a teaching certificate for substitute teachers.
- Sheri said that ISD has provided her with their vacancies and she is sharing that with others. She reported that other deaf schools are having the same problems and are now asking her to post their jobs. She explained that Michigan doesn't have a deaf education program in any of their colleges. They work with colleges in other states and ask their regular education teachers if they would be willing to train on line to be deaf education teachers. Sheri said the number of students wanting to become deaf education or regular education teachers is dwindling. She explained that this is not a problem of audism, but a lack of qualified teachers. Sheri suggested the council look at how Michigan is working on their situation and try to come up with other possible options as well.

- Julee stated that at CEASD she learned that this is a problem everywhere. All schools are having trouble finding qualified teachers and the number of people wanting to become teachers is on the decline.

Administrative Code from DHS/DRS

- Tabled until the next meeting

Stakeholder's Reports:

- Tabled until the next meeting

Other Business:

IHSA Renewal

- This was discussed earlier and it was determined that it is not an issue for the Advisory Council.

Suggested Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

- Appointment of officers.
- Several agenda items were tabled until the next meeting.

Public Comments:

- Curt commented that he was proud of the principals and the school. He reported that all four of his children are meeting or exceeding their educational goals. He said they are excelling at reading and math and that according to the NWEA, his son has progressed a full year. He stressed that cued speech does and can make an impact on a student's literacy skills and that ISD is providing services that meet their educational needs. He applauds the teachers and principals at ISD.
- There were no other public comments.
- Paula announced that there will be an ASL Camp for Family, Fun and Learning. The camp will be held at ISD in the PK-8 building and there is information about the camp posted on the ISD website.

Adjourn:

- John made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Karla seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.