

**ILLINOIS STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON THE EDUCATION OF
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

**Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777**

BUSINESS MEETING
December 11, 2008
9:00 a.m.

I. Procedural Business

ISAC Chair Susy Woods called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

ISAC Members Present

Beth Conran
Deb Fornoff
Carrie Janes
Suzanne Lee
Heather Munz
Marjorie Olson

Mike Otte
Rahnee Patrick
Kim Peck
for Frances Elbert
Beth Purvis
Rick Ramirez

Sharon Slover
Jim Surber
Stanley Valentine
Susy Woods

ISAC Members Absent

Marva Campbell-Pruitt
Nora Donoghue
Teresa Garate

Anel Gonzalez
Jennifer Naddeo
Kyle Packer

Kristine Stanley
Lanée Walls

ISBE Members Present

David Andel
Scott Beever
Juana Burchell

Jodi Fleck
Melanie Fleenor
Deb Kunz

Kathy Stratton
Gwen Williams

Guests Present

Deb Einhorn

Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center

Introductions

Chair Woods welcomed ISAC members, staff and guests and asked that they introduce themselves.

Adoption of Agenda

Motion #1 – Heather Munz **moved** to “adopt the agenda as presented.” Carrie Janes **seconded** the motion. **The motion carried.**

Approval of Business Meeting Minutes from October 9, 2008.

Motion #2 –Rick Ramirez **moved** to “approve the minutes of October 9, 2008 as presented.” Stan Valentine **seconded** the motion. **The motion carried.**

II. Public Participation

Dan Allen sent a letter to ISAC on behalf of Wabash and Ohio Valley Special Education District stating “Illinois is no longer meeting its financial obligation.” Mr. Allen was unable to attend the meeting and so the letter was read into public record by Sharon Slover. The letter encourages ISAC members “to use your influence and professional organizations to enlist help” in resolving the state of Illinois’ financial crisis.

III. ISBE Update

Zena Naiditch, Equip for Equality was due to present to ISAC; however, due to conflicts they cancelled for today but have rescheduled for February 11, 2009.

APR/SPP Update

Jodi Fleck, Principal Consultant, ISBE shared a document regarding SPP and APR Information. Ms. Fleck updated members on the progress of the Annual Progress Report (APR) that is due February 1, 2009. She outlined specific target data and the progress that has been made for the various indicators. Ms. Fleck will also share updated information during the January 6, 2009 ISAC Executive Committee Meeting.

Disproportionality

Scott Beever, Principal Consultant, provided a follow-up to the October ISAC meeting where Indicator 5 was discussed. ISAC had passed the following motion:

“ISBE use a weighted risk ratio of 4.0 or higher for a particular racial/ethnic group for significant disproportionality in educational environments where there are at least 20 students in the racial/ethnic group in question and at least 20 students in the comparison group, remaining consistent with the criteria used for significant disproportionality with regard to identification.” The motion was amended to include: “ask that ISBE staff share how, through the focused monitoring process and State Performance Plan evaluation, it will comprehensively monitor, target, and support improvement in districts with regard to disproportionality by race/ethnic group across educational environments.”

Mr. Beever came today to update ISAC on how ISBE is continuing to address cultural sensitivities in Indicator 5. Of the thirty districts that were selected for focused monitoring visits this year, six-to-seven districts have been identified as having possible concerns regarding cultural sensitivity across the educational environments. The focused monitoring teams will be looking at this data with the districts during their visits. Juana Burchell, also a Principal Consultant, shared an overview of the improvement activities for Indicator 5 which will stress technical assistance and training, and collaboration with Indicator 8. Ms. Burchell noted that there is also a strong parental component as well.

Focused Monitoring Update

David Andel, Division Administrator, reviewed the number of focused monitoring visits that have already taken place and those that are coming up. He also shared a list sorted by district and joint agreement. The list shows the data since the 2005-2006 school year. Are the focused monitoring visits making a difference? Yes.

The data shows that the districts are making progress after the visits and improvement activities take place, and that then improves services for the students.

Other

Mr. Anandel stated that 2nd Annual “Best Practices and Guidelines” for Nonpublic Programs Conference held in Oak Lawn on November 20-21, 2008 was very successful. There were over 230 participants. He thanked Paul Nijensohn and Sarah Sebert of ISBE for their work in planning and coordinating the conference.

ISBE and superintendents met to discuss inputting student discipline information into SIS for Indicator 4 for OSEP reporting. The superintendents do not want this data reported due to confidentiality of student records. However, ISBE consultants will be able to set up SIS to purge the information at the end of the year and create a separate database for longitudinal reporting without student’s names or SIS numbers.

Mr. Anandel shared some data from ISBE’s Special Education Division daily workload. For the months of July, August, September and October, the Division received 3612 phone calls, 299 Heat Tickets, 50 Letters of Response and 39 complaints.

Donna Schertz, Division Supervisor, and Mr. Anandel attended a fall forum offered by Brustein & Manasesevit. They predicted federal education policies for 2009 to include capital investments into building early childhood education, investing in success and innovation, and recruiting, retaining and rewarding teachers. They predict basically a status quo of NCLB although the name will probably disappear under the new administration. They believe the issues of reducing high school dropouts and funding for the education of strong leaders will not be priorities for the upcoming year.

Beth Hanselman is attending a conference in Kansas City which is focused on state strategies for enhancing teacher effectiveness, recruitment and retention of teachers. This policy forum is tied to Goal 2 of the Illinois State Board of Education

State Board Meetings / Future Meetings

Chair Woods reviewed the list of State Board Meetings scheduled and the ISAC members who have agreed to attend. Future scheduled attendance includes: December – Springfield – Marjorie Olson; January – Springfield – Suzanne Lee; February – Springfield – Sharon Slover; March – Springfield – Lanée Walls; April – Springfield – Beth Conran.

IV. Committee Reports

Committee reports will be available in the next ISAC packet.

Executive – Susy Woods, Chair – The November Executive Committee met to discuss the presentation from Mike Otte and the ISAC Finance Committee made at the Illinois State Board of Education’s December 3, 2008 Budget Hearing. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Access – Kris Stanley, Chair – no meeting was held so there was no report at this time.

Ad Hoc Communications – Rick Ramirez – The committee discussed the upcoming Spring, 2009 newsletter and how best to use it in conjunction with the Legislative

Breakfast. The Menta Group (Beth Conran) has offered to provide future printing of the newsletter. ISAC appreciates this service.

Bilingual – Tere Garate, Chair – no meeting was held so there was no report at this time.

Comprehensive State Plan – Beth Conran, Chair – Ms. Conran reviewed the proposed withdrawal of Rochester CUSD 3A from SASSED.

Family Communications – Beth Purvis, Chair – Donna Schertz, Division Supervisor, ISBE joined the committee and discussed how ISBE tracks procedural alignment to IDEA communications statutes. Ms. Schertz explained that the Special Education Division takes, on average, 1000 calls per month from parents and interested parties. She explained that a new computerized data system will be used to track the most important issues and follow-up with guidance for school systems.

Finance – Mike Otte, Chair – Mr. Otte was the fourth presentation to the Budget committee on December 3, 2008. Jim Surber joined Mr. Otte for the presentation and described how funding was effecting his own organization. The Budget committee had no questions for the gentlemen during the hearing.

General Supervision/Due Process – Rick Ramirez, Chair – The committee met with Andy Eulass, Due Process Coordinator for ISBE, who presented the latest 2007-2008 conflict resolution data. The committee discussed this data and the need to continue to look toward expanding dispute resolution options that prevent due process. Mr. Eulass will present to the full ISAC in February.

Legislation – Stan Valentine, Chair – Mr. Valentine thanked Melanie Fleenor, ISBE, for putting a flier discussing the Spring 2009 Legislative Breakfast in the Transition Conference packets. The group discussed how cuts are affecting the schools. Tentatively the legislative breakfast will be held April 22nd or 23rd in the Capitol Rotunda. Susy Woods will check the legislative calendar and chose a day. The dates might conflict with PSAE testing of high schoolers so alternate dates will be reviewed. Mr. Valentine is also seeing if it is possible to get a stipend for students to attend.

Personnel Development – Marjorie Olson, Chair - The committee presented a letter that was written to the parent who presented at the October meeting. Although the letter does not address the parent's specific complaint, it does inform her that ISAC is going to research the possibility that this might be a systemic issue. ISAC will ask ISBET staff about whether there is a pattern in the nature of special education complaints involving provision of special education services to address secondary disabilities.

Rules and Regulations – Beth Conran, Chair – There was no meeting so there is no report at this time.

Transition – Deb Fornoff, Chair – The committee members were joined by ISBE guests Sue Walter, Scott Beaver, Melanie Fleenor and Scott Beaver. Sue Walter shared information on the Transition Survey Project she has been working on with Loyola University. Scott Beaver shared the latest transition data including

information on Indicator 14. The committee will meet again via telephone on January 7, 2009.

Illinois Interagency Coordinating Council on Transition (ICC) – Marva Campbell-Pruitt was unable to attend the meeting. Deb Fornoff is the ISAC liaison to ICC. She reviewed highlights from the last ICC meeting. There were 730 attendees at the Statewide Transition Conference. There was positive feedback from these people. Next year’s conference will be held in the “north” but a location has not yet been selected. An Interagency Training for ICC member agencies is being planned for March of 2009. The draft of the **Illinois Strategic Plan** to Reduce/Eliminate Barriers to Employment for People with Disabilities from the Strategic Planning Leadership Committee is now available online at www.hbwdillinois.com/assets/mig_dsp.pdf The 2005/2006 Annual Report is complete and awaiting signatures and mailing. The 2007/2008 report is being finalized.

V. Old Business

A. Update on previous motions

Chair Woods reviewed the motions that had been made at the October Business Meeting.

B. Annual Report

Beth Conran will send the final version to Kathy Stratton so that it can be posted on the ISAC webpage. A letter will then be emailed to state legislators indicating that the report is available for their review.

VI. New Business

After final discussion of Rochester CUSD 3A’s proposed withdrawal from SASSED, the following motion was made:

Motion #3 – Beth Conran **moved** that “ISAC send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency consider obtaining the following information that was not present in the Comprehensive Plan for Withdrawal of the Rochester CUSD 3A from SASSED.

1. A plan for provision of appropriately certified staff to serve students with disabilities as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).
2. Assess impact to the remaining districts in the Cooperative.
3. Obtain the Cooperative Separation Agreement.
4. Obtain approval of the ROE relative to the separation.

Upon receipt of the above information ISAC recommends that ISBE approve the withdrawal of the Rochester CUSD 3A from SASSED.” Rahnee Patrick **seconded** the motion. **The motion carried. There was one abstention.**

Motion #4 - Marjorie Olson **moved** to ratify the testimony given (see attached) by Michael Otte to the State Board of Education’s Budget Committee. “I move that ISAC approve the finance committee’s presentation and information and share both with the Illinois State Board of Education’s Finance and Audit Committee in Wheaton, Illinois on December 3, 2008.” Deb Fornoff **seconded** the motion. **The motion carried.**

Motion #5 – Stan Valentine **moved** “that ISAC send a letter to the Governor’s Office and House and Senate members to stop all financial cuts to education, special education, disabilities services, and mental health services. We are already

underfunded on all of these programs.” Rick Ramirez **seconded** the motion. **The motion carried.**

Motion #6 – Marjorie Olson **moved** that “ISAC approve and send a letter to Aimee Veith, under Susy Wood’s signature, acknowledging her testimony and directing her complaint to ISBE.” Carrie Janes **seconded** the motion. **The motion carried.**

Motion #7 – Suzanne Lee **moved** that “ISAC ask ISBE staff to report back to ISAC about whether there is a pattern in the nature of special education complaints involving provision of special education services to address secondary disabilities.” Carrie Janes **seconded** the motion. **The motion carried.**

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

**Presentation to State Board of Education Finance and Audit Committee
FY 2010 Budget Hearing
December 3, 2008 – Wheaton, IL**

We are here on behalf of the Illinois State Advisory Council (ISAC) on the Education of Children with Disabilities. 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. Our purpose today is to advocate for students by requesting that funding for Special Education be a priority for FY 2010.

The number of children served in special education in Illinois in 2007 was:

- 37,137 children ages 3-5,
- 286,122 students ages 6-21.

These numbers reflect a small decrease for students between 6-21, and a 4% increase for 3-5 year old children. Although the total number of students served has decreased slightly, we continue to see increases in the areas of more challenging disabilities i.e. Autism, Other Health Impairments and Multiple Impairments where costs are also greater.

The Illinois State Board of Education has set the following goals for the schools and students of 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.
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The ISAC commends ISBE for these goals and the corresponding strategies they set to meet these goals. We acknowledge that these goals are for all students including students served in special education. We recognize however that significant resources must be allocated to special education services if these goals are to be met for all students. If school districts are expected to provide free and appropriate public education services in the least restrictive environment for all children with disabilities, including those with the most intensive needs, the State of Illinois must look for ways to adequately and equitably fund all mandated Special Education categoricals for the FY 2010 and into the future. We would like the committee to acknowledge the regressive nature of the funding formulas related to personnel reimbursement, and strongly advocate for increases to the reimbursement rate. The \$9,000 reimbursement rate received for certified special education teachers in FY 09 indicates only a \$1000 increase since 1985. In 1985 the \$8000 reimbursement represented 35% of the average teacher salary, and in 2007 the \$9,000 reimbursement represents 15% of the average teacher salary. According to the Center for Special Education Finance's Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP), the national average cost of educating a child in special education is roughly twice the cost of a student in regular education. Federal funding for IDEA services has decreased over the past 3 years. Despite increased demands on school districts to meet Special Education needs, state and federal funding remains stagnant. On behalf of the ISAC we urge your support for full funding of mandated Special Education categoricals as well as an increase to personnel reimbursement for the FY 2010 and into the future.

Respectfully submitted On Behalf of the Illinois State Advisory Council by,

Mike Otte (motte@elimcs.org) and Dr. James Surber (jsurber@ladse.org)