

## **Monday, February 28, 2011 Meeting Minutes**

Darren Reisberg, the Deputy Superintendent/General Counsel at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), opened the final meeting of the Task Force. Fifteen members were present during the meeting, or represented by a designee, and eight members were absent. Each member's attendance status is included on the list of the members that appears on the final page of this document.

Mr. Reisberg observed that he sees this Task Force as a first step. He thanked all of the members for joining ISBE to discuss these sensitive and important issues. He encouraged Task Force members from state agencies to work together to provide leadership on this issue across the state. He pointed out that he sent a draft of the final report to the members yesterday and then made some additional changes today. He included a draft policy in the appendices because it might be helpful for districts across the state. He asked the members to share questions, concerns, or comments before the Task Force voted on the document. On March 1, 2011, ISBE will prepare the report for submission to the Governor and the legislature.

Brooke Whitted, of the Leslie Shankman School Corporation, made a motion to adopt the report, which was seconded by Marc Kiehna, the Regional Superintendent of the Monroe/Randolph Regional Office of Education. Mr. Reisberg then opened discussion on the motion, noting that he wanted to ensure that members did not feel that they were being pressured into voting too soon.

Brooke Whitted remarked that he would like a note on the section that contains the DuPage County policy because he believes the policy is too punitive. Marc Kiehna agreed with Brooke about the punitive nature of the policy, but noted that he was an advocate for including the policy in the larger document as a resource for district leaders. Darren Reisberg pointed out that while the report could include this policy as a sample, the Task Force can also urge caution for other districts against being so punitive. Barbara Shaw, of the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority, remarked that she thought such a statement would call attention to the policy, when it was not mentioned elsewhere in document, and might not accurately reflect current practice in DuPage County. Mr. Whitted responded that elsewhere in the document the Task Force makes clear that punitive approaches and zero tolerance are not best practice. He noted that the public minutes of this meeting can also reflect this discussion. Stacey Horn, of the University of Illinois at Chicago, further observed that in the larger report, with the success stories for example, the Task Force does comment that these examples are not perfect, but that they represent the spirit of an ideal approach, even if a universal ideal is not necessarily ideal for each individual context.

To improve the final report, Barbara Shaw recommended that the Task Force provide an executive summary. She remarked that there is a great deal of good material in the report, but she worries that it won't get read in-depth. She would like an executive summary to list the Task Force's key approaches and key messages at the beginning of the report. Mr. Reisberg responded that unless anyone has concerns, in ISBE's cover note to the Governor and the General Assembly, ISBE staff will develop an executive summary that highlights the key points of the report and the Task Force's recommendations. He will send the final report and executive summary to the group.

Marc Kiehna asked for clarification about what happened to the section related to professional development for administrators through an Administrators' Academy. He urged ISBE to ensure that this section is included to encourage implementation of the Task Force's recommendations by administrators in the state of Illinois, to move them along in adopting a plan, and then to guide the implementation of those plans in their school buildings. Mr. Reisberg remarked that the language may have been accidentally removed from the final revision, but ISBE will make sure that language is included in the final report. Stacey Horn and Josh Gray, of Chicago Public Schools, agreed that language should be included in the report. Mr. Reisberg recommended that the language be added to the professional development section of the report as it is related to professional development for administrators. Dorothy Espelage, of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, further noted that the administrators' academy is not currently a recommendation, but it should be pulled out as an explicit recommendation in the executive summary and in the recommendation section of the report.

Stacey Horn raised an additional issue about a section of the report that included a paragraph about referral to special education. She observed that special education works very differently in different places across the state, so she wants to be careful about how the Task Force phrases this section. She recommended that the language be changed to, for example, special education or other appropriate services. Mr. Whitted contended that it was important for the report to reflect that special education should be available as an option for students who need it. He views special education in a positive way, not as a tool to marginalize young people. He would like to make clear that special education can be used at every stage of process. He believes there is more of a risk of not referring kids than in over identifying them. For example, autistic kids might be mercilessly harassed in a general education setting and might be better served in a self-contained situation. Barbara Shaw asked about the language used in the paragraph that indicated that special education would be appropriate to achieve a goal of reducing harassment and bullying. Marc Kiehna pointed out that in many districts in southern Illinois, special education referrals are the only way to conduct a high-quality case study analysis and to understand what may be behind a student's behavior. Through special education cooperatives, which work in collaboration with school districts in his region, districts are able to access school social workers and psychologists who can put together a battery of assessments and gather a variety of information about students. Without the special education referral process, many of these services would not otherwise be available downstate and it is the only avenue many districts have to examine the whole child. Dr. Horn remarked that she does not want this to be a big deal, but would like the Task Force to pay attention to how special education is used in different parts of state. She would like to craft the best statement possible so it does not give districts license to over utilize special education services for students when the services are not appropriate. Heather Nelson agreed that there are many districts that over identify students. However, if districts have a behavior system in place with tiers, then they can use the full case study approach after all interventions have been tried. Shannon Sullivan, of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, pointed out that schools are tremendously contextual places. In some instances, there are schools that place gay students in self-contained special education classrooms rather than deal with the homophobic climate that is pervasive in their school. There are some districts that are over identifying students for special education and some that are under identifying students. The Task Force needs to recognize that things happen differently in different parts of state and that special education services can be

utilized, as appropriate, at every stage of the process. Shannon will send language later this evening to reflect her statement to the Task Force.

Barbara Shaw thanked ISBE and the writing team for their responsiveness to the concerns that were raised by the members. She commended them and thanked everyone who worked on the report. Darren Reisberg asked for any final questions or concerns.

Josh Gray requested clarification about a statement in the report that referred to the idea about engaging key stakeholders and holding them accountable in some kind of agreement. It was clear at the last meeting that there is no research-based evidence for contracts, but he would still like to ensure that all stakeholders are held accountable. Dr. Espelage remarked that the language related to that idea should still be in the document. The writing team tempered the language to make it more inclusive, but she believes the message is still included. Dr. Horn noted that the language was in the version of the report that was sent on Sunday morning (either in the legislative/policy section or an appendix), but it looks like it might have been accidentally removed from the latest version. She asked Josh to review the language in the Sunday morning version. If he agreed with that language, it could be inserted again. Mr. Reisberg agreed that ISBE will make sure the language is reinstated if it is not in the current draft.

Mr. Reisberg mentioned that ISBE's goal will be to post the final report on the ISBE Task Force page. At that point, all of the members are welcome to distribute it to any of their colleagues or constituents who are interested in the report. He then called a vote of the members. All those in attendance at the time of the roll call voted to submit the report to the Governor and the General Assembly. Each Task Force member's vote is reflected on the final page of this document.

Darren Reisberg thanked all of the Task Force members for their contributions and hard work and then adjourned the meeting.

Illinois State Board of Education  
**Illinois School Bullying Prevention Task Force Members**

| <b>Representative</b>  | <b>Organization</b>  | <b>February 28, 2011 meeting attendance</b>                  | <b>Vote to submit report</b> |
|------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|
| Darren Reisberg        | Illinois State Board of Education                                    | present  | yes                          |
| Barbara Shaw           | Illinois Violence Prevention Authority                               | present  | yes                          |
| Rocco Claps            | Illinois Department of Human Rights                                  | absent   | no vote                      |
| Sarah Migas            | Illinois Attorney General  | absent   | no vote                      |
| Grace Hong Duffin      | Illinois Department of Human Services                                | represented by designee Kim Fornero (who had to leave early) | no vote                      |
| Shannon Sullivan       | Safe Schools Alliance  | present  | yes                          |
| Malik Nevels           | African American Coalition   | present  | yes                          |
| Lonnie Nasatir         | Anti-Defamation League   | absent   | no vote                      |
| Julie Justicz          | Health and Disability Advocates                                      | present  | yes                          |
| Peggy Thurow           | Carpentersville CUSD 300   | present  | yes                          |
| Heather Nelson         | Carpentersville CUSD 300   | present  | yes                          |
| Mike Penicook          | Rantoul School District 137  | absent   | no vote                      |
| Maria McCarthy         | Rantoul School District 137  | absent   | no vote                      |
| Josh Gray              | Chicago Public Schools   | present  | yes                          |
| Kelly Keating          | East Aurora District 131   | absent   | no vote                      |
| Stacey Horn            | University of Illinois Chicago                                       | present  | yes                          |
| Dorothy Espelage       | University of Illinois   | present  | yes                          |
| Anna Rangos            | Student/ Maine South High School                                     | absent   | no vote                      |
| Sukari Stone           | Student/ Whitney Young College Prep                                  | present  | yes                          |
| Marc Kiehna            | Regional Superintendent Monroe/Randolph Regional Office of Education | present  | yes                          |
| Matthew John Rodriguez | Illinois Parent Teacher Association                                  | present  | yes                          |
| Brooke Whitted         | President, Leslie Shankman School Corporation                        | present  | yes                          |
| Susan Goodwin          | President, Quincy Human Rights Commission                            | absent   | no vote                      |

Illinois State Board of Education  
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|------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| Darren Reisberg        | Illinois State Board of Education                                       | present  | yes         |
| Barbara Shaw           | Illinois Violence Prevention Authority                                  | present  | yes         |
| Rocco Claps            | Illinois Department of Human Rights                                     | absent   | no vote     |
| Sarah Migas            | Illinois Attorney General   | absent   | no vote     |
| Grace Hong Duffin      | Illinois Department of Human Services                                   | represented by designee Kim Fornero (who had to leave early) | no vote     |
| Shannon Sullivan       | Safe Schools Alliance   | present  | yes         |
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| Sukari Stone           | Student/ Whitney Young College Prep                                     | present  | yes         |
| Marc Kiehna            | Regional Superintendent<br>Monroe/Randolph Regional Office of Education | present  | yes         |
| Matthew John Rodriguez | Illinois Parent Teacher Association                                     | present  | yes         |
| Brooke Whitted         | President, Leslie Shankman School Corporation                           | present  | yes         |
| Susan Goodwin          | President, Quincy Human Rights Commission                               | absent   | no vote     |