



The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities Newsletter

#### ISAC Council Members 2008—2009

##### Individuals with Disabilities

Anel Gonzalez (Forest Park)  
Kyle Packer (Effingham)  
Rahnee Patrick (Chicago)  
Susy Woods (Chesterfield)

##### Parents of Children with Disabilities

Beth Conran (St. Charles)  
Nora Donoghue (Highland Park)  
Deb Fornoff (Washington)  
Heather Munz (Freeport)  
Rick Ramirez (Moline)

Kristine Stanley (Peoria Heights)  
Stanley Valentine (East Peoria)

##### Teacher of Students with Disabilities

Carrie Janes (Aurora)

##### General Public

Jennifer Naddeo (Barrington)

##### Private Provider

Mike Otte (Oak Forest)

##### Public Charter Schools

Elizabeth Purvis (Chicago)

##### Special Education Directors

Teresa Garate (Chicago)  
Jim Surber (LADSE—Lisle)

##### Vocational, Community or Business Organization Provider of Transition Services

Sharon Slover (McHenry County)

##### Regional Superintendent

(open)

##### LEA Superintendent

(open)

##### Higher Education

Suzanne Lee (U of I/Urbana)

##### DHS Secretary or Designee

Marjorie Olson

##### DCFS Designee

Frances Elbert

##### DJJ Designee

Lanéé Walls

##### ICC Representative

Marva Campbell-Pruitt

## ISAC FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENTS AT THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (ISBE) FY2010 BUDGET HEARING

Mike Otte and Jim Surber of the ISAC Finance Committee requested that special education receive priority status for fiscal year 2010 in their presentation to ISBE's Finance and Audit Committee in Wheaton on December 3, 2008. A few facts shared at the board meeting included:

- 37,137 children, ages 3 to 5 received special education services in 2007.
- 286,122 students, ages 6 to 21, received special education services in 2007.

ISBE has set the following goals for schools and students in Illinois.

- Every student will demonstrate academic achievement and be prepared for success after high school.
- Every student will be supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
- Every school will offer a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

These goals apply to all students including students receiving special education services. Significant resources must be allocated to special education if these goals are to be met by all students.

Special education funding in Illinois has not kept pace with education mandates and Illinois lags significantly behind other states with reference to funding for special education. The ISAC Finance Committee urged ISBE members to support full funding of mandated special education programs so that Illinois schools can provide appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for all children with disabilities.

Members of this subcommittee include Jim Surber, Mike Otte, Marva Campbell-Pruitt, and Stanley Valentine.



*Finance Committee  
Member Jim Surber of  
LADSE in Lisle.*

## THE ISAC GENERAL SUPERVISION — DUE PROCESS COMMITTEE

Rick Ramirez, Moline, is the chair of ISAC General Supervision/Due Process subcommittee. Our subcommittee members include: Deb Fornoff (Washington), Suzanne Lee (Champaign), Heather Munz (Freeport), Sharon Slover (Harvard) and Kristine Stanley (Peoria Heights).

The ISAC by-laws set forth the following responsibilities for our committee: 1) Make recommendations on proposed due process rules and regulations; 2) Develop objective criteria regarding the selection of due process hearing officers; 3) Recommend to the Council the need for additional hearing officers; 4) Receive, review and provide input as necessary to the Annual Impartial Due Process Hearing System Report; and 5) Review and make recommendations to the full ISAC Council regarding the state's overall impartial due process system.

### Overview of Illinois Dispute Resolution System

On February 11, 2009, Andrew Eulass, ISBE Due Process Coordinator, presented the ISAC council of the whole with an update of the current Due Process System. Mr. Eulass presented data and discussed in detail the following dispute resolution issues and concerns.

- Current special education dispute resolution functions in Illinois
- Emerging problems and issues facing Illinois dispute resolution
- Current structures and organizations surrounding dispute resolution and how they help or hinder the dispute resolution process as a whole
- First steps (and other long-term steps) to both better define problems and issues, and to identify solutions

In Illinois, there are three principal mechanisms for resolving disputes at the present time:

- State-Sponsored Mediation
- State Complaints
- Due Process Hearings (includes Resolution Process)

Mr. Eulass also commented that several agencies and organizations have been identified as key stakeholders and provide by mandate various levels of input into the current system. The agencies and a summary of their involvement are as follows:

- ISBE – statutes, rules, policies, appointment of some members of Due Process Screening Committee
- ISAC – policy recommendations, ratification of hiring and renewal of hearing officer contracts
- Due Process Screening Committee – review of hearing officer performance, policy recommendations
- Office of the Attorney General - appointment of some members of Due Process Screening Committee, provides advisory forum on policy affecting dispute resolution

Overall, a number of issues and problem areas were noted for discussion including, but not limited to, financial costs of the process, access to legal representation, timeliness of hearings and related legal procedures, and availability of other dispute resolution options. The idea of compiling a potential stakeholders group to begin identifying areas of reform was discussed. Mr. Eulass has agreed to prepare a working draft of recommendations for ISAC to review as it prepares its report to the committee of the whole for action.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008 Dispute Resolution Data

	Mediations	Complaints	Due Process
Total Cases Initiated	226	112	360
Total Completed (as of November 1, 2008)	163	92	359 (47 full hearings*)

\*Includes cases initiated before July 1, 2007

*Save the Date!*



The Illinois Interagency Coordinating  
Council Presents

2009 Illinois Transition Conference

**Mission Transition: Destination Success**

November 8-10, 2009

Renaissance Hotel & Convention Center  
Schaumburg, Illinois

***Did You Know You Could Find These  
Important Items On The ISBE  
Website Under Special Education?***

- Annual State Reports on Special Education Performance
- Information on the Complaint Investigation Process for ISBE
- A Video on Resolving Special Education Disputes

***Check it out at  
www.isbe.net***



## **ISAC BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE— ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES**

The purpose of the Bilingual Special Education Committee of the Illinois State Advisory Council is to address systemic needs of English Language Learners with disabilities throughout the state. Additionally this committee is charged with understanding regulations, policies, procedures, and/or programs as they emerge that may impact this population. The committee stays informed of issues, policies and best practices, and uses this information to make recommendations through ISAC to ISBE's leadership. Other areas of focus include working to improve supports for school districts to provide appropriate educational supports, and to collaborate as part of the statewide Joint Bilingual Special Education Sub-Committee with the Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education (IACBE).



***Bilingual Special Education Committee Members:***  
*From left to right, Tere Garate, (Chicago), Rahnee Patrick (Chicago), Anel Gonzalez (Forest Park), and Jennifer Naddeo (Barrington)*

## ISAC MEMBERS TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN SUCCESSFUL STATEWIDE TRANSITION CONFERENCE

On October 27—29, 2008, the Fourth Annual Statewide Transition Conference was held in Peoria. This three-day event was a collaborative project of the Illinois Interagency Coordinating Council, a group in which ISAC is represented. The conference brought more than 800 students, parents, teachers, and other agency and educational professionals together to learn about best practices in transition, legal requirements, and resources available to help increase awareness and possibilities for youth with disabilities. Attendees had numerous exciting choices for each breakout session and many of those sessions were presented by ISAC members!

The theme was **Transition: Bridge to the Future**. The conference included nationally recognized keynote speakers including Kathie Snow, the mother of Emily and Benjamin, and a zealous promoter of new ways of thinking about disability. Kathie authored the book Disability is Natural—Revolutionary Common Sense for Raising Successful Children with



Brett Eastburn

Disabilities and provides a wealth of resources to families and others on her website at [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com).

Brett Eastburn, a motivational speaker, club and corporate comedian and part-time substitute teacher also provided both humor and inspiration. Brett was born with a congenital problem known as Quadmemberal Limbs Deficiency which means very simply he has no arms or legs.

Dr. Patrick Schwarz closed out the conference on a high note, sharing his thoughts and experiences with changing the paradigm **From Disability to Possibility**. Dr. Schwarz is a dynamic and engaging professor, author, motivational speaker and leader in Education (Inclusive Education, Special Education, General Education and Educational Leadership) and Human Services. Patrick is Professor and Chair of the Diversity in Learning and Development Department at National-Louis University, Chicago.

Next year's Transition Conference, **Mission Transition: Destination Success**, will be held on November 8—10, 2009 in Schaumburg, IL.



Kathie Snow



Dr. Patrick Schwarz

### 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.*

### PRIMARY ISAC ACTIVITIES

- Joint Agreement Withdrawal
- Commenting on Rules and Regulations
- Providing input on Continuous Improvement Plan
- Due Process and General Supervision input
- Serving on other assignments/committees
- Development of an Annual Report
- Providing guidance on state rules
- Implementing IDEIA

Please contact Rick Ramirez,  
Ad Hoc Communications  
Committee Chair, with any  
comments or questions at  
[ramirez@netexpress.net](mailto:ramirez@netexpress.net)  
or 1-800-813-0392

***This newsletter was printed by students from The Menta Group – Hillside Academy, Hillside, Illinois***

***Thank You!***