

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



## Annual Report 2005 - 2006



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DATE: February 8, 2007

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Terri Devine, Chair  
Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education  
of Children with Disabilities

SUBJECT: Annual Report for 2005-2006

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 2005-2006 sessions.

ISAC has experienced attrition of council members whose terms have expired without timely reappointments. Members represent most of the geographic regions in the state of Illinois, though could benefit from additional representation from outside the Chicago metro area. Members represent parents of children with disabilities, people with disabilities, educators, governmental service providers, and a member at-large. ISAC committees include Executive, Access, Bilingual, Comprehensive State Plan, General Supervision/Due Process, Family Communications, Finance, Legislation, Personnel Development, and Rules and Regulations.

The Council provided comment on the state and federal proposed rules implementing the *Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004*. ISAC continues to provide legislative testimony, public comment on proposed rules and regulations, analyze effects of the No Child Left Behind initiative on students with disabilities, address the critical shortage of highly qualified personnel in special education, express concern about the lack of funding to provide adequate special education services, monitor Illinois' progress regarding teaching children in the least restrictive environment and changes that have been made regarding the Illinois Alternate Assessment and Due Process System.

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 education 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.*

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

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## Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities Annual Report for 2005-2006

### *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:

*Governor  
Appointed*

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

Mary Kay Ballasiotes	Bolingbrook	03/04
C. Jackson Darnall	Oak Park	11/03
Therese Devine	Orland Park	08/99
Judith Flink	Morton Grove	11/03
Kimberly Jachim	Palos Park	11/03
David Rands	Olney	11/03
Stanley J. Valentine	East Peoria	11/03
Suzanne Woods	Chesterfield	03/04
Vacant		

Five 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.

Katherine Hackett	Shorewood	04/04
Kyle Packer	Effingham	03/04
Linda Prewitt	Jacksonville	03/04
VACANT	(individual with disabilities)	
VACANT	(individual with disabilities)	

One regional superintendent of schools	Helen Tolan	Springfield	12/97
One representative of an institution of higher education that prepares special education and related services personnel	Brad Hedrick	Urbana	11/03
One teacher of students with disabilities	Vacant		
One superintendent of a public school district	Dr. Eric King	Matteson	08/05
One director of special education cooperative or special education administrator from a school district of less than 500,000 population	Vacant		
One representative of a public charter school	Elizabeth Purvis	Chicago	08/05
One representative of a private school serving children with disabilities	Mike Otte	Orland Park	03/04
One representative of a vocational, community, or business organization that provides transition services to children with disabilities	Sharon Slover	Harvard	08/05
One at-large member from the general public	Elizabeth Conran	St. Charles	01/06

*Ex-Officio Members* Jim Lundstrom, Chicago Public Schools District 299  
Janet McGovern, Department of Corrections  
Vacant, Department of Children and Family Services  
Marjorie Olson, Department of Human Services/ORS

*ISBE Staff*

Christopher Koch, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education  
Kathy Stratton, Program Specialist, Special Education Services

*Other Representative* Marva Campbell-Pruitt, Illinois Coordinating Council

### ***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

*Ad-Hoc Committees*

By-Laws Committee  
Nominating Committee

### ***Council Meeting Schedule 2005-2006***

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>MEETINGS</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
August 1, 2005 August 2, 2005	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	ISBE Springfield
October 5, 2005 October 6, 2005	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	ISBE Springfield
November 8, 2006	9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Business Meeting	Bloomington
November 30, 2005 December 1, 2005	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	Collinsville
February 8, 2006 February 9, 2006	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	ISBE Springfield
April 5, 2006 April 6, 2006	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	Springfield
June 5, 2006 June 6, 2006	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	Tinley Park



## ***Critical Issues Identified for Discussion***

The Council identified the following as priorities for discussion in 2005-2006:

- Proposed 226 Rules
- Response to Intervention
- Bilingual concerns
- Transition
- Increased funding for special education
- Continuous Improvement Plan

### ***Council Minutes***

Copies of approved minutes of the Council meetings from August 2, 2005 through June 7, 2006 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).

#### ***August 2, 2005***

[www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac\\_minutes\\_8-2-05.doc](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac_minutes_8-2-05.doc)

#### ***October 6, 2005***

[www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac\\_minutes\\_10-6-05.doc](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac_minutes_10-6-05.doc)

#### ***November 8, 2005***

[www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac\\_minutes\\_11-8-05.doc](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac_minutes_11-8-05.doc)

#### ***December 1, 2005***

[www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac\\_minutes\\_12-1-05.doc](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac_minutes_12-1-05.doc)

#### ***February 9, 2006***

[www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac\\_minutes\\_2-9-06.doc](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac_minutes_2-9-06.doc)

#### ***April 6, 2006***

[www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac\\_minutes\\_bm04-06-06.doc](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac_minutes_bm04-06-06.doc)

#### ***June 6, 2006***

[www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac\\_minutes\\_bm060606.doc](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/word/isac_minutes_bm060606.doc)

## ***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***

### ***August 2, 2005***

1. ISAC encouraged ISBE to review the previously cut discretionary funds and funds from the restored legislative money. We suggested that the following guidelines be used to decide which programs to restore: amounts should not exceed previous year amounts; areas should be funded that impact students across the state; agencies that duplicate services should not be funded; and it is important to take into consideration areas of disability that are in high need without support.
2. ISAC encouraged the Access Committee to work with Equip for Equality, Great Lakes Center on Disabilities and Technology Information, and the Board of Higher Education to develop recommendations to improve accessibility between assistive technology and information technology.
3. ISAC requested that ISBE use one state standardized form for IEPs.
4. ISAC requested that ISBE make on-line IEPs accessible to parents as part of the IEP team.

### ***October 6, 2005***

1. ISAC encouraged the ISBE to consider changing the word 'days' in the proposed changes to Due Process rules to 'business days' and that a definition of business days be included in the changes.
2. ISAC sent a letter to the Governor, Legislature, and ISBE recommending additional funding for special education services. The finance committee worked with the Chairperson in crafting this letter, pointing out the difficulties of school districts in meeting the needs of some special education students.
3. ISAC asked that ISBE's legal council offer interpretation of the appropriateness of school districts having legal counsel at an IEP team meeting.
4. ISAC recommended that ISBE encourage legislation that requires private parochial schools to report student enrollment for inclusion in the allocation calculations.
5. ISAC requested that ISBE maintain the requirement for a fulltime Director of Special Education.
6. ISAC encouraged ISBE to investigate the removal of the term 'dual enrollment' from the state rules to align private/parochial school rules with draft federal regulations of IDEIA 2004.
7. ISAC considered recommending legislative action to require K-12 school districts to purchase only education materials that are available in specified alternative accessible format.
8. ISAC revised the Committee bylaws which had been approved November 2000 and revised October 6, 2005. The following were added:
  - a. The charge of the General Supervision/Due Process Committee language is also changed as follows: 5) Review and make recommendations as appropriate to the full Council regarding: a. the impartial due process system, b. monitoring system, c. complaint investigation system, d. mediation system and e. other general supervisory concerns as assigned by the Chair;
  - b. A representative from the Interagency Coordinator Council (ICC) shall serve as a liaison between the two councils and shall be a nonvoting member of ISAC, with the same

notification, meeting attendance and participation requirements as full members, except that the ICC liaison shall not make motions or cast votes.

***November 8, 2005 (specially called meeting)***

1. ISAC recommended the approval of the State Performance Plan with the addition of the input provided today by this Council.

***December 1, 2005***

1. ISAC forwarded OSEP's comments on attorneys attending IEP's to Mr. Winchell. This Council prepared a response to him that let him know that ISAC has discussed this issue as well as provided him with minutes from today's meeting and invited him to future meetings.
2. ISAC partnered with ICC and ISBE to allocate the time, thought, and effort to develop knowledgeable responsive personnel who are accountable and understand their shared roles. This was done in an attempt to align programs, services and supports necessary to assist youth in achieving post-school goals.
3. ISAC created a partnership with ICC to work with the Governor's liaison on transition issues.
4. ISAC authorized the chairperson of this Council, Therese Devine to provide public comment to the ISBE AD Hoc Rules Committee on whatever she deems appropriate at the December 15, 2005 board meeting.
5. ISAC was made aware of the formation of the new Department of Juvenile Justice and so made the following recommendations to ISBE:
  - a. The school code should be amended to allow a representative of the Juvenile Justice Department to sit as a member of ISAC.
  - b. ISBE should inform the new department of the provision of educational services and specifically Special Education Services. These are a vital mission of the new department and all these services must be provided to juveniles not only in the Department of Juvenile Justice but also to those who remain in adult correctional facilities.

***February 9, 2006***

1. ISAC ratified the decision of the Executive Committee in regards to Rule 226 public comment.
2. ISAC tabled discussion on public comment until the next meeting. This was done with the understanding that members of this Council would make attempts to attend some of the Public Comment Hearings so that we would get a feel for some of the concerns and bring this back to the Council.
3. ISAC encouraged ISBE in cooperation with IBHE to support the collaboration of an ad hoc committee to review current state practices in making educational and administration technologies usable and accessible.
4. ISAC recommended that ISBE staff develop a set of core competencies and skills that will be required to be delivered by each school demonstration site funded by the ISBE Personnel Development Grant.

***April 6, 2006***

1. ISAC supported the passage of the Due Process Bill, SB2796, as it stands today. Chairperson Devine sent a letter to Speaker Madigan stating both that this Council supports the bill and that we feel an urgency that this legislation is passed this session.

2. ISAC invited members of the Bilingual Special Education Committee to come to a meeting of the Committee of the Whole and educate us on what they do and what they see as some of their issues and challenges.
3. ISAC amended its By-Laws to establish Transition as a standing committee.
4. Chair Devine, at the request of ISAC, drafted a letter to the Governor requesting support for the ICC's effort to secure resources and personnel to facilitate transition planning.
5. ISAC supported an interagency agreement between DOC and Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. This allows someone from the new department to sit on ISAC until the school code is so amended to allow this.

***June 6, 2006***

1. ISAC approved the appointment of nineteen hearing officer candidates recommended by the Due Process screening committee.
2. ISAC approved the withdrawal of Massac County Unit District 1 from JAMP.
3. ISAC approved that the Bilingual School Personnel Resource Directory be revised and brought up to date to reflect changes/additions since 1997 when this was last done.
4. ISAC approved forming a Transition Committee to assist ISAC in making recommendations to ISBE's leadership, the Governor, and the legislature for improved post-secondary results through determining the transition issues that impact students with disabilities and to make recommendations for more effective transition processes.
5. ISAC commissioned the Chair to identify a Council member to be part of the group that includes the IBHE and ICC to accomplish the mandate of HB1150.
6. ISAC recognized that charter schools are public schools and that they serve a diverse group of Illinois students. The children who attend these schools are entitled to all rights and protections under Illinois state law and IDEA. Therefore, the Council encourages and supports all Illinois school district personnel to work cooperatively with charter schools to ensure that this happens.

***Barriers to Success***

1. The failure of the Governor's office to timely make appointments to the Council. There are seven (7) unfilled positions at this time. The terms of an equal number of members have expired without replacement or reappointment. Therefore the ability of the Council to address a broader agenda is limited. Further, the absence of so many members is unreasonable, unfair and in violation of the law.
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. The guiding force in the area of special education is IDEA04, which is administered by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Delays in the publication of proposed regulations and final regulations by OSEP, comprise the ability of ISAC to fulfill its role as advisor to the ISBE, the Governor and the Legislature.
4. 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.
5. 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. Established the Transition Committee which will assist ISAC in making recommendations to ISBE's leadership, the Governor, and the Legislature, for improving post-secondary results through determining the transition issues that impact students with disabilities throughout their educational careers and make recommendations for effective transition processes.
2. One or more ISAC members attended each meeting scheduled by the ISBE in order to observe public comment on the proposed 226 Rules. ISAC members participated in the development of the current Summary of Performance document and instructions adopted by the ISBE.
3. ISAC reviewed the Comprehensive Plan of Massac County Unit District 1 to withdraw from JAMP, made specific inquiries and approved said withdrawal after thorough review.
4. Existing ISBE procedures require each District that withdraws from a co-operative to report on its success in providing services to students with disabilities following its withdrawal. However, neither the district nor the co-op is required to report on the impact of the withdrawal on the co-op. The Council recommended that such a report be mandatory. ISAC further recommended that ISBE change the withdrawal procedures to require ISBE to conduct a follow-up visit to determine the impact the withdrawal has had on the cooperative and its remaining districts.
5. ISAC reviewed and provided public comment in support of the proposed Due Process bill (SB 2796).
6. ISAC members participated on ISBE's Assessment Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) and provided input and review on the selection of a new vendor and format for the Illinois Alternate Assessment.

# APPENDICES

- Appendix A: November 14, 2005 - Letter sent to Legislators and Governor Blagojevich expressing concern regarding special education funding
- Appendix B: January 18, 2006 - Chairperson Devine's Public Comment to the ISBE Ad Hoc Rules Committee
- Appendix C: April 11, 2006 - letter to Governor Blagojevich requesting action to allocate funding and resources for needed transition supports for Illinois students
- Appendix D: April 11, 2006 – letter to House Speaker Madigan in support of SB 2796

## **APPENDIX A**

**November 14, 2005 –  
Letter sent to Legislators and Governor Blagojevich  
expressing concern regarding special education funding**

November 14, 2005

Representative / Senator

Dear Representative / Senator:


On behalf of The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC), I have been requested to express our concern regarding special education funding. The statutory role of ISAC is to be proactive, advising the Governor, Legislature and the State Board of Education on current issues relating to the education of children and youth with disabilities. Given this charge, ISAC has requested that I urge you to advocate for adequate funding to educate the children of Illinois who have special needs.

I am sure you are aware of the high stakes accountability driving education today. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) holds schools accountable for ensuring Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for *all* students. This includes the students in special education. I would presume you've heard from and about school districts placed on the watch list due to the failure of their special education students to meet the stringent AYP requirements. While the reasons for failure to make AYP are varied, adequately funding special education is imperative so that every child with special needs is given the opportunity to make educational progress.

Please consider doing what you can to provide additional funding for special education in Illinois. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004 will likely also result in increased special education costs. While local school districts are ultimately responsible for meeting the needs of the children with special needs in their districts, they can't do it alone. The number of students requiring special education services continues to grow, as does the severity and complexity of the needs of students. Local school districts require financial assistance to adequately meet the special education needs within their districts.

We appreciate that you have listened to our request and hope that we can work together to more adequately fund special education in the state of Illinois.

Very truly yours,



Therese M. Devine  
ISAC Chair

Cc: Superintendent Randy Dunn  
Dr. Christopher Koch  
ISAC Members  
Elliot Regenstein



## **APPENDIX B**

**January 18, 2006  
Chairperson Devine's Public Comment  
to the ISBE Ad Hoc Rules Committee**

ISBE Ad Hoc Rules Committee Meeting  
ISAC Public Comment  
January 18, 2006

Good morning. As you know, the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities is required by state and federal law to advise you on special education policy issues, specifically on rulemaking. ISAC members represent a wide variety of stakeholders, including educators, administrators, parents, individuals with disabilities and state agency representatives.

As you know, the revisions to Part 226 Special Education rules are substantial. Unfortunately, it appears that the rules as proposed are even more dramatically altered than the reauthorization of IDEA would require.

ISAC's Executive Committee was able to meet on January 10 to do a cursory review of the draft of the proposed rules and provide suggestions to ISBE staff for changes in language, agreement about matters included, and criticism of the format. Because of limited time constraints and the necessity to conduct the meeting via conference call, a thorough discussion was not completed.

Arising from that meeting, ISAC took several actions, which I have been asked to communicate to you:

- It is necessary to include the language from the federal rules, rather than referring to such rule only by statutory reference. The draft proposed state rules are not user friendly for parents, teachers or administrators.
- ISAC is in agreement with and thoroughly supports:
  1. Transition planning in Illinois should remain at age 14 1/2;
  2. The use of the eligibility category "developmental delay" should be allowed for children up to age 7;
  3. IEP's should retain the use of short-term objectives.
- ISAC also recommends the proposed changes regarding graduation include: a clarification that:
  1. An eligible student may continue receiving services through age 21 – defined as "through the day before the student's 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday).
  2. If a student completes the minimum state graduation requirements, such student shall receive a regular diploma upon exiting school.
  3. An IEP team may elect to defer conferring such diploma until the student exits school, instead confer a certificate of completion and student shall continue receiving services as specified in his or her IEP.

There were more comments provided to ISBE staff, including concerns about the timeline and confusing language included in the section on "Evaluation Procedures" (formerly "Referral). T did not allow us to address at least two significant areas:

- The use of Response to Intervention vs. Discrepancy model in addressing specific learning disabilities;
- Class size and case load proposals.

The bottom line that ISAC wants to share with you today is that though the rules include some worthwhile and exciting changes that we wholeheartedly support, the format of the draft proposed rules is terribly confusing and burdensome.

Red tape, by definition, means something that is overcomplicated, obstructive and unnecessary. As drafted today, Illinois' proposed rules meet that definition.

## **APPENDIX C**

**April 11, 2006**

**Letter to Governor Blagojevich requesting action  
to allocate funding and resources for needed transition supports  
for Illinois students**



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

April 11, 2006

Honorable Rodney Blagojevich  
Office of the Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Blagojevich,

On behalf of the Illinois State Advisory Committee on the Education of Students with Disabilities (ISAC), I am requesting you to initiate the appropriate action to allocate the funding and resources necessary to implement needed transition supports for Illinois students graduating from high school. Illinois must improve its systems to ensure post-school success for students with disabilities.

As Illinois struggles to meet the requirements of IDEA 2004, and to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, a search was completed to find out how other states meet the tenets of secondary transition laws. The Study of State and Local Implementation and Impact of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act indicated that 94 percent of all states employed one or more transition coordinators at state level (Schiller et al., 2003). The designated people at state level are responsible for secondary transition, and are referred to as "Secondary Transition Coordinators."

On June 30, 2006, Illinois' TOTAL Project (Transition Outreach Training for Adult Living) funded from a grant by the United States Department of Education will end. The TOTAL Project has made great strides in educating and assisting families, state agencies and local districts in their approach and expectations for working together to facilitate transition for students with IEPs. However, there is still much to be done.

Illinois **must** have the resources available to educate families and school personnel and to ensure that state agencies that provide services to adults with disabilities work alongside them to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures. Aligning students with disabilities with improved educational outcomes will expedite the many transition requirements of IDEA 2004.

Illinois schools must have a policy to insure all students with disabilities have realistic post-school plans, along with strategies developed to improve employment rates, higher education enrollment, and independent living options. To realize this goal, young people with disabilities need your support in funding the needed resources to facilitate transition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Therese M. Devine". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Therese Devine  
ISAC Chair

**APPENDIX D**

**April 11, 2006**

**Letter to House Speaker Madigan in support of SB 2796**



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

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April 11, 2006

Hon. Michael Madigan  
Illinois Senate  
300 Capitol Building  
Springfield, IL 62702

Re: SB 2796

Dear Speaker Madigan,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Illinois State Advisory Committee on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC). By a unanimous vote taken at our meeting on April 6, we support SB 2796 with the addition of the amendment drafted by your staff.

With this amendment the bill retains the current 120 day statute of limitations to file a civil action. It also adds language regarding the allowance of amendments and raises issues not in the original hearing request. It further requires hearing officers to have knowledge of both practice and procedure.

On balance, we find this to be a good bill with the changes put forth by your staff. It is supported by most people on both sides of the issue, both parents and school districts. Because of the importance and urgency to pass this bill, we are asking your help in seeing that it pass out of committee and then be called for a vote on the floor.

Suzy Woods, ISAC's Vice Chair and Legislative Committee Chair, can be available for testimony to confirm the content of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Therese M. Devine". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Therese Devine,  
ISAC Chair

