TO: Illinois State Board of Education

FROM: Robert E. Schiller, Superintendent
       Christopher A. Koch, Director


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Purpose of Agenda Item

Per Illinois school code, the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities is required to provide the State Board of Education with an annual reporting of activities. Therese Devine, a member of ISAC, will report on the FY02 activities of ISAC, including major policy or practice recommendations. The presentation may also address recent special education issues such as the Illinois Alternate Assessment and the upcoming reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item

Board members will be informed of ISAC activities in FY02 and receive input on current special education issues to guide subsequent decisions pertaining to special education.

Background Information

The 1997 IDEA regulations at 34 CFR 300.624 require each state to establish and maintain a State advisory panel on the education of children with disabilities. The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) fulfills this requirement in Illinois.

As specified at 105 ILCS 5/14-3.01, ISAC provides advice and policy guidance to the Governor, General Assembly, and the State Board of Education with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities. ISAC is also required to submit an annual report of panel activities and suggestions made to the State Education Agency. The attached report fulfills this obligation.
ISAC’s activities in 2001-2002 included formulating preliminary recommendations on IDEA ‘97 reauthorization, serving on the Continuous Improvement Plan Steering Committee and subsequent workgroup to finalize the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan, and discussion of special education finance and personnel shortage issues. It is likely that the ISAC Chair or his designee will address one or more of these issues during the presentation.

**Analysis and Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action and Communications**

**Analysis:** Review ISAC Annual Report for 2001-2002

**Policy Implications:**

The annual report does not have immediate policy implications. However, as ISAC conducts its work in 2002-03, any recommendations or advice the Council may provide regarding such issues as alternate assessment, IDEA reauthorization, etc., could have implications for future State Board policies and practices.

**Budget Implications:**

There are no budget issues associated with this presentation.

**Legislative Action:**

The annual report does not have implications for legislative action. In 2002-2003 ISAC expects to formulate final recommendations for IDEA ’97 reauthorization, which will have potential implications for federal legislation.

**Communication:**

Because ISAC is the primary special education advisory body to the State Board, it is important that regular avenues of communication between ISAC and the State Board be maintained.

**Pros and Cons of Various Actions**

Not applicable.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board accept the report from the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities.

**Next Steps**
• ISBE staff will continue to work with ISAC in conducting regular meetings and will forward pertinent recommendations to the State Board.

• ISBE staff will take the necessary steps to schedule direct reports by the ISAC chair or his designee at future State Board meetings, as requested by ISAC or the State Board.