Annual Report

Illinois State Advisory Council

2011-2012
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Memorandum

To: Governor, Senators, Representatives, and other Interested Parties

From: Dr. Elizabeth Conran, Chair
Illinois State Advisory Council on the
Education of Children with Disabilities

Subject: Annual Report 2011-2012

On behalf of the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC), we are pleased to submit this report summarizing the Council’s activities and accomplishments during its 2011-2012 sessions.

ISAC has experienced attrition of members whose terms had expired or who had resigned due to personal reasons. Our members are dedicated individuals who have agreed to stay on ISAC awaiting reappointment. We hope soon to have people named to the Council as each member of ISAC plays an integral part on the Council on behalf of children with disabilities in the state. Members, when appointed will represent most areas of the state as parents of children with disabilities, persons with disabilities, one member at large, educators, and governmental service agencies. We are pleased to announce that now members of the committee will also represent the two teachers’ unions, Illinois Federation of Teachers and Illinois Education Association. ISAC committees include: Executive, Access, Bilingual, Comprehensive State Plan, General Supervision/Due Process, Family Communications, Finance, Legislation, Personnel Development, Transition, and Rules and Regulations.

The Council provides comment on state and federal proposed rules that affect children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). ISAC provides valuable public comment both to ISBE and to other legislative venues in order to assure that the voice of all stakeholders is heard. The Chair provided public comment to the State Board of Education regarding the Part 226 Rules and other rules relevant to children with disabilities. Members of the Finance Committee also provided public comment regarding a more equitable funding for special education. In the spring, ISAC members held a legislative breakfast at the Capitol in order to educate legislators about the importance and duties of ISAC. The breakfast, as well as the decorations were completely prepared by special education students in various programs from around the state. ISAC has also continued to analyze the effect of the No Child Left Behind initiatives on students with disabilities, address the critical shortage of highly qualified personnel in special education, expressed concern about the lack of funding to provide adequate special education services, monitored Illinois’ progress regarding educating children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, and changes that have been made regarding the Illinois Alternate Assessment and Due Process System. This year ISAC was one of the sponsors for the Illinois Statewide Transition Conference attended by more than 700 students, parents, and professionals demonstrating the importance of transition to families in the state. ISAC members continue to provide public testimony both before the Illinois State Board of Education and before legislative committees on issues that impact students with disabilities.

ISAC appreciates your support in making a free and appropriate public education a reality for all students in Illinois. Thank you for your commitment to maintaining the level of services necessary for every student to attain his or her individualized program goals.
Mission Statement

The role of the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities is to be a proactive body, advising the Governor, Legislature and State Board of Education on current issues relating to the education of children and youth with disabilities, as well as the unmet needs of these children and their families. It is also the responsibility of this Council to encourage new strategies and technologies, while advocating high standards of excellence throughout Illinois.
Appendices

Appendix A: Presentation to State Board of Education Finance and Audit Committee

Appendix B: Proposed Changes to Special Education Rules (23 Ill. Adm. Code 226)

Appendix C: Letter to ISBE Highland Community School District #62 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw

Appendix D: Letter to ISBE East Maine School District #63 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw

Appendix E: Letter to ISBE Park Ridge-Niles School District #64 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw

Appendix F: Letter to ISBE Mt. Olive #5, Staunton #6, Gillespie #7, and Bunker Hill #8 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw

Appendix G: Letter to ISBE Triad Community Unit School District #2 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw
Identity and Purpose

Identity

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily mandated by state and federal law to provide 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 and the unmet needs of children with disabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Council is to:

1) Provide advice and policy guidance to the Governor, General Assembly, and the Illinois State Board of Education with respect to:

   a) special education and related services for children with disabilities; and,
   b) unmet needs of children with disabilities.

2) Advise the State Board of Education regarding:

   a) all rules and regulations related to the education of children with disabilities that are to be promulgated by the Board;
   b) modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans; and,
   c) qualifications for hearing officers and the rules and procedures for hearings conducted under Section 14-8.02 or Section 14-8.02a.

3) Assist the State Board of Education in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the United States Secretary of Education.

4) Advise the State Board of Education in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

5) Advise state and local education agencies regarding educational programs and materials that may be provided to children with disabilities to enable them to fully exercise their constitutional and legal rights and entitlements as citizens, including those afforded under the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Illinois Human Rights Act.

6) Advise the State Board of Education in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

7) Comment publicly on rules and regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities and the procedures for distribution of funds.
**Council Membership**

*Membership*  
The members must be citizens of the United States and of Illinois and are selected on the basis of their knowledge of, or experience in, the education of children with disabilities. Members are to be broadly representative of Illinois' population in regard to developmental, physical and mental disabilities, race, ethnic background, gender, and geographic location.

The membership of the Council is established by statute and includes twenty-three (23) persons appointed by the Governor and four (4) ex-officio voting members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Vacant</th>
<th>Riverside</th>
<th>08/07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne Lee</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>08/07</td>
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<tr>
<th>Position Vacant</th>
<th>Aurora</th>
<th>08/07</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrie Janes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Vacant</th>
<th>East Peoria</th>
<th>08/03</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanley J. Valentine</td>
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<tr>
<th>Governor Appointed</th>
<th>St. Charles</th>
<th>4/06</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Conran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Fornoff</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>8/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Foulker</td>
<td>Rockford</td>
<td>8/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Ramirez</td>
<td>Moline</td>
<td>8/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristine Stanley</td>
<td>Peoria</td>
<td>8/07</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Governor Appointed</th>
<th>Heights</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Conran</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Governor Appointed</th>
<th>East Peoria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Conran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Fornoff</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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| Governor Appointed |  
|--------------------|---------|
| Elizabeth Conran   |         |

3 individuals with disabilities, including one student or former student who is at least 18 and no older than 21 years of age at the time of his or her appointment and who is receiving special education services at public expense or received those services at the time his or her high school program terminated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anel Gonzalez</th>
<th>Riverside</th>
<th>08/07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Packer</td>
<td>Effingham</td>
<td>03/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susy Woods</td>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
<td>08/07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One regional superintendent of schools</th>
<th>Position Vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One representative of an institution of higher education that prepares special education and related services personnel</th>
<th>Suzanne Lee</th>
<th>Champaign</th>
<th>08/07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrie Janes</td>
<td>Aurora</td>
<td>08/07</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>One superintendent of a public school district</th>
<th>Position Vacant</th>
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</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One teacher of students with disabilities</th>
<th>Carrie Janes</th>
<th>Aurora</th>
<th>08/07</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>One superintendent of a public school district</th>
<th>Position Vacant</th>
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</table>

6 parents of children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 years currently receiving special education services at public expense:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Month Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Conran</td>
<td>St. Charles</td>
<td>4/06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Fornoff</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>8/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Foulker</td>
<td>Rockford</td>
<td>8/07</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristine Stanley</td>
<td>Peoria</td>
<td>8/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley J. Valentine</td>
<td>East Peoria</td>
<td>8/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>One director of special education cooperative or special education administrator from a school district of less than 500,000 population</td>
<td>Kye Gaffey</td>
<td>Lisle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One representative of a public charter school</td>
<td>Elizabeth Purvis</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One representative of a private school serving children with disabilities</td>
<td>Mike Otte</td>
<td>Oak Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One representative of a vocational, community, or business organization that provides transition services to children with disabilities</td>
<td>Sharon Slover</td>
<td>Woodstock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One at-large member from the general public</td>
<td>Jennifer Naddeo</td>
<td>Barrington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ex-Officio Members**

- Cynthia Marenco, Department of Children and Family Services
- Marjorie Olson, Department of Human Services/ORS

**ISBE Staff**

- Elizabeth Hanselmann, Assistant Superintendent Specialized Instruction Nutrition and Wellness
- David Andel, Division Administrator, Special Education Services
- Kathy Stratton, Program Specialist, Special Education Services

**Other Representative**
Committees

**Standing Committees**
- Executive Committee
- Access
- Comprehensive State Plan
- General Supervision/Due Process
- Finance
- Legislation/Interagency Communications
- Family Communications
- Rules and Regulations
- Bilingual Special Education
- Personnel Development
- Transition
- Communications Committee

**Ad-Hoc Committees**
- By-Laws Committee
- Nominating Committee
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MEETINGS</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, July 13, 2011</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>Telephone Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 05, 2011</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>ISBE - Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 06, 2011</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 1, 2011</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>Telephone Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 7, 2011</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>ISBE - Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 8, 2011</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 8, 2012</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Joint ICC/ISAC Meeting</td>
<td>ISBE - Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 9, 2012</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Committee of the Whole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 6, 2012</td>
<td>1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>Telephone Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 18, 2012</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>ISBE - Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 19, 2012</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, June 6, 2012</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>Eisenhower Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, June 7, 2012</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
<td>5318 West 135th Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Crestwood, IL 60445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public participation is invited during the business meetings. Reasonable accommodations are available upon request. Individuals requiring special accommodations should contact the Illinois State Board of Education (voice: 217/782-5589 and TTY: 217/782-1900) at least one week prior to the meeting date to allow time for making accommodations.
Critical Issues Identified for Discussion

The Council identified the following as priorities for discussion in 2011-2012:

- Twice Exceptional
- Special Education Finance
- Response to Intervention
- State Improvement Plan Progress
- Bilingual concerns
- Transition
- Post Secondary Outcomes
- Due Process
- Increased funding for special education
- Continuous Improvement Plan
- Legislation Relevant to Special Education
- Council Membership
Council Minutes

Copies of approved minutes of the Council meetings from June 8, 2006 through June 12, 2007 are available at the links given below. Individuals having difficulty accessing the minutes are asked to contact Kathy Stratton at: 217/782-5589 (Voice), 217/782-1900 (TTY), or 217/782-0372 (fax).

October 6, 2011


December 8, 2011


February 9, 2012


April 19, 2012


June 7, 2012

Public Participation

The Council provides an opportunity for public participation at every business meeting. During this period of time, participants sign in and are provided five minutes to address the various issues and concerns they have.
Council Actions

October 6, 2011

1. Motion carried to adopt the agenda as presented with the deletion of the IICC report by Marva Campbell-Pruitt.”
2. Motion carried to approve the minutes of June 9, 2011 as presented.

December 8, 2011

1. Motion carried to adopt the agenda as presented with the deletion of the IICC report.
2. Motion carried to approve the minutes of October 6, 2011 as presented with a correction in the number listing of agenda items.
3. Motion carried that Carrie Janes draft a thank you letter from ISAC to Western Illinois University in response to the “letter of appreciation” that she received acknowledging her positive impact on a student with a disability.
4. Motion carried that the remaining 2012 Executive Committee Meetings be held beginning at 8:00 a.m. and the February 8th and April 18th Committee of the Whole meeting be held at 1:00 p.m.

February 9, 2012

1. Motion carried to adopt the agenda as presented with the deletion of the IICC report.
2. Motion carried to approve the minutes of December 8, 2011 as presented.
3. Motion carried to accept the Annual Report.
4. Motion carried that that ISAC write a letter recommending that the Illinois State Board of Education designate an individual as the English Language Learner/ Special Education liaison as a resource for districts and families throughout the state.

April 19, 2012

1. Motion carried to adopt the agenda as presented with the deletion of the IICC report.
2. Motion carried to approve the minutes of February 9, 2012 as presented.
3. Motion carried that ISAC will write a letter to the Rules committee of ISBE stating our support of the changes to the 226 rules.
4. Motion carried that ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency approve the East Maine School District 63 withdrawal from the Maine Township Special Education Program.
5. Motion carried that ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency approve the Maine Township High School District 207 withdrawal from the Maine Township Special Education Program.
6. Motion carried that ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency approve the Park Ridge Community Consolidated School District 64 withdrawal from the Maine Township Special Education Program.
7. Motion carried that ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency approve the Community Consolidated School District 62 withdrawal from the Maine Township Special Education Program with the understanding that they will develop a plan for their students who are bilingual that may attend their district in the future.
8. Motion carried that ISAC for purposes of the Illinois State Annual Performance Report, support the Illinois State Board of Education staff recommendation regarding the method of assessing Indicator 4B,
which analyzes Rate of Suspension/Expulsion by Race Ethnicity, for purposes of reporting to the US Department of Education.

9. Motion carried that ISBE support a bill or changes to school code [14-8.03(a-5)] that would make the Independent Living Goal be a “must” rather than “where appropriate.”

10. Motion carried that ISAC recommend that ISBE write a letter to Representative Aaron Schock, a member of the United States House Ways and Means Committee on Social Security, in support of the continuation of WIPA (Work Incentive Planning and Assistance) as a service to assist students with disabilities in transition.

11. Motion carried that ISBE Parent Handbook be amended to include links to the new Common Core Standards and update the Transition section to include links to benefits information through the Department of Rehabilitation, Social Security, and the Illinois DHS information in WIPA (as long as it still exists).

12. Motion carried that ISAC provide examples of suspension practices in the Student Discipline chapter of the Educational Guide that may constitute violations of state and federal rules including requesting parent to remove students with disabilities from school due to inappropriate behavior.

13. Motion carried that the ISAC Committee of the Whole Meeting being held on June 6, 2012 in Crestwood, IL begin at 12:00 p.m.

June 7, 2012

1. Motion carried to adopt the agenda as presented with the deletion of the IICC report.
2. Motion carried to approve the minutes of April 19, 2012 as presented.
3. Motion that that the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities enter into a closed session per Section 2 (c) (1) of the Open Meetings Act for the purpose of reviewing the recommendations made by the Due Process Screening Committee pertaining the reappointments of the Due Process Hearing Officers for the period from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. Also, that Andy Eulass and Vickie Simpson be allowed to participate in this closed session.
4. Motion carried having completed its review of the recommendations of the Due Process Screening Committee for the reappointment of the Due Process Hearing Officers, ISAC end the closed session in order to take final action on the recommendations of the Screening Committee for the appointment of the Due Process Hearing Officers for the period from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013.
5. Motion carried that ISAC ratify the recommendations of the Due Process Screening Committee for the reappointment of the Due Process Hearing Officers for the period from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. The Due Process Hearing Officers July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 are:
   • Anne Breen-Greco
   • Mary Schwartz
   • Joseph Selbka
   • David Utley
   • Harry Blackburn
   • Michael Risen
   • Stacey Stuzman
6. Motion carried that ISAC approve the nominated officers – Beth Conran as Chair and Sharon Slover as Vice-Chair.
7. Motion carrier that ISAC approve the 2012-2013 ISAC Meeting Calendar.
8. Motion carried that ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency approve the Highland withdrawal from the Madison County Special Education Cooperative. The motion includes that ISAC additionally suggests that ISBE encourage the district to increase capacity for Secondary Transition ages 14.5 through 22.
9. The motion carried that ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency approve the Mt. Olive Community Unit School District 5, Staunton Community Unit School District 6, Gillespie Community Unit School District 7, and Bunker Hill Community Unit School District 8, withdrawal from the Madison County Special Education Cooperative. ISAC additionally suggests that ISBE encourage the district to increase capacity for Secondary Transition ages 14.5 through 22.

10. The motion carried that ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency approve the Triad Community Unit School District 2 withdrawal from Madison County Special Education Region II. ISAC additionally suggests that ISBE encourage the district to increase capacity for Secondary Transition ages 14.5 through 22.
Barriers to Success:

1. ISAC struggles to continue to operate due to lack of Appointments by the Governor to the Council.
2. There is inadequate economic support to school districts to implement the mandates of IDEA04 and NCLB. The level of services and the quality of services available to Illinois school age children who have disabilities is significantly uneven throughout the state. A fair and equitable formula which would improve the ability of some smaller and rural districts to cope with the mandates resulting from IDEA04 and NCLB is imperative. Programs to train those “highly qualified” teachers mandated by NCLB are victims of this inadequate funding.
3. Staffing levels within the Department of Special Education at ISBE remain inadequate to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, families, school personnel and ISAC.
4. ISAC is often requested to provide advice on special education matters without adequate time to meet, evaluate, discuss and make recommendations.

Accomplishments

During the period covered by this report, ISAC has accomplished the following:

1. ISAC gave Public Comment on the Part 226 Rules
2. The ISAC Communications Committee created and distributed a Newsletter to stakeholder groups twice this year. Included were General Assembly Members, educators, and parents of children with a disability.
3. ISAC members were active participants in the planning and organizing of the State Transition Conference.
4. The ISAC Transition Committee spearheaded a statewide stakeholder group that is working to champion transitioning across the state.
5. ISAC had representation at the OSEP Directors Conference.
6. ISAC was visited by the head of OSEP who attended the ISAC Legislative Breakfast and addressed ISAC at the April meeting. Discussions include review of the State Visit that was being conducted.
7. ISAC had a representative present at the ISBE Budget Hearings held around the state.
8. ISAC hosted a Legislative Breakfast in the Rotunda of the Capitol Building with special education students from schools across the state greeting the legislators, preparing and serving the breakfast.
9. Members of ISAC continue to be active participants on the ISBE Alliance for School-based Problem-solving and Intervention Resources in Education.
10. Members of ISAC participated in the LEA Determination Stakeholder group. The stakeholder group meetings identified the means by which an LEA would be identified to one of four categories: meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention, or needs substantial intervention in regards to explicit sections in the State Performance Plan.
11. The ISAC reviewed three Comprehensive Plans for withdrawal:

12. ISAC continued to review the Comprehensive Plans as requested.

13. Participation on the ISBE stakeholder group reviewing the Parents Guide.


15. Provided leadership to the Joint ISAC-Gifted Advisory Council (GAC)
Appendices
This testimony is provided on behalf of the Illinois State Advisory Council (ISAC) on the Education of Children with Disabilities. The ISAC is responsible for advising the State Board of Education as well as the Governor and Legislature on Special Education in the state of Illinois. ISAC’s mandate is to ensure appropriate special education services are provided to all students in Illinois.

The Illinois State Board of Education has posed three questions to which they have requested advocacy groups to respond.

Question #1: Should ISBE continue to prioritize General State Aid (GSA) and mandated categoricals?

Yes, ISBE should continue to prioritize GSA and mandated categoricals. We also believe it is important to point out that the funding the school districts receive for mandated categoricals is reimbursement for costs the districts have already incurred. It was brought to our attention that school districts were informed that they would only receive one of the four payments due to them in this fiscal year. We want to strongly encourage ISBE, the Legislature, and the Governor to elevate the priority given to special education funding and reimbursement to our school districts.

Question #2: What actions should the State take to ensure timely payments to school districts?

The Executive and Legislative branches are responsible for any response to this situation, since they are authorized to raise revenues, and they are responsible for the State budget process. We recommend that the State strongly encourage the Federal Government to increase federal funding to required IDEA levels. As a part of the IDEA 2004 reauthorization, Congress committed to shouldering 40 percent of the excess cost of educating students with disabilities. That obligation has never been honored, and it is estimated that the federal government’s current share of special education costs is less than half of what was originally promised.

Question #3: Should the State impose cost savings due to the reduced federal funds or leave cuts to the discretion of the local districts?

No, we are not in support of the State imposing cost savings on to districts. Instead we recommend that the State look at all existing and possibly new funding avenues to help them to meet their obligations. For FY-2011, Illinois will receive an additional $415 million from the Education Jobs Fund bill, which is federal legislation. It is possible that the State could use these funds to supplant existing funds for personnel in order to meet its budget targets.
In conclusion the ISAC recommends the following regarding the FY-2011 ISBE Budget:

- Fully fund Mandated Categoricals
- Give priority to education funding in the budget process
- Mandate that reimbursement occur in a timely manner
- Develop a plan to incrementally increase special education personnel reimbursement
- Utilize Education Job Funds to increase personnel reimbursement
- The State should strongly encourage the Federal Government to increase federal funding to required IDEA levels.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Otte
Chairperson, Finance Committee
Illinois State Advisory Council
for the Education of Students with Disabilities
Appendix: B - Proposed Changes to Special Education Rules (23 Ill. Adm. Code 226)
March 14, 2011

To: State Board of Education


Subject: Proposed Changes to Special Education Rules (23 Ill. Adm. Code 226)

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is mandated by law to comment publicly on proposed State and Federal rules. ISAC’s members represent a wide variety of stakeholders, including educators, administrators, parents, individuals with disabilities, and state agency representatives.

The ISAC is concerned with the loss of resources that the proposed rules will have for children with disabilities. The proposed regulations have to do with the list of “Qualified Workers and Noncertified Employees” that have been eliminated from the list and no longer qualify for reimbursement. For example, the proposed regulations state that: “In order to qualify for reimbursement, the noncertified employee shall provide direct services to students with IEPs.” As result, business managers, accountants, bookkeepers, educational support staff, transportation coordinators, secretaries, maintenance staff, etc. are no longer eligible for personnel reimbursement, even though they spend 100% of their time working in special education programs and facilities that support and provide services exclusively to students with disabilities. In addition, Speech and Language Assistants currently being reimbursed at the $9,000 level will drop to the noncertified level of $3,500.

For example district A employs 15 full time staff members who will no longer qualify for reimbursement which will result in a loss in revenue of $52,500. These numbers will be even greater in special education cooperatives and large districts that run separate facilities and employ even larger numbers of noncertified employees. This loss in revenue will translate into loss of jobs that will ultimately impact services to students and families.

While we understand that P.A. 96-257 is a technical clarification of the original intent of the Rules we are concerned that this change will reduce the current level of funds made available to schools in the education of children with disabilities. We would advice the ISBE that the reduction in funds for personnel reimbursement will somehow be redistributed so as to not negatively impact programming for children with disabilities.
June 18, 2012

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Highland Community School District Unit #5.

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on June 6, 2012. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Cooperative personnel. During the meeting the Special Education Director and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to withdraw.

On June 7, 2012 the ISAC carried a motion to recommend that ISBE approve that Highland Community School District Unit #5 withdraw from the Madison County Region II Cooperative. The Council suggests that prior to full approval ISBE provide further assistance to District #5 and request a comprehensive plan for services to increase capacity for Secondary Transition 14.5 through 22.

Respectfully,

Susy Woods
Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee
Appendix D: Letter to ISBE East Maine Township #63 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw

May 2, 2012

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the East Maine Township #63 from the Maine Township Special Education Program.

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on April 18, 2012. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Cooperative personnel. During the meeting the Special Education Director and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to withdraw.

On April 19, 2012 the ISAC carried a motion to recommend that ISBE approve the East Maine Township #62 withdraw from the Maine Township Special Education Program.

Respectfully,

Susy Woods
Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee
Appendix E: Letter to ISBE Park Ridge-Niles School District #64 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw

May 2, 2012

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Park Ridge-Niles School District #64 from the Maine Township Special Education Program.

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on April 18, 2012. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Cooperative personnel During the meeting the Special Education Director and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to withdraw.

On April 19, 2012 the ISAC carried a motion to recommend that ISBE approve the Park-Ridge Niles School District #64 withdraw from the Maine Township Special Education Program.

Respectfully,

Susy Woods
Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee
Appendix F: Letter to ISBE Mt. Olive #5, Staunton #6, Gillespie #7, and Bunker Hill #8 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw

June 18, 2012

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the following school districts: Mt. Olive #5, Staunton #6, Gillespie #7, and Bunker Hill #8.

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on June 6, 2012. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Cooperative personnel During the meeting the Special Education Director and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to withdraw.

On June 7, 2012 the ISAC carried a motion to recommend that ISBE approve that Mt. Olive #5, Staunton #6, Gillespie #7, and Bunker Hill #8 withdraw from the Madison County Region III Cooperative and form their own co-operative, South Macoupin Association for Special Education (SMACE). The Council suggests that prior to full approval ISBE provide further assistance to these four districts and request a comprehensive plan for services to increase capacity for Secondary Transition 14.5 through 22.

Respectfully,

Susy Woods
Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee
June 18, 2012

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Triad Community Unit School District #2.

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on June 6, 2012. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Cooperative personnel. During the meeting the Special Education Director and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to withdraw.

On June 7, 2012 the ISAC carried a motion to recommend that ISBE approve that Triad Community Unit School District #2 withdraw from the Madison County Region II Cooperative. The Council suggests that prior to full approval ISBE provide further assistance to District #2 and request a comprehensive plan for services to increase capacity for Secondary Transition 14.5 through 22.

Respectfully,

Susy Woods
Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee