

Parent Support Letter

To:

Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner

ISD Superintendent Julee Nist

Illinois State Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer

Senator Sam Mccann

Illinois State Board Education (ISBE) Superintendent Tony Smith

Illinois Dept. of Human Services (DHS): James Dimas (Secretary) ... CoreyAnn Gulkewicz (Counsel) ... & Quinetta Wade (Deputy Director of Rehabilitation)

We, as parents, guardians and family members who are in the front line of our student's placement, experiences, and successes at the Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD), are establishing ourselves in standing alongside ISD during this most recent situation of public condemnation led by Illinois Association of the Deaf Association (IAD). (See SJR article <http://www.sj•r.com/news/20180925/police-investigating•sex-video-allegedly-filmed-at-illinois-school-for-deaf>).

The IAD organization executive officers made the decision to contact the state police regarding the video being circulated in social media and allegedly posted on an adult porn website. (<https://www.mystateline.com/news/state-police-investigating-porn-video-allegedly-filmed•at•illinois-school-for-the-deaf/1476639686>). However, although IAD felt compelled to alert the authorities out of concern for the well-being of the students, their participation in the newspaper article emphasizing their involvement, opinion, and conclusions about the operations of the Illinois School for the Deaf seems to contradict any indication of their genuine concern for the school. In addition, the ISD parent used as part of their contribution to the article did not note that a child custody judgement placed her children in Jacksonville and at ISD, as referenced in earlier materials distributed by the association. It's unfortunate the newspaper did not attempt to locate parents supporting ISD to offer a more balanced perspective.

IAD has a recent history of attempting to convince the public of their best interest in the students' well-being, but IAD is a separate entity from the parents/guardians and school's authority. It is our opinion that ultimately their handling of the situation could have been based on an approach and tactic of support vs. blatant disdain on both the operation of the school and the quality of authority.

Although we agree that the incident that took place last April on campus between the students is very unfortunate, we are also aware that no school is immune from questionable and/or unacceptable behaviors among the student population. We believe and trust that ISD administration handled the situation swiftly and appropriately. We believe that this incident will be used to strategize ways to increase the safety and security of our students, reinforcing our trust of our children to the staff's care.

As parents, we believe that the responsibility for the students first belongs to the parents/guardians, then under the school's authority while in their care. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legally prescribes this responsibility. ISD has parents that are active at ISD as employees, contractual employees, that serve on the Parent Teacher Staff Organization (PTSO) raising funds for students and classrooms, serve on the ISD advisory council, act as volunteers on school grounds, and assist in serving the staff when needed.

We understand that a letter from both IAD and the Illinois School for the Deaf Alumni has been sent to you all and feel it is pertinent you also hear from some of the parents that are satisfied with their child's placement at ISD. In addition, we note that the verbiage and tone in the letter from ISD Alumni, who are also current IAD officers and/or members, is quite shocking, to say the least, in how the ISD Superintendent is being addressed. As parents we condemn this type of tactic as this would not be condoned in another school setting.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our side. This letter represents the parent's perspective, the true stakeholders, which in our opinion supersedes the opinion, perspective, and conclusions of outsiders who do not currently have a child enrolled at ISD.

Sincerely,

Curt Kuhn (ISD Parent)

Michelle Brown (ISD Parent)

Deb Gossrow (ISD Parent)

Ashley Traylor (ISD Parent)

Carrie Tucker (ISD Parent)

Christy Davenport (ISD Parent)

Dawn Tacker (ISD Parent)

Gwenn Eyer (ISD Parent)

Jennifer Mort (ISD Parent)

Rob Thomas (ISD Parent)

Cc:

Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (IDHHC)

ROE Adams/Brown/Cass/Morgan/Pike/Scott: Jill S. Reis (Regional Superintendent) & Julie Stratman (Assist. Regional Superintendent)