

Illinois School for the Deaf Advisory Council

Meeting Summary

August 25, 2017 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
ISD Main Building First Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Deb Gossrow, John Miller (via phone), Sheri Cook, Susan Dramin-Weiss, Paula Chance, Michelle Brown, Gwenn Eyer, Julee Nist, Quinetta Wade, and Shavon Tate

Members Absent: Matt Fraas, Deborah Beranek, Corey Axelrod, and Jerry Covell.

Others Present:

Kathryn Surbeck, Karen Garrett, Angela Leavell, Angie Kuhn, Jill Bruington, Charlene Hicks, Kitty Aubry, Christine Good-Deal, Joe Vieira, Deloris Summers, Jonathan Bordean, and Elaine Cady.

Welcome, Roll Call and Introduction of Visitors:

Sheri called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Roll call and an introduction of visitors were completed.

Reading and Approval of May 5, 2017 Meeting Minutes:

The May 5, 2017 meeting minutes were approved with no objections.

Reports:

ISD Advisory Council Chair – Sheri reminded council members that according to the by-laws, they must attend at least three of the four scheduled meetings to remain on the council. Reports from Ed were received and Sheri is happy to see that enrollment is up this year. Sheri reminded everyone that this council is a group that helps to guide and support ISD. She stated that it's the responsibility of the council to guide the school to achieve their goals and that the council can only advise and has no legal power. Sheri looks forward to working with everyone this school year.

ISD Superintendent's Report – Julee announced that donuts and coffee were available for the meeting participants and that the foods class would provide refreshments at the future meetings.

Julee announced that we now have a state budget and that bills are being paid as funds are released by the DHS Budget Office.

Julee reported that there are several vacancies at ISD. Paula asked about the House Bill and Julee informed Paula that the bill was passed. This means that ISD will still have to follow the hiring procedures, but should be able to fill vacancies quicker.

Julee announced that ISD will go through the CEASD accreditation process this year.

Julee also reported that graduation took place on May 26, 2017 with 8 students walking across the stage. Only one of these students chose to accept their diploma and the rest have decided to return to ISD's TLP program. This year's graduating class is expected to be approximately 20 students and Julee encouraged the advisory council members to attend the graduation ceremony.

Julee reminded the council that the Nestle Corporation gave ISD \$5000 and that 3 hydration stations have been purchased. Julee passed around a picture of one of these stations.

Julee stated that opening day was held last week for all ISD staff members. Lockdown training as well as Mandated Reporting training was provided to all staff. Social events also took place, including a staff breakfast, an ice cream social, and a staff picnic hosted by Sheila Stephens. Julee reported that the theme for this school year is "Our Time to Shine". Julee explained that various projects will be taking place during the school year to promote the positive actions by our students and staff.

Julee reported that the first day of school this year was an awesome experience for students and staff since that was the day of the eclipse.

Julee announced that ISD's student enrollment last year started with 205 students and that this year the enrollment is up to 225. She reminded council members that ISD serves more children than those that are actually on campus through the Outreach Program.

Julee reported that the Christian Women's Connection donated school supplies for our students, and also gave a cash donation. She also reported that the Jacksonville Deaf Bible Church provided lunch for the ISD dorm and educational staff on opening day.

Julee reported that she and several of the principals went to the ISBE Special Education Directors' Conference this summer. The conference provided current legislative case law updates along with a variety of educational workshops.

Julee announced that ISD will be partnering with the Secretary of State's Office to host Rules of the Road review courses for the general public who would like to review the laws and safety rules before renewing their driver's license. The plan is to have a review course in October for the deaf and hard of hearing community where an interpreter and closed captioning will be available.

Julee stated that she will meeting with MacMurray College's President and Provost to talk with them about their Deaf Education Program and recruiting deaf education teachers.

Julee was excited to announce that Roberta "Bobbi" Cordano, Gallaudet University President, will be coming to visit the ISD campus in March. Julee explained that several organizations such as GUAA, JCKK, JIAD/IAD, and ISDAA came together with ISD to promote this visit. Ms. Cordano will talk to the ISD students and present to the ISD staff. Paula explained that a committee worked on making this visit possible and will host the visit. The committee will meet again on September 20, 2017.

The Institute for Parents of Preschool Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing – Angie reported that this was the 73rd year for the Parent Infant Institute. They had 24 families and 25 children involved in this year's

institute. Two of the children who attended the institute have enrolled at ISD. One family sent their child here to live in the dorm and the other family is relocating to Jacksonville. Angie explained that the sibling program was changed a little this year in that these children were given more time to spend with their deaf siblings. Sheri commented that sometimes there are jealousies between hearing and deaf siblings and that having the siblings spend time together is important and she's glad the camp provided that opportunity.

Summer Camps – Christine announced that ISD did not have Creative Arts Camp this year due to not having enough campers. She's hopeful that the camp will be held next summer. Christine also announced that Sports Camp hosted 15 students in grades 6th through 8th. The campers developed skills and participated in team building activities.

Jill reported for Sheila on STEAM Camp. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math. There were 11 students who attended STEAM Camp, 10 boys and 1 girl. Of the 11 campers, 6 were ISD students. The theme for the camp was "Robotics". The campers learned to build, program, and operate a variety of robots. The campers participated in a field trip to Illinois College which included a scavenger hunt through the library. Shireen Hafeez, who founded Deaf Kids Can Code, was a guest speaker at the camp. While at camp, the students made trash into robots and created their own video game.

Jill reported that 7 local students participated in the summer work program. Most students worked 20-25 hours per week at a variety of locations in Jacksonville. There were three staff members who worked as job coaches and transported the students to and from work. Jill expressed appreciation to the Jacksonville community for giving the students the work experience.

Gwenn reported that her daughter loved STEAM camp and she appreciates the time and effort the staff members put in to run an excellent camp. She stated that the various camps were able to get together and socialize with each other and this was a wonderful experience for her daughter.

John suggested that in an effort to recruit more sports campers, he would make contact with someone from the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Illinois College.

August Conference – Joe reported that this is an annual conference for interpreters and teachers and that this year 111 people attended the conference. Joe explained that there is no cost to attend the conference and that the Outreach Department also host three parent conferences at various locations throughout the state. Tina Childress, an Audiologist, runs the August Conference. Paula asked how they decide on the presenters for the conference. Joe explained that they start working on it in February and they look for someone who will meet the ISBE standards. He said that ISRC and GURC both donate money that is used to pay presenters and that they also look for presenters who are willing to present at no cost.

Michelle said that she attended the conference as an interpreter and reported that Curt Kuhn presented on sports signs and it was informative and a good presentation. She said that mentoring was also discussed and how interpreters can support each other. She said overall she felt that the information provided was good and that the conference was beneficial.

Joe said that he conducted a survey this year and received several requests for educational signs, such as signs used in science and math classes. Joe handed out a summary report of the conference.

Changes/Improvements/Opportunities for 2017-2018 School Year – This topic was covered in Julee’s report.

DHS/DRS Director’s Report – Quinetta stated that in 2017 DHS helped 5000 people find employment. She also reported continued work with the Division of Developmental Disabilities on an agreement to help those students with developmental disabilities in regards to gaining employment opportunities. She said that she appreciates ISD’s School to Work and Student Work Experience programs. She reported that a Home Services Policy recently went into effect and that the division is trying to address all barriers. Quinetta reported that DHS is going to be embarking on an integration pilot program in Chicago in an effort to make sure integration is happening as much as possible.

Report on Council Members’ Terms – Sheri reported that the by-laws state that if you’re an employee of ISD you cannot be on the council. She stated that Michelle’s position on the council was questioned because she does interpreting at ISD. Serena Preston checked with legal about this and it was determined that it was not a conflict of interest. Michelle is not an ISD employee, she is contractual.

Gwenn said when making this determination, they looked at Michelle’s ability to work. She is able to accept work wherever she chooses when asked to interpret.

Susan suggested the council get a copy of that legal determination and Michelle said she thought Serena would have that.

Sheri passed out a list of terms for each of the current council members. There are currently 11 council members and the by-laws state that there must be a minimum of 9 members and each member is limited to two terms.

Paula asked about the one opening that still needs to be filled. There was some debate as to if the opening is for a professional expert or someone with a disability. Sheri suggested the council look at this some more and discuss it further at the next meeting. Gwenn reported that the council has applications on file that they can go through.

Susan volunteered to be on the membership committee. Sheri appointed Susan to the membership committee.

Student Body Government (SBG) Representative – Shavon Tate was in attendance as the SBG representative. She informed the council that the SBG hasn’t had a meeting yet, so they do not know who the officers or advisors will be this school year. She stated that the SBG does plan to attend future Advisory Council meetings. Shavon informed the council that the SBG was successful in getting a change to this year’s dress code as it pertains to the required length of shorts that are allowed to be worn to school.

Stakeholder’s Reports:

Deb informed the council that she was the Treasurer and Gwenn the President of the ISD PTSO. She reported that there was currently \$6000 in the PTSO account and approximately \$400 in the ISD PTSO account. She reported that the PTSO has made several donations towards classroom requests and they have received several more requests from ISD staff members over the summer. She stated that the main source of income for PTSO is through sales of spirit wear. She announced that there would be a Quarter Action to help with the fundraising efforts. Deb also announced that there would be a family function held at the Pumpkin Patch in Lincoln and another family outing is being scheduled in southern Illinois.

Paula asked about having a booth set up during homecoming to sell spirit wear. Gwenn responded that they are looking for help with this effort so that the same people aren't always working the booth. Gwenn also stated that if she gets staff and student support for the clothing, then an order form will be put together and made available around the time of homecoming. Charlene Hicks volunteered to help out. Gwenn reported that ISD's PTSO currently only has 5 members and she stated that it's hard to get parental volunteers because most of the parents live a good distance away from ISD.

Susan stated that she would like to have all of the ISD activities printed in the Tiger Time's Newsletter.

Paula gave a status of the round table that is located in the 2nd floor conference room of Main Building. She stated that Gallaudet doesn't have space for the table, so the Al Van Nevell Memorial Foundation Board has decided to donate the table to ISDAA.

Unfinished Business:

Recruiting deaf/HH teachers and administrators – Sheri noted that this topic was discussed during Julee's report. Paula said she knew of two people who wanted to work at ISD, but because of Illinois' budget problems they moved onto other job opportunities. She's hopeful that things will move forward now that the state has a budget and ISD has a new Superintendent. Sheri mentioned the annual CEASD conference as a good place to bring up these points and do some networking.

Deb commented that ISBE had a meeting in July to discuss the teacher certification test. She stated that there have been changes to the test and it is now very hard to pass. She explained that this is a Basic Skills Test and it affects all Illinois teachers, not just special education teachers. Gwenn stated that it's very important to look at the barriers when working on recruiting efforts.

John announced that the listening tour is still in the works and he will be working with Julee on this. John then excused himself from the meeting.

Remote Video Conferencing – Quinetta reported that this would be possible in Springfield and Chicago. She explained that advance notice would be needed and also an advanced list of attendees for security purposes.

Building ISD's reputation nationwide – Paula said that she noticed ISD's website has not been updated. Julee reported that the IT department is currently working on the website. She explained that they have to make sure documentation is accessible which means a lot of work behind the scenes and this can be a long process.

Deb commented on a poster hanging in the PK-8 School that reflects ISD's history and is very informative. She said the poster is faded and hard to read and she questioned if that poster could somehow be redone.

Michelle reported that her son is attending ASL class again this year. She explained that her son was adopted from China and had no language when he arrived here. She said that he is now reading English and is signing to communicate. She said that while working with him on his reading the evening before, she was able to contact several

of his teachers directly for support. She commented that most people don't know or don't hear that these things happen and she wants others to know how much she appreciates the support ISD staff provide and that without that support her son would not have the successes he is experiencing now.

Paula suggested that ISD advertise on the Daily Moth's website.

Set 2017/18 Meeting Calendar – Sheri reminded the council that December 8, March 9, and May 4 were the possible dates mentioned at the May 5th meeting. She asked if everyone thought those dates would still work. She also questioned if keeping the morning meeting times would be a good idea with the possibility of video conferencing. Paula suggested changing the meeting times to 8:30am-12:30pm.

Gwenn informed the council that video conferencing would need to be announced in advance and also reminded them that Quinetta would need to know at least a week before the meeting in order to get the conferencing set up and security measures taken. Gwenn said that this would mean that the announcement would need to tell people that they would have to RSVP in advance in order to participate in the video conferencing.

After some discussion, everyone agreed on the meeting dates of December 8, March 9 and May 4 from 8:30am-12:30pm.

OMA and Ethics Training updates from Council Members – Sheri stated that all council members should have received an email about OMA and Ethics training and that they can bring their information to a meeting or send it to Ed. She explained that the Ethics training is something you read and then sign and the OMA training is an on-line training. Some council members reported not receiving the link for the OMA training. Gwenn explained that the OMA training is a one-time only training and the ethics training occurs annually. If someone didn't receive the OMA link it may be because they have already completed that training. Sheri made a note to check with Ed on this.

Written Departmental Reports – Sheri noted that everyone should have received the departmental reports from Ed through email. Paula complimented Kathryn on the evaluation center report and asked Kathryn to explain about the research project with Dr. Trezek. Paula asked if the cued speech data had been released. Kathryn explained that Beverly didn't do research on cued speech, but rather on reading comprehension and that cued speech was a part of that study. Kathryn informed the council that Dr. Trezek had a publication on reading and cueing in the Journal of Deaf Studies. Kathryn explained that the teachers will continue doing what they've been doing in the classrooms and that Dr. Trezek will come on a volunteer basis if we ask her. Kathryn further explained that test scores will continue to be monitored, but because not every student is using the same program, you need to look at individual students to see the progress.

Michelle requested that Kathryn send out Dr. Trezek's article and Kathryn agreed that she would send the article to Julee to forward to all council members.

Review School Communication Policy – Julee had the communication policy printed on the back of her report. She stated that the policy hasn't changed and is available on the website. Paula explained that she had questioned the policy because the one printed on last year's school calendar didn't mention ASL. Julee explained that

last year's calendar displayed a summary of the policy and that this year's calendar was changed to include the entire communication policy.

Educational Advocates Committee – Sheri reminded council members that an Educational Advocate Committee was being set up. Paula said that she, Jerry, Gwenn, and Deb had volunteered to be on the committee. Gwenn commented that she is concerned with lack of knowledge parents have about the rights and laws regarding the education of their children. She expressed an interest in parents receiving training in educational law. Sheri mentioned that Andrea Marwah, who works with the ISD Outreach Department, is excellent with this and that she does go out and works with families. It was suggested that maybe an annual training regarding this issue could be set up.

The topic was tabled until the next meeting.

Bilingual Pay Policy for ISD Staff – Julee brought the policy for bilingual pay and stated that it is a state policy, not an ISD policy. The topic was tabled until the next meeting.

New Business:

Suggest Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

Educational Advocacy
Bilingual Pay Policy

Public Comments:

Charlene voiced her opposition to having the meetings done through video conferencing. She questioned the difference in someone coming to the meeting at ISD or going to a video conferencing site, because either way they would be missing work. Gwenn pointed out the sometimes it's just the long drive that makes it difficult for people to attend and having a video conferencing site nearby could be helpful.

Charlene also reported that she attended a cued speech workshop and she was impressed with the parents and grandparents she met who were there trying to learn to communicate with their child or grandchild.

Susan moved to adjourn the meeting. Gwenn seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.