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

ISAC Council Members
2012 - 2013

Individuals with Disabilities*
Ancel Montenelli (Forest Park)
Susy Woods (Springfield)

Parents of Children with Disabilities*
Beth Conran (St. Charles)
Deb Fornoff (Washington)
Rick Ramirez (Moline)
Kristine Hohulin (Effingham)
Stanley Valentine (East Peoria)
Tiffany Cole (Monmouth)

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
Rebecca Clark (Chicago)
Heath Brosseau (Chicago Ridge)

Vocational, Community or Business Organization
Provider of Transition Services
Sharon Slover (McHenry County)

Regional Superintendent
Stephen Breese (Jacksonville)

LEA Superintendent*

Higher Education
Suzanne Lee (U of I Urbana)

DHS Secretary or Designee
Marjorie Olson

DCFS Designee
Frances Elbert

DJJ Designee
Kye Gaffey (Chicago)

ICC Representative*

*Vacancies exist in this ISAC representative category. For information on how to apply, please go to: http://appointments.illinois.gov/bcForm.cfm

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

Welcomes students receiving special education services, their teachers, parents and all Illinois legislators to our

7th Annual Legislative Breakfast

This is an important opportunity for our legislators to meet our children and learn about their gifts as well as their challenges in obtaining a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in Illinois.

The breakfast is prepared and served by students receiving special education services

Where: Illinois State Capitol Rotunda

Springfield, Illinois

When: Wednesday, April 17, 2013

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Free to all participants

Financial assistance is available to students on an individual and limited basis.

For further information, contact Sharon Slover at sharon.slover@menta.com or 630-907-2400.
ISAC Committee News

ISAC Committee Chairs and officers make up the ISAC Executive Committee. They are from left—front row: Deb Fornoff—Transition; Ancel Montenelli—Bi-Lingual. Second row: Susy Woods—Comprehensive State Plan; Stan Valentine—Legislative; Beth Conran—ISAC Chair; Kristine Hohulin—Access; Sharon Slover—Vice-Chair; Mike Otte—Finance; Rick Ramirez—General Supervision/Due Process & Ad Hoc Communication; Suzanne Lee—Personnel Development. Missing from the picture are Beth Purvis—Family Communication; Jennifer Naddeo—Bi-Lingual Co-Chair. You may contact ISAC through Chair Beth Conran at beth.conran@menta.com.

ISAC Executive Committee

The State has established and maintains an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State. The Executive Committee of the ISAC is comprised of the Chairs of each of the Council’s Committees. The Executive Committee meets 5-6 times per year. The Executive Committee is charged with advising the ISBE on unmet needs of children with disabilities, comment publicly on rules or regulations proposed, advise the ISBE in developing evaluations and reporting on data, as well as advising the ISBE in developing and implementing policies on the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

Transition Committee

At the February 2013 meeting of the Transition Committee, items discussed included:

- Employment First policy in Illinois and how it may impact transition
- New items added to the ISBE website transition section
  - Health and Transition to Adulthood: Building the Foundation for Success
  - Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success
- A work group of the Governor’s Committee on Employment and Economic Opportunity, led by Sharon Slover, and charged with researching job development/employment consultant training and certification needs
- The upcoming Transition Institute planned by ISBE for March 21 and 22, 2013 in Springfield
- The Statewide Transition Conference for 2013 is scheduled for October 24—25, 2013 in Effingham. They are researching keynote speakers and will begin soliciting workshop/breakout sessions soon.
The Family Communication Subcommittee was developed to provide a forum for Council members to discuss issues and disseminate information to parents and families of children with disabilities. The committee will hold meetings throughout the state in conjunction with regularly scheduled Council meetings. If you would like a member or ISAC to come and speak at an event, meeting, or gathering of families of students with disabilities, please contact Beth Purvis at bpurvis@chicagointl.org.

At the February ISAC meeting, the Ad Hoc Communication and Family Communication Committees met jointly to discuss the ISAC newsletter. Rick Ramirez, chair of the Ad Hoc Communication Committee, noted that the newsletter is primarily compiled in a hard copy format with emphasis on educating legislators on ISAC and its role and functions. It was decided by both committees to also utilize the newsletter as an informational piece to make contact with families of students receiving special education services and special education providers around the state. Beth Purvis, Chair of the Family Communication Committee, asked each ISAC member to distribute the newsletter to at least one organization. The goal here is to provide a vehicle for special education stakeholders to communicate concerns and issues impacting the education of special education students to ISAC.

Due Process/General Supervision Committee

Andy Eulass, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Due Process Coordinator, and Rick Ramirez, Chair, of the ISAC Due Process/Supervision subcommittee, informed the Illinois State Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Developmental Disabilities (ISAC) members of the recent interviews of Due Process Hearing Officers (H0) for the state in December of 2012. Six hearing officers were recommended by ISAC for active hiring and 2 officers were selected to be placed on the reserve list. Mr. Ramirez also noted that a three day special education training and orientation was conducted for the HO in January. Rick Ramirez can be reached at rick.ramirez@mchsi.com.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee serves to educate the ISAC on any legislation that impacts the education of children with disabilities in Illinois. The committee also shares information on how any changes would impact families and school systems across the state. The committee is currently busy organizing the annual Legislative breakfast. More information about this breakfast is available on page 1 of this newsletter. Please share this information with your child’s teacher. This event has been a great and practical learning opportunity for many students! A tip sheet for planning your visit is included in this newsletter as well. Consider bringing your child to the Capitol to let your legislators know the importance of special education services to your family. Financial assistance may be available. See page 1.

Thank you and Happy Retirement, Kathy!

ISAC would like to offer a huge and heartfelt thank you to Kathy Stratton of ISBE. You have been wonderful to us and we wish you all the best!
ISAC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**Tiffany Cole — Parent**

Tiffany Cole resides in Monmouth, IL and is the mother of two; Drew is a Freshman at Aurora University and Erika is a Junior at Monmouth-Roseville High School. Tiffany is a graduate of Monmouth College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration and Psychology and holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Western Illinois University. She is a Financial Representative for COUNTRY Financial and in addition to providing multi-line insurance products she also offers financial services including retirement and special needs planning. She holds a Financial Services Specialist certification. Her past experiences include serving as a Trust Officer for a local financial institution and a Senior Development, Planned Giving and Alumni Programming Officer for Monmouth College. Her hobbies include photography, reading and watching her children participate in their numerous activities.

Cole currently is a member of the Warren County Board and serves on its Finance Committee, is a member of the Warren County Board of Health, is a grant writer for the Rainbow Riders Therapeutic Riding Center where her daughter rides, is a member of the Carl Sandburg College Foundation Board of Directors, Chapter E PEO, Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Association and is a Governor Appointee to the Western Illinois Economic Development Authority Board of Directors. She has served as a school board member, led the school consolidation marketing effort, chaired the district fundraising and capital planning and corporate funding committees, has presented at the State School Board Conference as well as numerous other seminars and is a past president of the Monmouth Area Chamber of Commerce and the Warren County Prime Beef Festival. Tiffany joins ISAC as a parent of a child with disabilities and is very interested in continuing to advocate for those with special needs.

**Heath Brosseau — Director of Special Education**

For the last 8 years, Heath Brosseau has served as the Director of Special Education for Indian Springs School District 109, located in Justice, Illinois. Prior to becoming the Director, Heath served as a special education teacher working with learners with disabilities in grades 3rd through 6th.

He earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale Illinois, a Master’s Degree in Special Education and a Type 75 Administrative Certificate from Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois. Mr. Brosseau serves as the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) liaison for the Executive Board.

Mr. Brosseau has made presentations on the important topic of inclusive strategies for students with disabilities at the IAASE Conference and was the 2012 pre-conference presenter at the international Kids Included Together (KIT) conference. Heath resides in Chicago Ridge, with his loving wife and two cats.

**Steve Breese— Regional Superintendent**

Steve received his Bachelor’s degree from Illinois State University in Elementary Education and a Masters degree from the University of Illinois, Springfield, in Educational Administration.

He taught for 20 years in a mostly self-contained setting, working with 5-6th grade students. Steve served as a Principal for one year at Illinois School for the Visually Impaired and two years as a K-12 Principal in the small rural school district known as Triopia. For the last 10 years he have served as the Regional Superintendent of Schools for Brown, Cass, Morgan, and Scott counties.

Steve has two children with special needs so has been involved with the process of Special Education throughout his educational career from both sides of the table. Steve says “I feel like this background will help make me a productive member of the ISAC organization.”

Check out the Special Education resources available at www.isbe.net/spec-ed
Preparing to Visit Your Legislator

How to contact your legislator:
To request a meeting with your legislator, be sure to contact the correct office. You may set up an appointment either through email or a phone request. Be sure to have the date you want to meet and the time you will be at the capital.

Be sure to mention you are in Springfield as part of the ISAC Legislative Breakfast. The person answering the phone will ask the following:
• participant names
• purpose of request/topic of meeting
• contact name and information
• Date, time, and location

Call shortly before you leave to confirm the appointment. Occasionally, hearings or other meetings occur that demand their presence elsewhere at the time of your meeting.

Preparing for the meeting
Know your concerns – be prepared to discuss your ideas and be aware of community response and interest. Note opposing viewpoints and constituencies, and be prepared to respond to these concerns if raised by your legislators.

Give your legislator an "issues packet" during your visit. The purpose of the packet is to provide a point of reference to focus discussion, and to reinforce some of the matters discussed after you have left.

You may wish to supplement this material with local information and facts that reinforce special education issues being raised. Be sure to provide detailed information about your districts. Although legislators are often provided with information regarding the statewide effect of their decisions, they rarely have available information on the specific school districts they represent. If you provide that information, you will have a greater chance of influencing decisions.

The association also included articles which supported their positions. Even if your legislator has previously read the article, it reinforces that the press and the community are aware of the problem, and that is something your legislator should consider important and work with you to resolve.

Be sure to include names of contact people in your packet so the legislator or his/her staff can contact you for further information.

If you prepare such a packet before meeting with your legislators, your discussion is more likely to be focused on the issues you wish to discuss. The legislator will also see you as a valuable information source who may be relied upon in the future.

During the Visit
Have confidence in yourself. Do not let the fear of visiting a state legislator intimidate you. A conscientious legislator welcomes advice and counsel.

After a summary introduction, note your purpose and objective for the meeting. Be as concise as possible. Depending on the time you meet with the legislator, he/she may be on a limited time schedule and time may be of the essence.

Don't insist on a commitment before your legislator has considered all the facts. A legislator has various considerations, such as other constituencies, other provisions of the bill, future amendments, etc., to weigh before making a commitment. Also, do not be carried away by a friendly reception and interpret this reception as support for your position without having heard this support stated.
The 8th Annual Illinois Statewide Transition Conference was held on October 24-26, 2012, at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois. Over 700 participants attended the conference which included sessions geared to high school aged students and young adults with disabilities, their family members and teachers, vocational professionals, caregivers, health care professionals, college students pursuing careers in special education and community advocates.

The conference, titled "Stepping Stones of Transition", invited participants to imagine the possibilities for students with disabilities in the areas of independent living, education and training, employment, community integration, health care, and self-advocacy.

Jonathon Mooney, the keynote speaker, explained what a challenge it was to grow up with learning disabilities and ADHD and how he didn't learn to read until he was 12 years old. He overcame the overwhelming depression he felt because of the support from his mother and a college English professor and his outstanding soccer success. Jonathon went on to graduate from Brown University, has written two books, and is a national leader in the disability arena.

Young adults with disabilities took an active role in this year's conference. Speakers for several of the sessions were young adults with disabilities who shared their journeys, struggles and successes. One hundred twenty parents and 90 students attended this year's conference.

The 2013 conference will be held in Effingham, Illinois on October 24 and 25. Mark your calendars now for this exciting and informative event!