

**Illinois School for the Deaf Advisory Council Meeting Summary**  
**December 4, 2024**  
**9:00am-11:00am**  
**Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Michelle Mendiola (Elle), Deb Gossrow, Bregitt Endicott, Tamara Jones, Carrie Tucker, Karla Giese, Jamal Garner, Julee Nist, Shirley Wilson, Benro Ogunyipe

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:**

Laci Kennedy, Desa Walls, Todd Williams, Michelle Brown, Angie Kuhn, Christine Good-Deal, Jill Bruington, Allison Fraas, Amy Bordean, Jessica Crawford, 2 ISD students

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

- Elle welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 9:03am.
- Roll call and introductions were completed.

**Reading and Approval of August 29, 2024, Meeting Minutes:**

- Deb made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from August 29, 2024. Carrie seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting minutes from August 29, 2024, were approved.

**New Business:**

- **Open Meetings Act/Mandated Trainings**
  - o Elle reported that council members should have received an email regarding their state mandated trainings. Bregitt shared that she successfully logged into her account, but the page displayed an inactive message. Carrie explained that she experienced the same issue and contacted Curt Kuhn to let him know. Karla added that she always called the state office, not the ISD office to reactivate her account. Desa added that members will receive a temporary password that expires after 24 hours, so members must login and update their password within that time frame. Carrie explained that she did contact the Springfield office and was told she needed to contact ISD to reactivate her account. Julee asked Desa to follow up on the procedure. Benro stated that he already completes some of the trainings that are required by state employees and asked if he is required to complete the trainings again for ISDAC. Carrie explained that she is a state employee and was told she is required to complete all ISDAC trainings. Jamal and Karla agreed.
- **Student Presentations (topics, requests?)**
  - o Elle asked if there was a student presentation scheduled for today. Julee shared that ISD students do have a presentation, but they aren't ready yet. Elle announced that the council will continue with the remaining agenda until the students are ready. Two ISD US history class students shared their ISD Revolution Power Point. The students explained how "Lord John" from ISD Main Building told the students they were not learning enough, and they needed more homework to prove they were learning. Mrs. Jessica and the student teacher agreed that the students should complete more

homework. The students read through their PowerPoint explaining the class activities they participated in.

- **Parent Square**

- Angie explained that Parent Square is a communication platform currently used by ISD. We use it to communicate with parents, students, and staff. There are some groups set up for teams, clubs, and activities. Parent Square is directly linked to ISD's Skyward, and it's supposed to automatically sync but we have experienced some difficulties. It is being used by teachers to communicate directly with parents without having to share their personal cellphone numbers. We also use it to post photos of classroom activities and to send emergency notifications. Deb added that she has been impressed with Parent Square so far and feels it is a good form of communication between parents and staff. The platform is well organized, and educators can keep their work information separate from how they communicate with parents. Karla added that the school where her kids attend have used Parent Square for the past two years and it has been helpful. The information is in one place making it easier to find. Angie explained that Parent Square is set up like a social media page so that users can scroll back to find information previously sent. She agrees that Parent Square is a little more organized. Tamara shared that she is unable to communicate with all her son's teachers and asked if there was a way to expand who parents can communicate with. Angie will check Tamara's account and explained that she needs to add a new message in the directory search. That feature isn't very user friendly. Tamara will send Angie a message using the process explained to test the feature. Elle added that she uses Class Dojo which is similar to Parent Square. She prefers to use that platform as a communication method over emails that can get lost in the inbox.

**Old Business:**

- **ISD Advisory Council By-Laws Reviewed/Approved Pending Ms. Julee Nist's Response**
  - Elle reported that the ISDAC By-Laws were reviewed and were posted on the ISD website on December 23, 2024. Benro asked if he has access to the By-Laws on the website. Elle said that Benro can access them, and she will also send him a copy.

**Reports:**

- **ISD Superintendent's Report (Julee Nist)**
  - Julee emailed her report to council members prior to the meeting today and tried to include several pictures of campus improvements. The ISD track is complete. Staff and students celebrated with a ribbon cutting and fun races. The track is now open for public use. The ISD Teen Center was painted, and the old furniture was replaced with newer furniture. Desa shared information about ISD's Tiger Classic that took place in October. Atlanta Area School for Deaf, Ohio School for the Deaf, Wisconsin School for the Deaf, and Westfair Christian School participated in the event. The weather was beautiful, and everything went smoothly. ISD will host the event again next year. Julee attended the elementary pumpkin drop and had the opportunity to ride up on the lift where the pumpkin was dropped. She also shared ISD's outreach services for the fiscal year 2024. ISD currently serves approximately 200 students as well as families, community, and professionals across Illinois. ISD has served a total of 6,371 people through ISD tours, ISD's Outreach Department, flu clinic, and public use of ISD facilities. The Battle of the Books participants completed their last competition recently to

determine if they will advance and participate in the final competition at Gallaudet. We will receive the results next week. ISD students and staff made a new sign for the front of Main Building. The sign is made of metal and lights up at night. Julee also shared that Main Building staff enjoyed a social potluck lunch in The Gathering Room.

- **Other Department Reports**

- Christine shared that there are several teachers who are doing elf on a shelf in their classrooms and the students are very excited about it. The elementary will not have their typical Christmas program this year, but pictures of classroom activities will be shared via Parent Square. The SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Committee has reestablished the ISD Tiger Friend program from several years ago. ISD has several students in need of extra support, so they were paired up with an ISD staff member who is not in the school setting. A meet and greet was held in the elementary gym where the students and staff decorated picture frames, took pictures together, and enjoyed cookies. The pictures will be sent to the staff and students. The ISD Tiger Friend can also participate in special classroom events with their assigned student. Jamal added that he remembers being involved in the program when he was a child and it's exciting to know the program has been reestablished. Jill explained that the ISD CTE program receives grant money every year to purchase equipment, supplies, subscriptions, etc. There will be a visitor from the Illinois State Board of Education here today to tour the CTE building. Tamara added that she ran into some of the CTE students at McDonald's recently and wanted to let Jill know they represented the school very well. Jill thanked Tamara for sharing. Desa shared that ISD will collaborate with GPSD (Great Plains School for the Deaf) for basketball, cheerleading, track, volleyball, and academic bowl. Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin are also collaborating with GPSD. The first tournament will take place in Arkansas during February. ISD Homecoming will be on January 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> this year. Wisconsin School for the Deaf, Metro School for the Deaf, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Michigan School for the Deaf, and Minnesota School for the Deaf will participate in the homecoming events. Desa invited everyone to come and watch the tournaments. Elle added that she is happy that ISD joined GPSD and thinks it is a great opportunity for ISD students.

**Discussion:**

- No discussion.

**Suggested Agenda Items for Next Meeting:**

- ISD Curriculum
- ISD student state testing
- Student presentation
- Advisory Council roles and meeting rules. Karla explained some of the ISDAC roles and responsibilities to Benro during the discussion.

**Public Comment:**

- Elle congratulated Bregitt on her new baby and reminded everyone about the next meeting scheduled for March 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjourn:**

- Elle closed the meeting at 9:58am.

**Meeting Dates:**

**March 6, 2025, 9am-11am, via Zoom**

**May 7, 2025, 9am-12pm, in-person**