

**Received: July 23, 2012**  
**From: Donald Miksell**

Dear Feasibility and Planning Study committee,

Hello! My name is Donald Miksell. I graduated Iowa School for the Deaf in 1983. ISD has been very important to me, my family and Iowan Deaf children or community members. It was our school where we as Deaf people grew up together as brothers and sisters. Together as a group sharing the same language, American Sign Language, and Deaf culture, we had similar needs, communication desires, Deaf role models and experienced equal access unlike anywhere else. For this I am proud to be an Alumni of ISD. I among many feel fortunate I also gained leadership opportunities from ISD that I use up to this day!

In the future, if the Board decides to close, change or cut ISD, where will the Deaf children go to?

Mainstreaming in the public school is not an answer for all Deaf children, because they will be more isolated, access will be drastically limited, and their communication opportunities will be limited. The interpreters needed to meet their needs are not available for all these Deaf children unless temporary unqualified be assigned, which should be avoided!

For four years, I was in a mainstream setting. I would say nothing worked! The Iowa School for the Deaf had filled my educational, social and personal needs. Sharing with me my wife, daughter, brother, sister, brother-in-law, and father-in-law also went to ISD and cannot imagine going through the cracks of mainstream schools and the deficiencies it includes.

Even today, we are amazed with the additional programs ISD offers. Bearing in mind the State pays the expenses for the deaf child to attend public school, with additional expenses to accommodate them then adding the interpreter costs. At ISD it is just one expense the state pays. The school does not need an interpreter in different places, nor in after school activities. The school does not need to be concerned of accommodating deaf people and making access possible whether in a school play, showing a movie, when students are into group discussions, when students are free to interact with other students and in after school activities that are suddenly announced.

If ISD should be closed, merged or have a major budget cut, please carefully consider my appeal

Money can't solve,

The needs of the Deaf cannot be solved by thinking financially, because they will have to be deprived, discriminated or isolated if services are cut or they are removed from a Deaf school.

Donald Miksell  
ISD - 1983

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**Received: July 26, 2012**  
**From: Cindy Crawford**

Thank you for listening to the thoughts and ideas of those involved in Deaf Education here in Iowa. I have listed several thoughts and concerns below that have led me to believe that the establishment of regional programs in Iowa is something that the Feasibility Committee, Iowa Department of Management, and Board of Regents should consider. In no particular order, here are some of my observations.

1. Having the Iowa for the Deaf in the southwestern part of the state really creates distance problems for families who live far and want to keep their child home but want direct deaf education services. Creating regional programs in addition to the state would help address those families' concerns as well as provide the continuum of appropriate educational services.
2. Regional programs would allow for children to live at home but still experience the critical mass they so

sorely need by interacting with other D/HH peers. Currently D/HH students are the only DHH child with no D/HH peers in their general education or special education setting.

3. Regional programs would allow for interaction with hearing peers and staff;
  - a. Students become comfortable interacting with not only Deaf but hearing.
  - b. Students learn how to use an interpreter in a variety of situations.
  - c. Students learn to advocate for themselves when an interpreter is required which helps prepare them for life after HS.
4. The establishment of regional programs would have far-reaching benefits. Given the fact that there is a shortage of qualified sign language interpreters in our state this would provide for the ability to draw from the qualified permanently licensed interpreters in their area by sharing and pooling resources.
5. The current licensure law for sign language interpreters has no specifications for obtaining a temporary license; this means that any individual with minimal knowledge of sign language could apply to be a temporary, licensed interpreter and unknowing folks would not be the wiser to their actual sign language or interpreting skills. It is imperative that the interpreter must be a qualified and skilled language model for the student.
6. In addition to not knowing about the temporary interpreter's actual knowledge of interpreting skills, many school districts hire and accept any interpreter with no real understanding of how to evaluate an interpreter's skill level, receptively or expressively. All three, the school district, interpreter, and deaf/hh student, are at a disadvantage for not being able to ensure true, effective, clearly-conveyed and interpreted instruction in the classroom.
7. I cannot count the number of times we have heard the horror stories of a D/HH student who was 1:1 in a mainstream environment from pre-school through HS who arrived at college only to discover that their skills are not what were reported to the college.
8. A student in a regional program would work with a variety of interpreters which helps to alleviate the unhealthy dependency that often occurs between a student and an interpreter they have worked with since pre-school.
9. The large district I am a part of currently has 16 interpreters on staff. Only one of the 16 interpreters has a temporary license. The understanding of all the interpreters I work with is that their assignment changes every year, thus avoiding the dependency that can result, and thereby increasing sign language receptive skills, leading to stronger language development and increased literacy skills.
10. A regional program would provide more fluent language models including, not only the permanently licensed sign language interpreter, but also the Deaf Ed classrooms staffed by a teacher of the D/HH and hopefully Deaf associates who are considered effective language role models.
11. Most of us are well aware of the fact that most D/HH students in rural Iowa are served by the special education teacher in their building. The itinerant teacher of the D/HH typically sees the D/HH student once a week for a minimal amount of time. Many times D/HH children require specially designed instruction that specifically incorporates the use of auditory and visual language strategies in developing literacy skills. This does not fall within the special education teacher's realm of instructional skills.
12. Regional programs would allow for on-site interventions, consultations, direct services, monitoring and data collection by a specially trained teacher of the D/HH, not a special education teacher.
13. I have heard that the Executive Committee is working to establish standards and benchmarks for D/HH students in Iowa. These standards and benchmarks can only be achieved by D/HH students if the instruction is provided by a certified teacher of the D/HH. Special Ed teachers cannot fulfill the specially designed instructional practices required to meet these standards.
14. Regional programs work closely with the comprehensive school they are a part of to monitor and mainstream students as their skills develop. This would allow for fluid partnering and responsibility for a D/HH student in a general education classroom.
15. One argument in opposition is going to be the hour long bus ride for the D/HH student. I grew up on a farm in Iowa and lived 7 miles from town. Riding the bus for over an hour did not affect me adversely. I work for a large urban school district and many of our students experience a 45 min. to an hour long bus ride and they live in the same city as the school they attend. 2 to 10 miles in the city can take as long as 35-55 min. the same amount of time it takes to drive 35-60 miles. The transportation concerns should be the least in consideration for establishing regional programs.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the comments I have offered with regard to the establishment of regional D/HH programs.

Respectfully,  
Cindy Crawford CI/CT

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**Received: July 30, 2012**  
**From: David Williams**

Hello, Board of Regents,

I am David Williams,

I was graduated from ISD 1979, know kinda of last minutes to my comments, cuz I can't make it appeal to Vinton, Iowa on July 30, 12, my point reason why should keep ISD open default?? Cuz, I was raised from School hood full of 13 yrs keys that learned lots of Social, education, sports activity deafhood devote through life.. when go home feel less cuz not much communicate lack of public, family reunion make feel left out, and knew that shrink of deaf students of ISD since few yrs, know sad cuz of approx 1985 cause sexual or physical abused report spread of media that how effect their parents began has keep dependent not go ISD instead to mixed Hearing/Deaf district. special site well really not always one cuz these states does have same media problem.,, my images if ISD closed could be collapse, deaf community life's break heart bad.. like fall apart of circle life chain, I understand about economy issue of perspective under the Gov Terry Branstad, Stronger belief presents of Feasibility ex ISD or students of favor keep ISD for good. if concern about \$\$\$ might keep blind can be acceptable to useful in ISD but separate of two way deaf and blind sites activity we pay tax as overall Iowa citizens pay tax and figure out with pull some IWCC deaf can useful at ISD vocational and bussiness classes too expense paid ??

thanks David Williams

ps.. hope help u understand whereabouts feedback :)

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**Received: August 1, 2012**  
**From: David Moon**

as one of 3 former students '41,'80 and '83 we dont want to see the school closed it has a lot of memories for us and also save it for those who arent no longer with us i.e. my dad Eldon Moon '41 it be in the best interest to keep the rich history alive for the alumni who come to homecoming every year because to close the school wld mean a end to the activites for past and current students so keep it open for us to someday see it as a historical landmark thank you David Moon '80

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**Received: August 2, 2012**  
**From: Patricia Ewoldt Rowray**

Sir,

I want to keep school for the deaf. Because I am cerebral palsy and deaf. I love the school, active ,scout, sewing, cooking, sports, go shopping, movie and dance. I want many deaf children go the school what do they need to learn. We want them happy. I graduated last 1965. My parent are proud of me,.

Thank you,  
Patricia Ewoldt Rowray

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**Received: August 5, 2012**  
**From: Agnes Mundhank**

AGNES MUNDHANK WEBER I WANT KEEP IOWA SCHOOL FOR DEAF I HAVE DEAF BEFORE  
ISD I LOVE SCHOOL DEAF AND FUN

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Dated: August 7, 2012  
From: Daniel Keen

August 7, 2012

Superintendent Patrick Clancy  
Iowa School for the Deaf  
3501 Harry Langdon Blvd.  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Dear Sir:

My name is Mr. Daniel Keen. My daughter is Jaymee Keen, who has just concluded her first year at the Iowa School for the Deaf. She graduated this year from the eighth grade, and looks forward to attending the ninth grade this year at the Iowa School for the Deaf.

We live in Ames, Iowa and suffered through the public school system with Jaymee, to the point of daily frustration. My wife and I had no idea what we were going to do with Jaymee and her schooling. Jaymee hated school and it was a daily uphill struggle just to get her to go every day; there were tears flowing every day. I still have vivid memories of having to forcefully get her out of the car just so she could attend school- then driving away feeling like a terrible parent.

Jaymee had no friends, she had no social life. She was becoming more withdrawn every day. Daily life was being made fun of at school and always being isolated and left out because of her hearing impairment. In conclusion, Jaymee took it upon herself to do some research and found out about the Iowa School for the Deaf. I had not even heard about it and thought the expense would be way too much. Once we toured the campus and found out Jaymee was sold on it and wanted to give the school a shot. It has been a miracle this last year, a blessing from God. The turnaround in Jaymees growth as a young teenager with friends has been amazing. She has a social life now and I am seeing her grow now both inwardly and physically. She actually wants to go to school and is happy and looks forward to her future. Her life has come back.

I had to write this letter so you understand what this school does. It's a life-changer; it gives these kids a life; a purpose, a reason to live and flourish. So I would encourage you to push to keep this school open, as it is – a campus – a life for these kids – a future, it means everything to them. No Regional Sites could ever replace what they receive and experience at the school. I've seen the kids interact and become normal human beings – You can't begin to learn or progress if you are not even accepted as equal – And the fellowship and attention they receive at the school is the best way – You can't even begin to think of any alternative. I believe that the best way to grow the school is to advertise it – I know with all the money concerns – But more kids – means more money. I had not even known of its existence. AEA does a very poor job of letting people know – It seemed they were more inclined you pushing the children into the local school districts. Thank you for taking your time and reading this letter. I hope you continue to keep ISD open and flourishing. You have my total support in everything you can do to continue the Iowa School for the Deaf.



Daniel D. Keen

**Received: August 8, 2012**

**From: Lois Lenderman**

Hi from Lois (I.S.D. Class 1971). The superintendent, Patrick Clancy, of Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School in Vinton must meet all qualification for operating Iowa deaf school. The superintendent of Iowa deaf school or any other deaf school must know well how to use sign language communication. Don't allow the Board of Regents BEND SOME RULES to assign him with little qualification as new superintendent of Iowa deaf school!

Apparently the state of Iowa fusses that the budget is too expensive to operate a deaf residential school with a little over 100 students. How can the state expect a larger number of students at I.S.D. since there are other deaf students in public schools? Perhaps there are much less of deaf children in Iowa than in old time. Does the state have the estimate total number of deaf children in Iowa? How many of them don't attend I.S.D.? Don't parents or students have a right to choose I.S.D. over "mainstream program" or educational interpreter service in public school? The state can't deny their right for sake of budget problem to close down I.S.D. in near future. The school is too valuable to worry about budget unless the reduced budget hurt or downgrade the school. I.S.D. is the only one deaf school Iowa has. I.S.D. should be respected equally as any public school for educating deaf children! I saw the list how much the state budgeted for I.S.D. each year from 2002 to 2012. Remind the state officials that public schools don't include residential expenses. How much would a public school cost if it includes residential expenses for most hearing students? I bet much more than I.S.D. How about state's budget for some residential colleges in Iowa? Huh?

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Continued on next page.

Submitted: August 13, 2012

From: Jaymee Keen

Mr. Clancy

I am writing this letter in concern of my school. When I came to ISD, I gained a whole lot more than just a school that is suited for my needs. I gained confidence, an excitement raging in me to go to school every morning and a comfortable environment knowing that I'm not looked down upon at in the hearing society like how I was in mainstream school districts. I understand that ISD is only hanging on a thread because of the money. But I don't think people are really understanding what they're doing if they actually close ISD. With my past experience in the public school districts, being different is the worst thing. But ISD saves us from that and lets us overcome our fears from joining sports, getting involved with extra-curricular activities and having a social life. I remember going to public school I used to lock my parents out of the car, enabling myself from going to school. I had no social life, I didn't join

sports or any activities, but the most hurtful thing was that I didn't have one friend at all, and being a kid that seems like the most important thing on earth. And I didn't have it because of something that was stuck in my ear that made me different.

When coming to ISD, many doors opened for me. I joined my first sport, I was on student council, I won first place in a speech contest and I had friends. Five years ago I probably would of never seen myself this successful and I'm sure I'm not the only one. Closing ISD and having to go back to a mainstream school feels like the most hardest thing to do after all of these great things happened. I am hoping that ISD stays open for all of the kids that don't want but need this education and life that ISD provides them to actually have a smile on there faces and feel like a happy child that is no different than anybody else.

Jaymee Keen

Submitted: August 15, 2012  
From: Frank Turk

FRANK R. TURK

15 August 2012

Dr. Craig A. Lang, President

Dear Dr. Craig:

It just came to my attention that a special "Town Hall" meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, involving those with irrevocable interest in the future of the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD). The primary purpose of the gathering is to discuss ways and means by which the same campus facilities may be most effectively utilized mutually beneficial to the needs and interests unique to two distinctly different groups -- the deaf/hard of hearing students and the hearing blind students currently housed elsewhere.

As a member of the Iowa Association of the Deaf (IAD) as well as a deaf person who was raised and educated in a residential school environment; and a lifelong educator and leader of the deaf and hard of hearing community, I take great interest in the potential outcome of the meeting. Unfortunately, much to my dismay, I am unable to attend the affair due to a long-standing commitment, hence this letter to you.

America down through the years has witnessed quite a few successful cost-effective schools for the deaf and the blind situated on the same campus. They exist as separate components of the total school community, each with its own budget sharing the costs of the utilities. Their unique needs and interests are treated community-wide with respect and trust. They have basically the same mission which is to provide a total educational environment conducive to students' birthright of independent living and self-determination. The term, "total educational environment," refers to the five domains of learning and becoming -- Social, Physical, Intellectual, Communicative, and Emotional (SPICE as an acronym).

The concept here is that there is more to school than academic development alone. It is just as important to develop personal competency as it is to develop intellectual competency. Generally, the academic curriculum caters to only two of these five domains -- intellectual and communicative. The remaining three-fifths of the student's total education take place outside the regular classroom.

Both schools subscribe to the whole student philosophy, not the fragmentary whole ... education all the way from head to toe. Every child is legally entitled to an opportunity to grow and develop in all of the five essential areas, not just one or two or three but the full five of them! Anything less, in my opinion, is tantamount to child abuse.

Given their ability to hear, blind students generally are capable of performing academically and competing in all of these five categories on equal terms with their non-blind hearing peers in the public school system. Not so for a great majority of deaf students whose barrier to total excellence in a public school setting is communication, most notably deprivation of the use of their first language, the American Sign Language (ASL), which is a 24/7 standard at the ISD.

Ideally, so as to allow deaf students to compensate for the loss of sound experiences and to be competitive in the real world, academic and after-school activities (SPICE) are integrated into the total school curriculum. They are treated as one indivisible whole, each building on the other in providing a total educational environment germane to becoming all that is in the students to be. All five essential domains of learning and becoming are put into play simultaneously.

Balanced academic and personal development is the cardinal goal of successful deaf education. This is contrary to the theory that if deaf students develop intellectually, they will automatically grow in other ways, and therefore educators need not concern themselves with "personal" learning.

If it should be rendered financially inevitable that the two special schools in Iowa be housed on the ISD campus, I would hope that you and those in authority would seriously consider two entirely separate cost-effective programs. I have some ideas on how to most effectively pursue this goal mutually beneficial to all concerned and stand ready to provide whatever I may be of assistance to you. My first and foremost commitment, 60 years running now, has always been and always will be to the deaf and hard of hearing children of America. I want nothing but the very best for them, their families, and the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Turk

cc: Dr. Patrick Clancy, Superintendent, ISD  
Ms. Kathy Miller, President, IAD

**Received: August 17, 2012**  
**From: Robert Vizzini**

17 August 2012

Dear Feasibility Committee members,

At the July 30th, public meeting I, among others, urged to keep ISD open for the educational and social benefit for Deaf children. At the end of my message, I quickly gave two recommendations repeated here: 1) to include at least one national recognized expert on the committee, and 2) to be familiar with the "Child First" campaign.

ISD's education and social opportunities are offered far better than many public schools, special education programs or deaf programs in Iowa. At the Vinton hearing, many Deaf adults and several ISD students testified that their academic achievements, social well being and self confidence improved when they entered the Deaf school. With individual differences, the Deaf school should always be an option. The "Child First" campaign points out the merits of the Deaf school and public schools not suited to provide the LRE necessary for deaf children

The Deaf adults and students' concerns were confirmed by several parents and a few interpreters including the President of Iowa's Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ISRID), Laura Lord. Again, In knowing the "Child First" principles, the committee may realize see that transferring ISD students in any kind of mainstream or regional program would be missing the changing trend of improved Deaf Education.

Based on the current interpreter shortage, signs indicate many more temporary licensed interpreters, will not retain their licenses. The closure of two recent Interpreter Training Programs is another sign that this could be a crisis for Deaf children who might have to leave ISD. We also know some educators and programs in the mainstream schools are not as qualified as needed to be. There is no consistency. Maintaining this is far costly and would remain a deficient for a decade or longer

Only several of the committee members know ASL and the many issues in Deaf Studies and Deaf Culture. This again begs the need of having a national recognized expert "to guide the research and discussion" of the committee. The June 6 B.R. report stated after meeting with the Director of Iowa Office of Management it was proposed to select committee representatives and to include at least one consultant expert, as stated in:

"Consultation support. Nationally recognized expert(s) in the field of sensory impairments will be selected to guide the research and discussion of the Feasibility Study and Planning Committee."  
(see: [http://www.regents.iowa.gov/Meetings/DocketMemos/12Memos/June2012/0612\\_ESAC%2012.pdf](http://www.regents.iowa.gov/Meetings/DocketMemos/12Memos/June2012/0612_ESAC%2012.pdf))

These experts should know the merits of all eight questions first handedly, and give some resources or data. We do not have a Deaf Education expert, or college level program in this field in Iowa. Someone of this kind of experience and knowledge could be obtained through CEASD (Conference of Educational Administrators for Schools and Programs for the Deaf, [www.ceasd.org](http://www.ceasd.org)), Gallaudet University's Deaf Education department, (or American Society for Deaf Children, [www.deafchildren.org](http://www.deafchildren.org), or a Gallaudet's bilingual Deaf Education site). National Association of the Deaf may recommend specific persons or organizations.

The Child First campaign should be familiar by the committee. Child First discussions began in Council Bluffs among CEASD participants and has been moving forward to suggest some modifications that accommodate Deaf children in the educational setting. They have begun their official position last year and shared it at the National Association of the Deaf conference. It examines and addresses IDEA, LRE and IEP. Evidently, to plan for the future of Deaf children, it could do more harm to proceed without heeding the recommendations. They are hoping to modify the current law of accommodating deaf children. I cannot be certain on the implications but from my understanding of Child First campaign, any effort to close ISD or set up regional schools, would do more harm.

Thank you for serving on the committee and researching the eight questions. Please feel free to contact me with any clarifications or further sources, for your research of a sensitive and important role affecting Deaf children.

Sincerely,

Bob Vizzini  
ASL Lecturer, University of Iowa

CC: Board of Regents

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**Received: August 19, 2012**

**From: John Matthews**

1. What might be the advantages & disadvantages of a regional model or centers to serve students? Regional centers may be in four or five locations in the state within an hour drive to receive services.

Advantages:

There is no advantages for a regional model

Disadvantages:

Too expensive

2. If Iowa had regional centers what would be the advantages & disadvantages of maintaining

the campuses at Council Bluffs and/or Vinton? Would their location allow for them to be used as regional centers?

Advantage:

ISD is part of regional center and some travel to ISD. Expertise is already there.

Disadvantage:

Pay five times the cost of staffing different area of expertises. Some staff members could be high qualified or under qualified. All hearing staff may create audism toward deaf students.

3. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of continuing to provide services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf blind on the campus in Council Bluffs & services for students who are blind, visually impaired or deaf blind from the campus in Vinton?

Advantage:

ISD continues to serve the students with LC programs, interactions with the other students, staff, & AEA in CB.

Nebraska students continues attending ISD with paid tuition from state

Easier for parents and school districts to drop off at ISD from Nebraska

Community has strong connections with ISD.

Good role models at the site. Normal socialization for students and their peers. Efficient cost.

Serves in best quality & quantitative interests.

Disadvantage:

None

5. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of a single campus being located centrally in the state?

Advantage:

Moving into central location may be nice but historically, not.

Disadvantage:

hard to predict if the students come to central, will it grow larger number?

It will start all over with training new staff

It will hurt Nebraska students to attend the central location

Takes millions dollars to build a similar campus as ISD

6. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of a single campus located on the current Iowa Braille School campus in Vinton?

Advantage:

None

Disadvantage:

Deaf students depends on Urban area

The area in IBSSS is too small for deaf students

Omaha, NE and Council Bluffs has strong cultural values

What philosophy will it be used at IBSSS?

Distance from home

Almost no deaf members around Vinton area that ISD students can look forward to. None of the club organizations' supporting like Rotary Club or Lions Club. Council Bluffs' economy is depending on ISD dollars.

7. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of a single campus located on the current Iowa School for the Deaf campus in Council Bluffs?

Advantage:

ISD has audiologist office, speech therapist, everybody does sign,

ISD has land across the highway & can build a blind school there

Deep root historically

LewisCentral across ISD

Iowa Western Community College close to ISD

Close to Boystown

Easy access to ISD from Interstate

ISD has VP in every building

ISD Health Center

Council Bluffs' historically economy is depending on ISD dollars. It enjoys being associated with the city in all aspects--social, psychological and political.

Omaha Metro Community College

University of Nebraska-Omaha

Disadvantage:

Distance from home

8. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of centralizing the administration & coordination of services for students who are deaf, blind, hard of hearing, visually impaired or deaf blind

Advantage:

More contact with Board of Regents & Legislators

Have a person in charge of both school centralizing in one location

Disadvantage:

Contact between the students & superintendent

Thank-you,

John Matthews,

Iowa School for the Deaf Alumni 1979

**Received: August 20, 2012**  
**From: Mary Klendworth**

Hello !

My name is Mary Klendworth , graduated ISD 1981. I want support our school for deaf children s sake. My parent told me, I was 2 or 3 years old so they dont know what to do with me for my future . We went to Iowa City Doc . My parent wanted me to have deaf eduaction but no location around so doc told them that I have go to ISD good education & make friends deaf for me. When I grown up ISD & missed my family too far home . Now I understand why & Thank you , my parent and Doc Iowa City . Iowa City Doc told my parent If I dont go to ISD then I will not happy when I grown up and not learn everything. My parent agreed with Doc , yes They are right . I do agree with them too. Right now Im thinking of deaf children do need your help & keep open school ISD , for deaf childrens sake. Its important for all of us & make deaf children better education for future . If deaf children go to public school with hearing kids , they ll have no fun , sad sad . Please think & look @ deaf children . I apprection you , Thank you .

Mary K.

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**Received: August 20, 2012**  
**From: Alice Klendworth**

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writting this letter to give u my support of keeping the Iowa School for the Deaf open to educate our Deaf children of Iowa. I m a parent who's daughter, graduated from the school in 1981. Her name is Mary Jane Klendworth, now Zweibamer. She started at the school when she was just 5, not able to communicate with us at all.

When she was 2 or 3 years old we took her to University Clinics in Iowa City where they told us she was totally deaf, they could not even get a reading on her deafness.

They told us the best thing was to prepare to send her to ISD because there was no teachers or school in our district that could teach her. Especially a balanced education.

I went to the superendent of our local school, he told me, sorry nothing in the school to teach her. So we decided to visit ISD. we were amazed how happy these children were at the school, how they loved the staff and teachers. The school was giving many opportunities to broaden the childrens education. even thou they were deaf. Sports, indoor swimming pool, lots for the children to do. of course its, a residential school, Our daughter could only come home every 6 weeks for a few days, holidays and during the summer.

We visited the school many times over the years during my daughters educational years.

Kindergarden, grade school, and graduating from high school.

At first, she didn't understand why she had to be away from home, but soon she did.

She was well educated at the school, had a good time meeting all her deaf friends, which she now e mails, and skp's. She just told me, "mom" if u and dad not send me to ISD, I would not learn, I be sad, with no deaf friends. In public school i just sit with 1 teacher, not learn much. no friends, i am so happy u sent me to ISD.

"Mary Jane" sent me a copy of the e mail she sent u about closing the school. She is concerned about the deaf children of Iowa and so am I.

Just wanted u to hear from a supportive ISD parents view.

Sincerely,

Alice Klendworth

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**Received: August 21, 2012**

**From: Candie**

Hi my name is Candie.... I was on honor rolls for years before I went into mainstream school in my hometown, my grades went down to around 2.50 GPA, almost didn't graduated on time, I used to play sports, cheerleader, girl scout, some more at ISD, but nothing at my hometown... I started to feel depressed, lonely and missed my "sisters and brothers" at ISD.. It would not be good for it to be closed.... It gives other students more experience with deaf cultures.. It was very frustrated with the interpreter all day at mainstream school... missed a lot of things such as taking notes, switched many classes and unsocial with hearing students.. Hope it will stay open and help others learn more experience and have more enjoyable life at ISD!

Good luck!

Candie

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**Received: August 22, 2012**

**From: Jennifer Keaton**

I, Jennifer Keaton, would like to request for a clarification on the applicability of the procedural safeguards in placement decisions made by Iowa Area of Education Agencies for all of those deaf pupils. I am concerned about how placement team assesses the individual's needs. I am led to believe that the placement decision is potential made based on category disability, the configuration of the delivery system, the availability of educational or related services, and availability of space or administrative convenience

That brings a concern for least restrictive environment provision of the IDEA and Section 504 is being interpreted in the public agencies in state-wide. A free appropriate public education (FAPE) for a child who is deaf or significant hearing loss in a setting, including regular class that prevents a child from receiving appropriate educations that meets his or her needs including communication needs is not least restrictive environment. The communication needs and related needs make up the educational process in which this interaction, for the purpose of transmitting knowledge and developing the child's self-esteem and identity, depends on direct communication. Given with the availability of interpreter service, does not remove the communication needs barrier in which inherently isolation.

I am very concerned about deaf pupils in the state of Iowa is being evaluated and placed. The deafness is considered a low incidence disability, in which, there is not widespread understanding of its education approaches. That contributes to the existing substantial barriers for deaf loss students in receiving appropriate educational services and supports. I am asking the Iowa Department of Education and public agencies to assess the placement decision to ensure deaf pupils are receiving the least restrictive environment educational setting and not left behind in inadequately educational setting.

In overall, I am saying that Iowa School for the Deaf is an unique school that offers least restrictive environment educational setting. It ought to be presented as option within placement decision made at Individual educational Planning (IEP) meeting.

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**Received: August 24, 2012**

**From: Joanna Busch**

I just read the summary of the meeting from the July 30 for the Feasibility & Planning Study Committee for the DHH

I am currently a Communication Coach in the Cedar Rapids Community School District, and have worked with preschool, middle school, and high school DHH students.

These students have all or will have in the case of the pre-k, experience the following:

- Mainstream experience was challenging:
  - lack of identify as deaf of or hard of hearing person
  - lack of quality interpreting services
  - communication, including comprehension, was inadequate
  - low academic expectations
  - experienced bullying
  - inability to fully participate in extracurricular activities
  - socially isolated; deaf culture can't be learned in isolation
- And one that was not on the meeting agenda, is lack of family understanding the difficulties with using verbal English to communication, getting self-understood with peers, teachers, staff, & family members.

\*\*\*\* Full access to communication is paramount\*\*\*\* VERY IMPORTANT

Suggestions that were noted at the meeting, the ones in bold are the most important to me:

- Consider increasing the 3 minute time limit for ASL speakers at the next public hearing.
- All blind/visually impaired students should spend one year at Iowa Braille School, \*\*\*to interact with peers that have the same or similar disability\*\* This is paramount in their learning and developing self-worth and confidence in living in a visual world when the student if VI.
- Don't merge IBS and ISD. Being VI or D/HH are completely different and have different adaptive needs. Yes, there are, throughout the US children that will be born Deaf/Blind or born deaf and become blind later in life due to a genetic disorder.
- Get a national expert from National Association of the Deaf or Gallaudet University to present to the feasibility committee. They are the experts and continuously researching, surveying, and collecting data on what works and doesn't work. Let's not make the same mistakes other states have made
- Can we change admissions policies to draw students from other states
- Consolidate statewide service at ISD
- Educate parents statewide that ISD is an option-especially is the child is experiencing any of the following:
- lack of identify as deaf of or hard of hearing person
- lack of quality interpreting services
- communication, including comprehension, was inadequate
- low academic expectations
- experienced bullying
- inability to fully participate in extracurricular activities
- socially isolated; deaf culture can't be learned in isolation

I wished when I was in school I had the chance to go to ISD. I have a 45-50 dB hearing loss. My self-confidence/worth was very low all throughout in a mainstreamed public school and hearing college until I transferred to Gallaudet University. The freedom and ease of being in a classroom that was design with DHH students in mind was mind blowing. I can't even begin to describe the joy of being with students and professionals like myself: having a hearing loss.

Sincerely,

Joanna Busch  
Communication Coach  
Kennedy High School

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**Received: August 24, 2012**

**From: Marvin & Harriet Vande Kamp**

We are concerned about what we hear pertaining to the closing of the Iowa School for the Deaf. From what we hear from parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, mainstreaming the deaf and hard of hearing may not be as successful as we are led to believe. Often times interpreters are not properly trained for the job and often times they are not licensed. Teachers fail to give the deaf and hard of hearing students the extra time and attention that they need.

ISD also provides social life that mainstreamed students do not have access to. We found that with our daughter Carol ('80, Vande Kamp) Manning. By the time she got to high school, she was looking for more deaf and hard of hearing friends. We found that ISD provided what she needed and wanted. Thank you for being there!

Our daughter, Carol graduated from two different universities and obtained her Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in Tennessee. Additionally, she took graduate courses to update her teaching certificates. We are so proud of her. We never dreamed that Carol could go to college. She was an excellent student and studied very hard. Over the last several years she has been a deaf educator in various educational fields.

Carol's deaf husband, Steven, also has a college degree and is a computer programmer analyst. He graduated from Tennessee School for the Deaf.

ISD is also a place where alumni continue to gather for sports and hanging out. There seems to be more to "weld" them together than with the hearing population.

It is our hope that ISD would remain open to serve the deaf and hard of hearing students of our state. Please consider the pros. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Marvin and Harriet Vande Kamp (parents of a Deaf daughter)

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**Received: August 25, 2012**

**From: Kevin & Stephanie Jones**

I sent this e-mail to the news station & others. because I think the public needs to pay attention:

RE: The closing of Iowa School For the Deaf

This is Kevin & Stephanie Jones. We live in Superior, IA. We want talk about ISD(Iowa School for the Deaf) in Council Bluffs, Iowa. We were born with German measles and became deaf. We went to ISD from 1970 until We graduated in 1983 and 1984. ISD are likely brothers and sisters to us as a family and feel comfortable to communication with sign languages, educations, sports, & anything also, ISD History & Community are important to us & to the children to keep that school OPENS PLEASE! Iowa School for the Deaf can not close! I am asking that you draw attention to the people that would personally be affected by this the children that attend the school that would be without the resources it provides. The children at ISD are not just hearing impaired. they have wheelchairs, walkers, oxygen tanks, etc. These children feel SAFE at ISD. It is THEIR community where they don't feel like outsiders. They are able to communicate with one another and find themselves in an environment where, for once, they aren't DIFFERENT. It is a safe environment where they aren't subjected to the cruelties and ignorant nature of those that can't get past their disability and see them for the child they are. I am truly begging you to help me keep this from happening. I am terrified for the children that would lose their safe-haven if this school was shut down. The people that work there are some of the most amazing people and they cannot be replaced. They have changed children's life. The community needs to see the children and how

happy they are there. They need to put a face to who this would truly be affecting. We want ISD to keep opens its good for deaf/hard of hearing children goes to that school and save money IF deaf/hard of hearing children goes to public some of school refused to having an interpreter for hearing impaired and refused pay to interpreter. public teacher forgot that hearing impaired children can't read what teacher said while teacher writing on the board or reading something with no interpreter. We against that hearing impaired do not go to public school We want hearing impaired children goes to ISD that are very important for them easy communication with sign languages & etc.. also why not Blind school can merge with deaf children at ISD. I do remembered 1 lady We met her at the bar & grill couples years ago. they saw us We sign Languages and they came up to us & talked to us that They have theirs daughter who were 6 or 7 yrs old she was born to be a deaf and put her C.I. they said some are help and some not working and They said they asked theirs daughter want go to Public school She said NO to theirs parents don't want go pubic school. and they asked her why don't want go public school. She told them cuz of hearing people make fun of her, having hard time communication with hearing children, no one play with her cuz of being deaf. She told her parents I prefer goes to deaf school. They said ok and is that why you want go deaf school cuz of easy communication, play with kids who are like her being deaf and hard of hearing & etc. She said yes that's where I want go deaf school. That's why they asked us. if We went to deaf school since we were little kids until graduated We said yes. They asked us where you guys goes to deaf school. We told them went to Iowa School For the Deaf in Council Bluffs, IA. They said understand why between different deaf and public school.. they said they are not forcing her to go public and they respected her to let her go to Deaf school. How important for deaf/hard of hearing goes to that ISD and keep that open school for them.

PLEASE HELP!!

Thank You,

Kevin & Stephanie Jones :-)

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**Received: August 25, 2012**

**From: Loretta Martzahl**

Superintendent Patrick Clancy  
Iowa School for the Deaf  
3501 Harry Langdon Boulevard  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Dear Mr. Clancy:

This letter is referencing the feasibility study being performed to decide the most efficient and effective way of providing education to the current and future students of the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) and the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBSSS). Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the committee's meeting being held on August 27, 2012; please accept this letter in support of distinct programming and continuing educational services in the state of Iowa for both special populations (hearing and visually impaired) students.

As a mother of a deaf and hearing impaired student who has chosen to enroll my daughter at ISD, I have an invested interest in the future of the school and educational experiences of deaf and hearing impaired students. My daughter, Jaymee Keen, is currently attending her second academic school year at ISD; she is enrolled in ninth grade. As a parent, it was a difficult decision to choose to enroll my child at the school. Let me make notation that in this case, difficult is not synonymous with a bad decision. On the contrary, choosing to send her to ISD has been the most pivotal point of her public education thus far. One of the greatest gifts we can provide our children is an education and opportunity which supports success and self-sufficiency toward future endeavors in life. Our family believes in the services and educational programming ISD offers their students.

Prior to attending ISD, we struggled in finding an appropriate educational setting for Jaymee. Historically, Jaymee has attended two larger districts in the state, two smaller school districts, and home schooling. While each

situation came with positive qualities, it always seemed the negative qualities far exceeded the gains. Not until Jaymee became a student at ISD, did I fully witness my daughter blossom into the exuberant and well-rounded young woman she has become.

As we have experienced, ISD is much more than a school; it is a way of life. I am a hearing parent who will never be able to experience what my daughter endures. The closest comparable experience I have to feeling the exclusion and challenge of communication Jaymee experiences in life was her first day of school a year ago when I was on campus with her. I was surrounded by individuals who were speaking a language I didn't know; some of them attempting to communicate with me and I had no viable way to neither address them in return nor understand what message they were communicating to me. I felt helpless, lost, frustrated, and sad. It was an overwhelming experience to realize, if I were in a setting similar to this and was expected to absorb crucial knowledge it may have taken me days to fully grasp the message being communicated to me.

ISD provides a language rich environment for their students because they are committed to every child and understand the importance of this type of learning for children who have always (in some degree) been shut off from the traditional communication which occurs in the world around them. This school supplies an intentional and thoughtful curriculum to meet the needs of children with communication deficits. The residential setting is difficult to accept as a long-distant parent, but I realize the importance and purpose of the children being involved in experiential learning which is offered to them in such an atmosphere. At ISD, the staff embraces the children in a dedicated manner, as if they are their own family. It's reassuring and comforting to know the individual and special needs of every student are of utmost importance and met fully. As a parent, I am confident ISD is serving my child in the most effective and efficient way imaginable.

I realize budgetary concerns are the drive behind considerations to altar an already amazing standing of the schools and education you are providing the special populations of our state. As a public school employee myself, I have experienced first-hand the brainstorming and collaboration which occurs in hopes of achieving and implementing creative solutions to save money. Generally speaking, change is difficult for people. But with a strong commitment and a team of dedicated individuals, I am optimistic an effective resolution will be reached that will not sacrifice the specific educational practices supplied at the two distinct schools.

As a parent, I am opposed to regional centers. The framework of developing such a structure appears to ostracize students even greater by housing them in smaller settings and inter-mixing a wide range of educational levels in one classroom. Combining the two distinct schools seems to carry the risk and lack of meeting the specific needs of each special population in the areas of curriculum and experiential learning opportunities. Moving one school to the opposing campus appears to create a division from the get-go for some individuals that preferential treatment is occurring. Moving and establishing a more centrally located campus seems to incur greater costs and appears wasteful of the money already utilized to update the ISD facility within the past several years. When dissecting the negative aspects of each option already discussed, the same dilemma exists.

Solutions must be the focus of what will resolve the issue at hand. Has the committee discussed a recruitment process for new students for each of the campuses? Is it possible to charge families a small tuition fee that might off-set some of the operational costs? Can realignment occur of districts where Iowa pulls in students from additional states (such as northern Missouri or western Illinois)? Is it possible to utilize more parent volunteers for various roles on campus? These may be few suggestions that have already been considered and found to lack viability. I believe in creative thought in determining solutions in order to assist offering the current programming for both schools.

ISD is a family we are proud to be a part of. My daughter has grown and I hope has the chance to continue to grow through the experiences and education the school offers. It is my hope both schools will have the ability to sustain and grow in order to continue to serve the current and future students of our state.

Sincerely,

Loretta L. Martzahl

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**Received: Aug. 27, 2012**  
**From: Shannon Hurd**

My name is Shannon Hurd , i graduates 84 from ISD ..I went to visit and tour in 1980 and I look around the area and school and in my mind , that i decide to join ISD and I look around deaf peoples and more people around and social around with friends and what i see myself in school and i love it and cos it more safe around area and to keep people stay .. I in school for 4 yrs and i glad i have alot of friends and more social and many thing going on .. I love it at school and it make me feel safe and lot memories at school and friends there. I suggest that I think it best for ISD keep open WHY? because ,I think it best for blind with deaf and deaf to keep safe than other school cos I was afraid that if something happened to blind with deaf lost or disappear or something happened them, also if blind with deaf dont know where they going or how communcation with other school or make fun of them or hurt them or bully from other school .. i think it best for blind with deaf move to ISD, and keep them safe and social around with and help each other to protect ad people's ..It'll help alot with deaf and blind with deaf keep safe at ISD and I think the parents want kids to keep safe .. I support to keep ISD open and it will safe deaf and blind with deaf and other school not safe cos it will happened to them in future ,never know it will happened .....no matter what happened to them ..I thanks ISD keep me safe and stay out trouble and it get me lot of memories and KEEP ISD OPEN LONGER ... DEAF POWER !

Sincerely,  
Shannon Hurd 84"

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**Received: Aug. 27, 2012**  
**From: Susan Larrison**

To whom in may concern:

My name is Susan Larrison. I am writing on behalf of Iowa School for the Deaf. I am very concerned about the possible demise of my alma mater. I feel the closure of ISD would be a terrible thing and a great disservice to the students and staff of this school.

I graduated from ISD in 2003 as valedictorian, and I feel ISD greatly influenced my life in a very positive aspect. I come from a family of nine children, and no one in my family signed. I went through my elementary years without knowledge of anything deaf related. All I knew was struggle, loneliness, and frustration. I did not know sign language. I did not know there was any other method of communication other than struggling to read lips, listen, and socialized. I was an outcast, and I knew it was because I was "different."

My mother enrolled me in a mainstreamed program my junior high years. There, I met students like me: deaf, isolated, and unaware. We were unaware there was a life outside of being singled out because of our differences. I learned to sign, yet I was placed in classrooms all day, every day, under the intense care of my interpreters. I did not know there was a boundary that should have been in place,. Ethics in this area was not something I understood. Some of my interpreters tried to baby me. They tried isolate me from my peers because they felt my signing and lack of hearing would embarrass cause me to embarrass myself. I could not actively participate in classroom discussions: partly because the quality of my interpreters left a lot to be desired, and partly because I didn't want to draw further attention to myself. I still felt depressed, lonely, and ashamed of myself.

When I arrived at ISD, I was in AWE. I never knew there were so many people like me, and I never knew I was normal. I was thrilled at the aspect of being able to fully participate in my classroom setting, and at ISD, I thrived. I lived in the dorms where life skills were readily taught, with no barriers. I played sports, shopped with friends, bonded with my peers, and I grew. My confidence soared. I felt like I could be somebody. I could do whatever I wanted.

I will always thank ISD for the rest of my life. I know this school does great things for its students, and the staff as well. Never in my life had I felt so comfortable like I did at ISD. I cannot begin to imagine where I would be today. I am a full time college student, majoring in Social Work, and I will always hold a special spot for ISD in my heart. Please, do not take this away from the students there. Please do not close off doors for those who would so greatly benefit from this wonderful school.

Thank you,  
Susan Larrison

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**Received: August 27, 2012**  
**From: Iowa School for the Deaf Student Council**

Click ***HERE*** for attachments sent in this letter.

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**Received: August 27, 2012**  
**From: Richard McCowin**

Here are two attachments for the August 27th public hearing. The two documents are Doing Math to Save Residential Schools and Focus Our Educational Strategy.

My name is Richard McCowin from National Association of the Deaf. I will attend to testify as NAD representative this evening.

Thank you.  
Richard McCowin

Click ***HERE*** for attachment #1 sent in this letter  
Click ***HERE*** for attachment #2 sent in this letter.

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**Received: August 27, 2012**  
**From: Kathy Carlson**

I wish to speak to the matter of closing or combining the Iowa School for the Deaf and the school for the blind.

I am the aunt of a young lady who is deaf; the rest of the family is hearing. The Iowa School for the Deaf was the greatest thing that has ever happened for this young lady. She grew up with very good friends, a very good education, and the ability to fit into society, to raise a family, and to contribute to her family by working. As a taxpayer, I feel very blessed that we can contribute to those in our society who are disadvantaged from loss of hearing or eyesight and contribute to making them capable citizens. It is something I am very proud of! Iowa School for the Deaf teaches them educationally, but also teaches them to feel successful as deaf citizens. You and I cannot imagine the difficulty they face every day communicating. What gives them hope in their lives are the wonderful friends they have made who support them, the families who have learned from this incredible school how to support them, also. It teaches so very much more than just education. It teaches how to live well for these young people who have a disability to work their way through.

In society today, we are so worried about bullying and not fitting in well. The regular classroom experience is fine in the beginning for these young deaf people, but when they reach middle school age it becomes so much more difficult for them in maintaining friendships and maintaining the learning level. Communication is not easy for people who have no way of knowing how to communicate with each other. Regular teachers do not know sign language! They may have one deaf child in their classroom in their lifetime and that is not enough to prepare them for working with this individual. Teachers will always do their best, but it creates frustration for them in having someone who is not able to learn in the same way as the rest of the class. Let's give these young people every opportunity we can! It should be an individual choice whether to mainstream or attend a school for the deaf. It should be a choice a family works their way through.

My niece went to ISD from preschool on. She has an entire community of deaf friends who support each other and consider themselves "family". She communicates far better with them than she does with her family. We try very hard, but we are not capable of communicating on the same level as they are. My niece now has a family and two hearing-challenged daughters who have been mainstreamed. Now that they are middle school age, it is becoming difficult for them to remain in the regular school system. Friendships are becoming difficult. I very much want these two great-nieces to find happiness through very good friends and enrolling in the Iowa School for the Deaf has seemed like such a good answer for them at this time in their young lives. PLEASE CONSIDER NOT ONLY EDUCATION BUT THE SUCCESS YOU CAN GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE BY LETTING THEM EXPERIENCE LIFE WITH OTHERS WHO HAVE THE VERY SAME DISABILITY. IF THEY DO, IT DOES NOT REMAIN A DISABILITY FOR WE LEARN FROM OTHERS AROUND US WHO ARE EXPERIENCING THE SAME PROBLEMS. We want the best for our hearing kids - let's give the best to these young men and women! They deserve our help just as much as the rest of the kids who do hear. Shame on us if we turn our backs on someone who is capable of learning, but not capable of hearing.

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**Received: August 27, 2012**

**From: April Stultz-Kammerer**

My name is April Stultz-Kammerer. ISD is a huge part of whom and why I am the person I am today. Iowa school for the deaf made my life so much easier by just being an option that was available to me in my own home town. I was one of the students who showed up at ISD and I didn't know how to read or write because I couldn't hear or understand my teacher in the public school system. Since I did not know sign language at the time and interpreter was not even an option. When I first arrived at ISD, I was welcomed right away, people were there to help me understand signs language and everything even though i was local I stayed in the dorms so I could learn a bit faster. ISD had become my home. If it were not for ISD I would not be in college working on my mid wife degree. They have teacher that know signs and with the smaller classes the students are able to learn much faster. If you take ISD away from Council Bluffs, you will be taken away a lot of history to this town, from me, from past students and staff and from current student and staffs. ISD is like a family to everyone who has ever become involved with the school. Please, you must leave ISD right where it at. We need to just draw more awareness to the school; I do not think relocating it will be better for the school. The fact that deaf children would be force to enter public schools until a new building has been built would only upset them and confuse them. Please leave ISD right where it is at and help us bring awareness to better the school.

Thank you for taken the time to read this,

April Stultz-Kammerer ( former student)

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**Received: August 27, 2012**

**From: Candice Goodwin Arteaga**

I'm emailing about ISD as I could not attend to the meeting at ISD on Monday, August 27th.

I joined Iowa School for the Deaf in fall of 1997 and graduated in May 1999. I am the only deaf person in my family. All my growing up, I was mainstreamed in public schools. I remember when I was living in Wyoming, Iowa and rode a van to Anamosa and then switch vans to go to Cedar Rapids where they had deaf education

program while Wyoming didn't have the program. That's an hour one way and an hour back but I remember it was a long drive depending on the traffic. Think about how much time I have lost with my family and friends by being on the road more than 2 hours a day.

Later in the years, my family and I moved to Bettendorf and they did not have deaf education program either! During my middle school and first 2 years of high school, I rode a bus over the Mississippi River every day to attend Moline Public Schools in Moline, Illinois. They had deaf education in Moline while Bettendorf didn't. It was very frustrating for me as I didn't have friends in Bettendorf and my family didn't sign much. It was harder to join after school activities as I needed to find a ride to home ACROSS the river and had no friends to give me a ride home!

I never heard of Iowa School for the Deaf until I attend Deaf Missions Camp in the Summer of 1996 and some people graduated from ISD attended the camp. They have told me about it so when I got home, I told my parents I wanted to visit ISD. So we did in fall of 1996 and I was in awe that everyone knew how to sign. In Spring of 1996, I made my decision to attend ISD in fall of 1997 which I began my junior year and graduated in 1999. I was ranked second in my class.

After I attended ISD, I got a full ride to Iowa State University for 2 years and transferred to Des Moines Area Community College for last 2 years. I felt that if I never attended ISD, I may not have gone to a better college...I ended up attending Iowa State University which I never dreamed that I'll make it to college.

I never regretted on making my decision to attend ISD. They have taught me so much about Deaf Culture and my communication thru sign language has improved so much. Iowa School for the Deaf is my second home. I never felt left out. I was able to communicate with teachers who signed back to me (without relying on an interpreter). I was able to join in sports where we all felt the same and we could communicate together as a team. We play against other deaf schools and we had the opportunity to meet other deaf students from other schools knowing we are all the same.

In the dorm, my houseparents were great! I had an houseparent whose like a second mom to me. She was there for me when I needed a mom. We, the girls, did things together. Houseparents taught us how to clean our rooms, how to cook, talked to us to think about our future after we graduate.

If you decide to close Iowa School for the Deaf, the future of Deaf Community will be lost. We need to keep Iowa School for the Deaf OPEN to the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students in the future as ISD can teach them pride, encouragement, self-esteem, so on! My self-esteem was so low when I was mainstreamed until I join ISD, my self-esteem was high with happiness and knowing that I have the support from ISD Staff and Deaf Friends (Students).

If you decide to relocate Iowa School for the Deaf, I would think middle of Iowa would be the best move. It's in the middle where everyone can go. It's easy access and equal drive than driving across the state. More parents would be more involved.

I am asking you please do NOT close Iowa School for the Deaf! Please don't. Think of another way to keep the school open.

Thank you for your time to read this letter. God Bless.

Candice Goodwin Arteaga  
Class of 1999  
Senior Class President of 1999

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**Received: August 27, 2012**  
**From: Tracy R Jackson**

This is Tracy and myself deaf, I have tour already tour to this beautiful campus at ISD last spring and really reconsider to move up to Conuicl buff Iowa for my deaf daughter to enroll next year and planning to attend to Deaf Mission Bible Training next year as well. It seem perfect community where Deaf church, Deaf Mission, Deaf School. Please keep Iowa School for the Deaf open and leave as it is cuz God used people built that beautiful campus!! As right now my daughter is in mainstream and its time for her to explore deaf school and build up social skills with others deaf. Right now she only had about 2 deaf she see every day. I would like for her to experience to play sports as well. Thank you for your time and please think it over for the best interests for Deaf kids, their future and my daughter future as well.

You all and Iowa school for deaf in my thoughts and prayers!

God bless

Tracy

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**Received: August 27, 2012**  
**From: Carmen Grove Suminski**

Public Hearing  
Monday, August 27, 2012  
Iowa School for the Deaf

Members of the Feasibility and Planning Committee for Iowa Services for Students who are Deaf, Blind, Visually Impaired or Hard of Hearing:

My name is Carmen Grove Suminski. I am the current superintendent of the North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NDSR/RCDDH) and the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind (NDVS/SB). I am here at the request of Joe Finnegan, CEASD and the approval of Patrick Clancy.

It is a pleasure to speak before you today. I commend you and your stakeholders for allocating time and resources to specialized services in your state.

Mission of NDSR/RCDDH: To provide an environment in which individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can access the services and support that they may need to become and remain integrated, productive citizens of the state. (Page 9, Future Services Plan, Outline and Description)

Mission of NDVS/SB: To function as a statewide comprehensive resource center and to work cooperatively with related agencies in providing a full range of services to all persons who are blind or visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities.

In North Dakota there has been a lot of change, partnering and planning.

Accomplishments of NDSR/RCDDH include:

- Completed a Facility Master Plan and began its recommendations per appropriated expenditures
- Completed a Future Services Plan in July, 2010
- Completed a Strategic Plan in October, 2011
- Changed name to North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center for Deaf and Hard and Hearing on January 1, 2012
- Further develop outreach and adult programs statewide

- Additional information is available on the North Dakota School for the Deaf website [www.nd.gov/ndsd](http://www.nd.gov/ndsd)
- Maintain and continue to provide an accredited K – 8 program for students who are deaf and hard of hearing in compliance with their IEP's
- Provide services for grades 9 through graduation as determined by the IEP in partnership with the district of residence, Devils Lake Public Schools and various other accredited distance education options
- Collaborate with related entities (i.e., Minot State University, all ND higher education facilities, Lake Region State College, local education agencies, dual sensory project, vocational rehabilitation, aging services, alumni, families and parents and ND Vision Services/School for the Blind)
- Generate revenue with campus rental and tuition for ASL classes

Through the processes of the Future Services Plan and the Strategic Planning there was a significant focus on gaps in services and where additional outreach services were needed; however, the dorm and the strong center based program would continue to enable students and families to have a continuum of services based on individualized needs.

As you are aware, there are many unique needs; yet, extremely different for the deaf and hard of hearing person and persons who are blind or visually impaired:

- Age of onset of hearing loss or vision loss
- Family support
- Severity and type of hearing or vision loss
- Type of amplification (i.e. FM system, hearing aids, cochlear implant) deaf
- Communication Skills
- Social Skills
- Access to support services
- Availability of assistive technology
- Instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum (assistive technology, Braille, Braille music, daily living skills, orientation and mobility, recreation/leisure, and career education) blind

The NDVS/SB provides regionalized outreach services and center based programming to persons of all ages; infants and their families, students and adults.

Offered is the following:

- Short term programs during the academic year and summer months (22 weeks from July, 2012 to August, 2013)
- Consumer and Professional Library, Sensory library
- American Printing House Quota Funds and Materials
- Braille Access Center
- Talking Book Machine Lending Agency
- Store (adaptive aids for sale)

Based on my 40 plus years in the field of blindness and three in the field of deafness, there are more differences than similarities as to their educational needs. The year around programming at NDVS/SB works for North Dakota. We have continued to refine and improve it since 1994. We have presented on this programming both statewide and nationally and have been asked to assist other states in the development of short term programming.

The deaf person; however, needs the opportunity to communicate with others in person; thus, avoiding isolation. It is not feasible that the same delivery of service works for both disabilities. It is not a "one size fits all."

Summary

North Dakota is open to creating "partnerships" with other states. I would also be willing to return per your invitation.

I wish to quote from a friend and esteemed colleague, Dr. Philip Hatlen, "There is no right or wrong placement for a child; however, there is a right placement at a given time."

I am honored to serve as the superintendent of NDSB/Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and ND Vision Services/School for the Blind. This is a critical; yet, exciting time to be in education.

Thank you, members of the committee, for your ongoing support in serving persons who are deaf and hard of hearing and blind and visually impaired.

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**Received: August 27, 2012**

**From: Shirley Hicks**

### Residential School for the Deaf Staying Alive

As a residential school for the deaf, ISD has and will continue to have a role to play, within Iowa, the region and the nation.

I am Shirley Hicks, a proud ISD alumna and a retired ISD teacher. I am proud to have taught at ISD for 44 years.

ISD is crucial to all deaf and hard of hearing children in Iowa and the region, whether or not those children attend. It has to continue to be available to the children and their families. ISD has an established service infrastructure that can serve deaf and hard of hearing children immediately. Certified teachers of the deaf are teaching. Language immersion, along with the direct communication with educators, classmates, and other staff is priceless and rare. Campus life, with dorms, classrooms, and space for extra-curricular activities is invaluable. Historical and cultural roots, as evidenced in the ISD Museum, make ISD a cultural institution that needs to be preserved.

ISD has evolved throughout the years to meet the changing needs of students, families and the community. Look at the ISD Foundation, looking at ways to successfully support ISD financially. Look at our expanding programs to help people from all over the state learn to sign. ISD will continue to evolve and innovate on what could be next.

It's clear the impact ISD has had. Now let's imagine an impactful future, one where ISD continues to play a central and critical role to the educational and cultural lives of Iowa and the Region's deaf and hard of hearing children. This is the time for possibility, not black and white choices.

Thank you...

Shirley D Hicks '57 and Retired ISD teacher

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Received: August 27, 2012  
From: Jerry Siders

My name is Jerry Siders. I represent Iowa Association of the Deaf (IAD). Since you limit us to speak for five minutes, I try to do my best to maximize my comments about the feasibility study.

The IAD views the Iowa School for the Deaf as a comprehensive academic, health, and socialization program including dormitory living equipped for students who meet their societal needs and skills.

Next to coming from a deaf family or a family with some fluent sign communication skills, many view residential life as the ideal opportunity for students who are deaf to become familiar with and enculturated into the Deaf community. In the dining room, for example, students get direct and firsthand experience of true dinner conversation, because the language of the Deaf community, American Sign Language (ASL), is used.

In after-school activities students are on equal footing with their peers, and communication is not a barrier to social life because students do not have to depend on an interpreter, enabling them to express themselves freely to their peers. The residential school provides a great opportunity for socialization and is a great environment for developing self-worth.

If a culture is defined as heritage, language, and a set of customs and values shared by its members and transmitted from one generation to the next, then the Deaf community truly is a culture. Members of the Deaf culture are a group of individuals who have a common heritage (historical events, famous figures, art, literature, and scholarly organizations), a common language (American Sign Language), and a set of customs and values (cherishing Deaf children, expecting participation in cultural events, valuing the visual world, protecting one another) (Padden & Humphries, 1988).

This heritage is passed on from one generation to the next via the residential school, where they learn such things as Deaf folklore and folklife (jokes, legends, games, riddles, etc.) from other children, Deaf teachers, and Deaf/signed houseparents.

As I mentioned many sociological facts about the residential school above, most mainstreaming programs do not have/possess. According to Dr. George Propp's study at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, he found that there should be at least 120 students to make the program viable/a whole community for the child. Therefore it needs at least a community (both Deaf and hearing) to develop a normal and healthy child. A mainstreaming program will not.

Many Deaf people look at Iowa School for the Deaf as their second home and shrine. If you decide to close it, move it to another location, or divide up its program into regional schools, you will cause Deaf students and people to lose its connection to the school and alienate their feelings. Many hearing people have their connections to their groups, their schools or colleges. Why can't Deaf students and people experience their belongings like hearing people?

I, again, beg you to keep our school/community where it is now. It is cheaper to keep the campus because all is there. If we have regional programs for the deaf, it will cost Iowa at least five times the total cost. In a long run, it will save Iowa in dollars because many of us including students will become viable members of the society who pay taxes to national, state and local governments.

Deaf children need to be with each other to communicate fully and at ease, to exchange information without barriers, to learn about the world, to be fully themselves and express the fullness of who they are. This promotes literacy development, leadership potential, academic excellence and success in life. The best place for them is at Iowa School for the Deaf!

Thank you for your time.

Jerry Siders

Received: August 27, 2012  
From: James Snyder

To the editor

I would like the Board of Regents to consider my experience as an Deaf lowan before deciding the fate for Iowa School for the Deaf.

I was mainstreamed 60 years ago before the term "mainstream" was attached to schooling for special needs children. My hearing loss was not discovered until 5th grade. My hearing parents never considered a school for the Deaf or need for manual communication. While I have enjoyed a most successful life professionally without any regrets I would not wish mainstreaming another Deaf child ever.

I don't mean to minimize the special needs and challenges faced by the blind but their education situation can be handled in regular public schools. Education is more than books and what the teachers say. School is about growing emotionally and equally. Necessary escorts or companions to access public schools for the blind can be easily found-fellow students, teacher aides or volunteers. However, qualified interpreters do not exist in Iowa for a one to one basis for everyone of Iowa's 3000 Deaf/hard of Hearing children. Yet, even if such interpreters could be found I would remain a strong opponent to "mainstreaming" the deaf child. Much of what we learn in school is not in the classroom but in the cafeteria, hall ways and during recess. Children need to freely exchange information and secrets to develop a sense of self worth and belonging. Thrusting a third person in a conversation places a barrier between two children.

I graduated from both pharmacy and dental schools with academic honors. Unfortunately, I never learned the ability of making small talk and many social skills that one picks up by "social osmosis". Communication is not visual as much as it is sound. No matter how skilled an interpreter is something is always lost in translation. I never enjoyed a level playing field in the classroom or playground. I was identified as "different" by my hearing classmates. Hearing parents want what is best for their Deaf child but unfortunately don't recognize their child's special world of silence.

As much as I loved my parents I would have loved to benefited attending a school for deaf. I would have been on equal footing with all my classmates. I would have developed a better sense of who I am and my interactions with the hearing world would have been on a stronger basis. Only with a total immersion provided by a school for the deaf can these special children reach their considerable potential.

Mainstreaming is not a means of inclusion as it is proposed by hearing educators and counselors. Mainstreaming is a terrible act of exclusion for the Deaf child. Lastly, the cost per student to continue with Iowa School for the Deaf would fall greatly if all Deaf children were encourage to attend one central location. Verses the proposed expense of hiring hundreds of interpreters (if they could be found) across the state for each Deaf child to attend public school.

James Snyder  


**Received: August 28, 2012**  
**From: Ronalee Vinsonhaler**

I am a parent of one of the kids at ISD, I was unable to make the forum but want to express how upset I am at the thought of them closing this school! I can't express into words the positive results that ISD has had on my son Brendan. He has become such a wonderful young man always willing to help and feels a great deal for the less fortunate students. I get such warm responses from parents and teachers as to how sweet of a boy he is. As a mom you can imagine how proud I am of him and it feels great to hear other people confirming that. He has learned so much at ISD too and was failing miserably at the public school as they didn't have the know-how or resources to help him with his disability. He has come such a long way and I can see that in the other students that have been there with him. Please make sure the right people get this information as it would be a disservice to this area if the school was to close.

Thank you for your assistance.

Ronalee Vinsonhaler  
Parent of Brendan Vinsonhaler

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**Received: August 29, 2012**  
**From: Bob Mundt**

Kathy Hintz  
1107 G Avenue  
Vinton, IA 52349

Ms. Hintz:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Council Bluffs Area Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our concern over the potential closing of the Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs. As a part of Council Bluffs and Southwest Iowa for over 140 years, the school is almost as old as Council Bluffs. Deaf people from across the country come to Council Bluffs and ISD to receive a quality education and develop skills to lead a productive life. Over these many years, thousands have gone on to become leaders in the deaf community and in the hearing world.

Today, the school has grown to employ over 100 jobs generating over \$6 million in payroll. In addition, the goods and services purchased by ISD amount to hundreds of thousands in revenue for area businesses. Employees of ISD have purchased homes in Council Bluffs and Southwest Iowa and have, in many cases, established multi-generational ties to ISD, Council Bluffs and Southwest Iowa.

Students and their families have also established a vested interest in Council Bluffs and Southwest Iowa. Many of these families have moved to Council Bluffs and established permanent residence, sending their children to local schools, taking local jobs or establishing their own businesses.

They have integrated into our social fabric and have become part of the culture of Council Bluffs. Many of our community businesses, attractions, education institutions and recreational/ cultural programs have been influenced and adapted to meet the needs of our diverse population.

In addition, the physical infrastructure of the school and its facilities have become a community icon and many are listed as a "must see" in Southwest Iowa. Its architecture has been well maintained and its new facilities have opened up new opportunities for recreation, education, cultural exchanges and a general showpiece to our history as the Eastern terminus and a mainstay in our history. Additionally, ISD has residence halls and support services to house all students wishing to attend.

Our community and our culture supports and embraces ISD. To lose such a viable and integral part of our community would surely impact us negatively for decades to come.

These and many other reasons talked about at the public hearings is why we, as the Council Bluffs Chamber feel we need to find a way to keep ISD open and viable to serve our deaf community.

We look forward to further conversations and offer our services in generating dialogue, ideas and solutions to the challenges we face today.

Thank you for allowing us to have input into this process. Please let the chamber and the Council Bluffs business community know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Bob Mundt  
President/CEO

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**Received: August 29, 2012**  
**From: Lynn Crawford**

I am Lynn Crawford. I am very proud to have graduated from Iowa School for the Deaf in 1974.

This school has provided me and so many others with fabulous memories that you cannot begin to comprehend. This school is a bilingual, bicultural environment and a unique approach to education for us. In academics, we learn English, reading, writing and the aspects of the hearing culture. Since many of us live in the residential setting or dormitory, we are fortunate to have the older children right there to teach us more about our own culture.

The deaf adults who work in the school are also important role models.

This school is the core of our deaf culture. We learn about the values, traditions, folklore, norms and identity while preparing for the real world of the hearing. Many of us consider this beautiful school our home. A home where life is good and very special relationships are developed into one big happy family.

I now live in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I flew home to Council Bluffs on Saturday because I want to voice my concerns about your future plans for this school. After investigating and researching, I have discovered things that have me wondering and pondering about the process of the feasibility study.

The Iowa Code 270.10 specifies that "the state board of regents shall not merge the School for the Deaf at Council Bluffs with the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School at Vinton or close either of those institutions until all of the following three requirements have been met."

I understand that the residential program in Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School is no longer in use and that some of the buildings are being used for administrative purposes. Other buildings are being used in a contract with AmeriCorps. Is the school then, in a sense, closed? If it is in fact closed, then the Iowa Code 270.10 should be complete. Why is it that we still need to do the feasibility study on ISD?

Furthermore, I am questioning the committee members on the feasibility and planning study. There are no nationally recognized experts as consultation support on the committee. I believe they should be included as stated in the feasibility and planning study. May I recommend that you select the Executive Director of the National Association of the Deaf and the President of Gallaudet University?

Also, I question the choices of the meeting sites. I support the first two sites, Vinton and Council Bluffs. However, I do not agree with the three meetings with the Area Education Agencies. I believe in those last three meetings, there are some plans to include, in depth, the exploration of the Preferred Future Plans for the State-wide Services for Iowa Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. I see only one educational professional with a significant hearing loss. May I recommend that 51% of the executive council/team members be deaf?

I am also uncomfortable with the wording in each of the five goals that open with "We will know....." How can you "know" what you are looking for in our deaf population? You don't "know" what it is like to be deaf. You don't experience what we experience as Deaf people. You don't live in our shoes. So what do you "know" about us? To me, this shows oppression.

I ask you now to really consider saving Iowa School for the Deaf. It is the best educational and social environment for deaf children. Many who are attending the mainstreaming programs are suffering academically due to a shortage of proficient interpreters in Iowa's educational settings. These children also miss out on the opportunity to develop special relationships and be a part of that big happy family like the one I'm so fortunate to be a part of. May I recommend that these children be sent to Iowa School for the Deaf?

Finally, let it be known that our being deaf is a wonderful gift from God. We are the People of the Eyes and we love who we are. We function in and deal with your culture daily. Must we be fully assimilated in it as well?

Thank you so much for allowing me to voice my concerns. I pray that you will take them into consideration and understand that the closing of Iowa School for the Deaf would forever be a devastating impact on all who are a part of it's past, present and future.

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*Continued on next page.*

Received: Sept. 4, 2012  
From: Jennifer McKittrick

Jennifer Lynn McKittrick

- o I don't know if I am sending this to the right place, but I hope if I am not you may be able to help me get it to the right place, please:—

My son is a new student to ISD this year and I have seen him blossom in just the few weeks that he has been there. I want to try and explain what I have seen in the past, what has happened in the past and what I am seeing now and why it is important for you to know all of this, so please be patient with me.

I have tried to raise my son to understand that just because he is deaf doesn't mean something is wrong with him and I have tried to show him he can do anything he wants to do if he set his mind to it. I tried encouraging him to go out for sports and make friends and give it his all while in school. He tried and I saw him put his whole heart into it, but the hearing kids were cruel. I watched them tease him, exclude him, and knock him down emotionally. Don't get me wrong, not all the hearing kids were like this, but 90% were and he was socially and emotionally isolated. He started having many behavior problems because he wasn't easily understood by people in his school and he honestly lacked in communication and social skills and he struggled with school because of all this and daily I got bad behavior calls, and he was always in detention. His older sister is a hearing child, and I watched her get into many fights to protect her little brother from people making fun of him and teasing him, and her friends tried their best to include him, but that was hard on him and his sister. I did my best to do right by him, I went to school to learn how to communicate with him and to learn about Deaf culture and the Deaf community and I know now that it wasn't enough, he needed more and my heart broke that my decisions could be hurting him more.

My son and I sat down and discussed him going to ISD camp to see how he liked the school and we decided on him going for that week. When he came home, he was so excited and I could barely keep up with him when he was explaining what he did and how he met new friends and how everyone understood him and how he loved it there. That night I sat down and cried because I saw that in a way I kept him from what he needed most because I was selfish and didn't want strangers raising my son, and that's how it felt to me if I sent him away for school. Later that week I went to him and asked him if he wanted to go to school at ISD and I explained he would live there during the week and it was possible he would only come home once a month for visits, this was before we found out it was every weekend, he thought about it for a few days and came to me and told me he really wanted to go to ISD, so we got the ball rolling. I talked to ISD, his home school and the district he was going to for the deaf ed classes. Between all of us we had the IEP set up one week before school started and that day myself, ISD and his home school decided ISD was best for him so we rushed around and got him ready to come up there.

He arrived the day before school started and we were both a nervous wreck, but he was determined to see it through, and I fought every mothers instinct to grab him and run for home. By the time I left to come home I was an emotional wreck. Thoughts of "Did I do the right thing? Will he be okay? What if he needs me? What if this what if that?", all of

it went through my head and I cried all the way home, all that night and into the next day. That week was the hardest week of my life. I felt he didn't text me enough, I didn't hear from him enough, all the other things that go through a mom's mind went through mine. His dorm parent called me every day with updates and really tried to support me through this change and they were wonderful with keeping me informed and easing my worries. Finally Friday arrived and he was coming home, and I was surprised by what I saw when he came home. He had some confidence he hadn't had the Sunday before when I dropped him off, he was smiling and excited to tell me about his week and he just bubbled over with happiness. I knew then that we made the right choice for him. Every week when he comes home and I see his confidence becoming stronger, his social skills improving, his personality shining, maturity happening in him, hearing how his classes are going great, reports from dorm parents always positive and absolutely no daily reports about bad behavior. ISD has been the most positive influence in my son's entire life. He is able to get the full High School experience all kids deserve to have and it is having such a positive influence in his life. It has been absolutely wonderful to see this. Then just recently I heard that ISD may be closing their doors in the future and my heart just dropped. So I am coming to you and sharing my story with you with the hope for you to see what good ISD is doing for the kids. I'm hoping that my experience and my son's experience, even as short as it may be so far, may show you that making it where some of these kids, including my own son, may have to go back to a public school will be a horrible change for them and I am asking you to please not let this happen. My son and all of the other kids depend on ISD for what you offer them emotionally, educationally and socially. Please, don't close ISD doors, please don't take away what you offer my son and all of the other students. He has finally found a place he fits in and he is happy and like any parent that is all I want for my boy.  
Thank-you for listening to me,  
Sincerely,  
Jennifer McKittrick

**Received: Sept. 11, 2012**  
**From: Lori Bushby**

I would just like to put my two cents in, on the topic of ISD. The children work very hard to be able to learn things that will help them in "Normal life" here in the surrounding area that make it easier for them to be able to learn. I am a mom of a child that has a hearing loss in her left ear and a cochlear implant on her right ear. We found out about ISD from Mr. Missky with AEA4 he made the appointment that we could go down and see the school. She did not know any sign when she went down to the school but by the time she came home for Christmas she was singing the entire song of silent night. I had not seen the glow in her face that was on it that night in a long time.

It is said that Iowa school for the deaf is not needed. I say BULL you put children in the main schools that don't have any problems at all and they are not able to keep up. The testing that is done is across the board but when you put in "handicaps" of any sort hearing, seeing, or learning. YOU now have even harder times for the student. By being in the school for the deaf she has the extra help that was not possible in public schools as much as they try they don't have the resources to help them. Students in the school for the deaf has the resources to be able to have an interpreter, signing and talking it through. She has gone from C and D to high honor roll she is a shining star. Public schools are harder for a deaf child because the walk around the room they only talk and different tones are harder for a hearing impaired child.

I believe the you are looking at this WRONG you should not be looking to close either place you should be looking to get the other percent of the deaf or hard of hearing and blind children enrolled in to the school where they can grow and become a part of this world with their heads held high. As of 2006 - 2007 there are 3,231 children with hearing loss or deaf. Last I knew there was ONLY maybe 200 kids at ISD. So the others struggle with trying to keep up with "normal" kids or as it would turn out fall behind or just stop trying. They can get the

help that will show them the things they need to be independent. Not have to rely on anyone to help them. The school for the deaf helps them to go one after school fill out applications for collage and for jobs. <http://www.regents.iowa.gov/CCHS/DHHDDataSummary.pdf> gives you the graphs that show when heard of hearing to deaf children are taken out of public schools they score better.

Lori Bushby

**Received: Sept. 13, 2012**  
**From: Ron Sutcliffe**



September 13, 2012

To: Feasibility and Planning Study Committee

From: Ronald E. Sutcliffe, Ph.D.

Subject: Iowa School for the Deaf

My name is Ronald E. Sutcliffe. I am a graduate of the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD) class of 1954. My parents are also ISD alumni. I grew up on a farm in Clarksville and after graduating from ISD, I went on to Gallaudet University where I earned a B.A. degree in accounting. As I began my professional career I continued my studies and eventually earned Master and Doctorate degrees from the University of Maryland, College Park. I was employed at Gallaudet in several business related capacities before becoming a professor of Business Administration, retiring as Dean of the Business School after 42 years of service. I also served as a board member of several local, state and national organizations of the deaf. A proud alumnus of ISD who deeply appreciates the personal and educational development opportunities ISD provided, I authored "The Legacy of the Iowa School for the Deaf," published in 2005.

I appreciated and benefited greatly from the direct and unimpeded language and communication around me at ISD, and also the many incidental learning opportunities that it presented. ISD, my family and later Gallaudet all contributed to the development of my language, each being able to provide the spontaneous communication that is so critical when socializing and learning. I still remember back when I was growing up and a member of the 4-H Club during the summer time. While I valued and was greatly interested in the club, and communicated with my peers via paper and pencil, my participation was negatively impacted by the language and communication challenges that existed. At times I felt like a loner who in group situations was limited to fringe elements of the activities. I felt so differently at ISD because language and communication flowed naturally and it was easy to engage in language and social discourse with my peers, teachers, and administrators. Being able to share my thoughts effectively and also understand the thoughts of others was so important to my overall development and success in life.

Now that the task force committee was established to make recommendations to the Board of Regents to "increase efficiencies and effectiveness in services for Iowa students who are deaf, hard of hearing,"

I would like to offer my thoughts of what ISD could or should do to help the deaf and hard of hearing students be better prepared for higher education or the world of work so they can become responsible and contributing citizens.

Among the concerns being noted is related to the geographical location of ISD. There are some other schools

for the deaf that are located outside demographic clusters. For example, the Florida school with 600 students is located in northern (St. Augustine) part of the state. Both California schools, in Fremont and Riverside, have over 500 students and are located outside metropolitan districts where larger numbers of students reside. Council Bluffs being "out of way" should not really be an issue. The ISD campus is well facilitated for the deaf students. The videos in the school's web page <http://www.iowaschoolforthe deaf.org/isd-videos> should be viewed to feel how the students enjoy about being around their peers and others as well as direct communication with their teachers to help develop their self-esteem. Testimonies by some parents further justify considering the importance of direct language and communication access. The issue of saving money is important but should not be considered without examining the end result of any decision. Developing deaf students to become responsible citizens and tax payers will result in positive returns through income taxes, in contrast to living off welfare and other government supports. For myself and many other graduates ISD has been a great investment for the state of Iowa.

Because accountability is so important, consideration should be given to the designation of ISD as the state agency responsible for oversight of ALL deaf and hard of hearing students within the state of Iowa, as some other states are doing. ISD can be a resource to local school districts, parents, families and so forth across the state. The school can work with the Local Education Agencies (LEA) and other providers of services for deaf and hard of hearing students to track student progress statewide, and use data to examine programs and services. This can be accomplished through inter- and intra- agency planning and collaboration and managed through MOUs between the school and the LEA. I recommend Dr. Jay Innes, a retired professor of education at Gallaudet University to be a consultant for this project. His vita is enclosed. Dr. Innes is a highly respected consultant who is working with some schools and states, including Indiana, Ohio and Delaware.

I will be available to offer my assistance if so needed. Thank you for your consideration.

Click **HERE** for attachment sent with this letter.

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**Received: Sept. 13, 2012**  
**From: Ben Lackender**

Clozing down the Braille school is a bad idia, what about the egication for the blind childrin, they need to lern just like the sited due. Something els what is this about? putting the deaf with the blind, this can not be, doing this would be like putting two groups of people of two difrint languages to gether wair one can't understand each other. sine language is a forin language to the blind, and Braille is a forin language to the deaf. Patrick can not be the presadent of this, think about this, he das not know Braille or sine language, if I want to be a presadent of a school wair you lern french or chinies, do you not think that I should not know thees languag-es? something to consitter.

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*Continued on next page.*

Received: Sept. 14, 2012  
From: Julie Delkamiller



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
Department of Special Education  
and Communication Disorders

September 14, 2012

Dear Feasibility and Study Committee:

Thank you for your commitment to the students in Iowa and for your diligence in seeking input from a wide variety of stakeholders.

It is my strong belief that educators and families have access to current research in the field. While there is a plethora of medical and audiological research, it is more difficult to locate solid research in the area of visual language and teaching methodologies.

There are several resources available which would be helpful in your challenging work. I suggest:

(Click **HERE**) Information on reading to deaf children:

[http://www.gallaudet.edu/Clerc\\_Center/Information\\_and\\_Resources/Info\\_to\\_Go/Language\\_and\\_Literacy/15\\_Principles\\_for\\_Reading\\_to\\_Deaf\\_Children.html](http://www.gallaudet.edu/Clerc_Center/Information_and_Resources/Info_to_Go/Language_and_Literacy/15_Principles_for_Reading_to_Deaf_Children.html)

(Click **HERE**) Visual learning and visual language:

<http://vl2.gallaudet.edu/>

I am including a research brief about bilingual/bimodal approaches for kids with cochlear implants. Additionally, I am also including the issue of a recent *Odyssey* magazine about putting research into practice.

I encourage you to look at these materials and resources as they apply to your charge of determining the effectiveness and efficiencies at Iowa School for the Deaf and the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. If you have any additional questions, please contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Julie Delkamiller, Ed.D., C.I., C.T.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Special Education  
University of Nebraska Omaha  
Former faculty at Iowa School for the Deaf

6001 Dodge Street / Omaha, NE 68182-0054  
402-554-2201 / FAX: 402-554-3572

Click **HERE** for attachment #1 sent in this letter.

Click **HERE** for attachment #2 sent in this letter.

**Received: Sept. 19, 2013**

**From: Stacie Polewick**

To the Members of the Feasibility Study and Planning Committee

I was unable to attend the open forums held by the Feasibility Study and Planning Committee but wanted to take the time and share my support for combining the school for the blind and the school for the deaf. I believe that state funds need to be set aside to create regional programs across Iowa. Regional programs allow services for deaf and hard of hearing students to be more effective, efficient and equitable across the entire state. These regional programs may look different in each area of the state depending on the educational needs of the students they serve.

Center based programs in larger school districts should be encouraged. The center based programs should be overseen by the state or regional coordinators and not the individual school district to be sure that the program is designed to help students who are deaf and hard of hearing reach their maximum potential. Center based preschool programs for deaf and hard of hearing should be established to front load students with language development. The type of language development used will also vary depending on the needs of the child and family.

Nebraska, since closing their school for the deaf, has created such programs. The regional programs in Nebraska work together as a state to create various professional development and family development programs. They have both statewide and regional trainings that focus on early intervention to transition. The regional program coordinators also work together to plan various social and educational activities for the students. These activities range from a Valentine's dance for middle school and high school deaf and hard of hearing students, to attending Close Up in Washington D.C., and Space Camp. They also have a well-attended summer camp that is theme based and is sensitive to the cultural and social emotional needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The goal for many of the programs is exposure to deaf culture. The success of these activities is based on the regional programs and providing transportation and supervision by the staff. The regional programs in Nebraska have brought the state together to provided services and activities for all students across the state.

I support combining the schools for the blind and deaf and using funds to create regional programs across the state. I encourage the committee to look at the regional programs created in Nebraska and learn what has worked and things they would do differently. I would suggest that it be required that administration for the programs be by trained professionals in the area of deaf and hard of hearing. The majority of my career has been supervised and evaluated by people who do not understand the unique needs of the population I work with.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter,

Stacy Polewik, M.S.

Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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**Received: Sept. 22, 2012**

**From: Deb Landolt**

I hope this is not too late. I would like to comment on the campus at ISD. I am a parent to a deaf child that graduated at the school. In which, I am so happy that I sent her there, for she is a very confident adult. She is now working and coaching at the school.

I would like to mention that ISD has put a lot of money into the school in the last 10 years for technology. It has smart boards in most every classroom. There is WiFi so the kids can have their own laptops from classroom to dorm room for school work. And honestly, I was not sure that was going to be a good thing when it first happen. I am a believer now.

I do also want to mention that through the 20 plus years that I have been on campus, and it is a beautiful campus, is that the kids do not care how far they have to travel to get there, because once they are there most do not want to leave when it is time to go home for breaks. They have people they can communicate with, not just with an interpreter. When they go home there is not a whole lot of people in their home and their town that sign for them so that they can understand them. I will be honest and say as a hearing parent that learned to sign for my child so I could know what is happening in her life, this frustrates me. They have a right to be able to have friends and adults to teach them the little things in life.

I hope that you take this to the meetings and inform the others how important that the deaf need peers and adults that can help them become successful citizens. I know many that just collect government help for no one was there to communicate to them.

In God's prayers,  
Deb Landolt

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**Received: Sept. 24, 2012**  
**From: Megan Donaldson**

To whom it may concern,

My son Bruce Jr is 5 years old. He started March 25th 2012. He lives in the dorm. He comes home every weekend because he is so young.

Since starting there Jr has been immersed and really needs that. He is picking up sign language all the time. He definitely would not get this at home or in his home town school. The reason for this is we hometown school and us the family do not know sign language. What I know is very limited one year of classes threw ISD and the book. So he will not be able to communicate with any of us on a level that ISD can and will be able to provide. While Jr has had a lot of problems health and developmental delays he also had cortical vision impairment till the end of his 2 preschool year. When starting his next year he was able to look people in the eye. So with this impairment sign language was not working most of his life. Over the course of the last year 2011-2012 at the beginning of the school year the school and I were looking into another option closer to home. So we were having to wait on the decision. The other option was Capial Veiw in Des Moines has a deaf program. They came and seen him than the timing was not so good so we waited till end of October to get there decision. They told us that Jr didn't have receptive or expressive language amoust not knowing his ABC's or Numbers or Colors. So they wouldn't take him. A lot of my team were very confused. We said I thought that they were suppose to help teach him this. This is a school right?. Anyway the downfall for Jr if you close ISD would be. He wont get the communication. So we looked for a para for 2-4 weeks. Only one person applied. She got the job. She was the one teaching him but didn't have any kind of license and the behavior teacher didn't know any sign and almost never spent her time that she was suppose to with him. Not saying this to be mean. I loved the para she was awesome and loved Jr and wanted what was best for him. My best guess to the head teacher she was lost with him and didn't know how to teach him due to not being able to communicate to him herself.

Thank You very much for your time and consideration

Megan Donaldson

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**Received: Oct. 8, 2012**  
**From: Lisa Lutz**

This email is in regards to the importance of keeping the Iowa Braille School open for weekend activities, summer programs, and athletic opportunities, and for the museum. Not only does this benefit the community, but it also benefits the students. The IBS campus is the best place to offer learning opportunities for students in the state, especially on the east side (logistically speaking). We have a pool, hot tub, dorm area, kitchen dining,

adaptive equipment, adaptive play areas, LOCAL STAFF that are trained in working with the visually impaired, and a safe and supportive community. IBS still offers extra curricular sports, including, swimming, forensics, goalball, track and field, and potentially wrestling. Depending on the season of the sport, when students come to IBS for weekend/summer activities, they can also participate in practices for their event. Currently, the night before the event, the students will gather at IBS, staying over night, getting a practice in, and then leaving as a team for their event, which is always out of state. We need this facility to continue providing these services.

Keeping the museum open and continuing updating it, is a vital part to our history and will and should be enjoyed for future generations to come.

There really aren't any GOOD reasons to not continue having programs continued to be provided at IBS.

Please feel free to call me with any questions.

Sincerely, Lisa Lutz, Orientation and Mobility Specialist

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**Received: Oct. 9, 2012**

**From: Michael Barber**

Hi Patrick:

I have a couple of things I'd like to send to you to distribute to the committee. I did not know for sure the proper channel to follow, but I'll start with you. If this is not the proper channel, please advise for future reference. The first is a report done in 2007 in Washington State regarding school for the blind and the school for the deaf. It appears that the report does not encourage the combining of both programs. The second document is a resolution unanimously adopted by the convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa this past weekend opposing any merging of the two services in our state and encouraging the Governor, Board of Regents, and the General Assembly to oppose such a merger.

Cordially,  
Michael D. Barber

*Click **HERE** for document #1 sent with this letter.*

*Click **HERE** for document #2 sent with this letter.*

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**Received: Oct. 9, 2012**

**From: Don Eells**

Please find attached a letter addressed to the individuals above regarding the Board of Regents current feasibility study of services to the IBS.

For further information or discussion I can be reached by phone or address as indicated on the letter or by email as indicated above.

Thank you for your anticipated attention and careful consideration to this matter.

Don Eells

***Continued next page.***

Don Eells



Date: 10/9/12

To: Patrick Clancy, IBS Superintendent  
Kathy Hintz, Administrative Assistant  
Robert Donley, Executive Director of Board of Regents  
Dawn Pettengill, State Representative  
Tim Kapucian, State Senator  
Mary Jo Hainstock, Superintendent, Vinton-Shellsburg Community Schools  
Ann Jorgensen, IBS Vision Committee  
Nathan Hesson, Director, Vinton Unlimited

Re: Board of Regents Feasibility Study and Planning Committee

As the Board of Regents reviews the future of services to the blind and visually impaired in the state of Iowa there are many issues that need to be studied.

Most of these issues are driven by numerics such as dollars and miles and other figures and totals that can be quantified on a spreadsheet. While quantitative data are an important consideration, it is also important to identify the qualitative factors.

I've been retired for some time now but my business experience in California includes working on and experiencing several corporate mergers and buyouts. I've seen firsthand the results of such transactions that were primarily metric driven at the expense of ignoring the importance of corporate culture. Upon completion of the transaction, diminished expectations, underperformance, darkened morale, a drop in product quality or service, and customer dissatisfaction seemed to surprise senior executives and the bean counters whose only analysis was spreadsheet driven.

For over 150 years a strong cultural fabric has been woven blending Vinton and the IBS. Vinton's citizens, city government, businesses, churches, civic organizations, and schools have known, adapted, helped, partnered, and supported the kids and staff at the IBS. Car pools to church, weekend visits to resident homes, high school wrestling meets as competitors and teammates, sharing the IBS swimming pool, talks and presentations in school classrooms, Lions Club Christmas parties and graduation gifts, shopping and making change in downtown businesses and restaurants, driver caution and sensitivity to mobility training, and a knowledgeable and skilled labor force make up an integral part of this fabric we call community.

On the surface, someone might say that these are simple things that could easily be picked up by another town and any community. But doing so would ignore the significance of 150 years of tradecraft and the deep culture that has developed of respect and support.

I don't believe you can enter these items onto an Excel spreadsheet but if things like culture are not measured and evaluated in any decision making process, it will be a shame. If the kids are the first priority, then culture has to count. Make Vinton count in any reorganization plan you may consider and the kids will count.

Respectfully,

Don Eells

Member, IBS Vision Committee  
Board member and past President, Vinton Unlimited  
Committee member of the Vinton Business Opportunity Group  
Board member and past President, VS Chapter of Dollars For Scholars  
Chairman, Virginia Gay Hospital Foundation  
Current member, past President, Vinton Lions Club  
Board member of the Vinton Community Foundation

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**Received: Oct. 10, 2012**

**From: Jen Simmering**

My name is Jen Simmering, and my daughter, Lauren, has an educationally significant hearing loss. I also have a severe hearing loss myself. Lauren is a 4th grade student at Mulberry Elementary School in Muscatine, and she mainstreams for almost all of her day. Our local HOH teacher at Mulberry and our local AEA have been phenomenal in their support of Lauren and her education. In part because of them, Lauren has become a confident, socially-integrated, academic achiever. She made the talented and gifted program! I have no doubt that without our local supports, Lauren could not reach her full potential.

I have been reading the comments and notes from the feasibility studies, and I feel that the comments seem to lean heavily toward those made by deaf individuals. I understand that the ISD is a very important part of the feasibility study, and given that I have never needed that service, I don't have much to offer in the way of problem solving for the ISD.

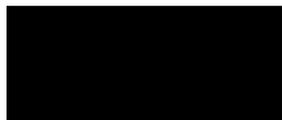
I can, however, share with you my belief that education for the hard of hearing goes beyond the needs of those who are completely deaf. Please consider the needs of lowans who want to and can attend their local schools and need a local support team to do it. I am deeply concerned that the discussion of regional centers for education for the deaf and HOH will result in the loss of local services. My family and others like us would feel that loss tremendously.

I want to applaud those of you working on this study. I understand that this must be a tough job, and I really appreciate the commitment to the deaf and HOH people in our state that is apparent in the documentation posted on the ISD website. If you have a mailing list of those getting any published information on the feasibility study or related issues, please add me to it. I am keenly interested in making sure that the viewpoint of those of us who are hard of hearing, but not completely deaf, are heard.

Thank you for your time,  
Jen Simmering

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**Received: Oct. 14, 2012**  
**From: Sue Gates**



Feasibility Study and Planning Committee Member:

Thank you for devoting so much time, knowledge, and understanding around the decision about how and where future services will be delivered to blind/visually impaired and deaf and hearing impaired students in Iowa. Change is never easy but it is leaders such as you who can best facilitate whatever decisions are made.

There are several options being explored leading up to how the above mentioned services will be delivered in the future. One of these is based around delivery of services for both populations using a regional center concept. There are many reasons why the IBSSS would be an ideal location for a regional center.

- The city of Vinton and surrounding areas are already familiar with and accepting of people with disabilities.
- The Vinton-Shellsburg School District has worked hand-in-hand with the IBSSS to serve students who are visually impaired and would be able to also serve those with hearing impairments.
- Critical partnerships with the Area Education Agency are already in place. Vinton-Shellsburg has a positive relationship with those key professionals who work with students who need special programming.
- The Iowa Braille School, the oldest educational facility in Iowa, is already equipped to serve the needs of those with handicaps so would take little remodeling to be used as a regional center.
- Vinton is located within one hour of two major universities and Kirkwood Community College where training programs for signing already exist. It is also only two hours from Des Moines and less than an hour from Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, and Waterloo.

As the Feasibility Study and Planning Committee continue their work around this important decision it is hoped the above reasons why the IBSSS would be a perfect regional center will be taken into serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Sue A. Gates, President  
Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District Board of Directors

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Received: Oct. 16, 2012  
From: Nathan Hesson



*Take time to explore Vinton*  
www.vintonunlimited.org

Dear Feasibility Study & Planning Committee,

Vinton has been the home to the Iowa Braille & Sight Saving School for over 150 years and what a rich history it has built. This facility has housed thousands of students throughout the years through residential and summer learning programs and sadly over the past 20 years we have seen the use of this facility by visually impaired students slowly diminish. Due to the diverse use of the current facility, the Vinton community and IBSSS employees have come together on various occasions to partner with each other for the betterment of the students both locally and statewide. Vinton continues to desire this relationship and to continue to strengthen our ties with those who are in need of specialized services pertaining to visual or hearing impairment.

We see the track record of the past 150 years as a great asset to both the Vinton community and the blind community worldwide. With our centrally located facility, we have been able to provide students the resources they need in a timely and efficient manner. Maintaining this campus would allow the many years of experience and highly trained individuals the opportunity to continue their nationally recognized education and provide resources for students near and far.

The economic impact that moving these services would create would be detrimental not only to the 25+ staff currently working in this facility, but more importantly, it would provide an additional hardship to the current and future students using the services provided by the IBSSS. Our centrally located facility is within just one hour of a majority of eastern Iowa's population base and less than two hours from the hub of our state's government headquarters. Having a facility already in existence that fulfills these needs is a huge cost savings for not only the state of Iowa, but more importantly, the students who utilize these services throughout the state and nation.

As you consider the future of the Iowa Braille & Sight Saving School and the impact that moving current services would have, I encourage you to remember the rich history and experiences our community has shared with students from around the country. The Vinton community is passionate about expanding and improving the services already offered in Vinton. With your help we look forward to strengthening the relationships that have been built throughout the years by serving students with the highest level of specialized education possible.

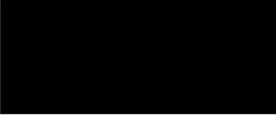
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nathan Hesson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Nathan Hesson  
Executive Director  
Vinton Unlimited

Vinton Unlimited  
310 A Avenue, PO Box 387, Vinton, IA 52349  
319/472-3955

**Received: Oct. 16, 2012**  
**From: Sue Gates**



Dear Feasibility Study and Planning Committee Members:

This letter is being written with the understanding that the task before you is not easy and the recommendation at the end will impact many lives. With several options to consider it is key that time is spent gathering and evaluating data from many sources. Background information and experience from those who have and continue to serve the needs of visually impaired students is an important part of input to be considered in this decision.

The Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District has partnered with the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School to serve the needs of visually impaired students for many years. We have professional staff in place with experience and licensure to meet the needs of students with special needs. Transportation to move students from one building to another has been perfected over the years.

Thinking beyond just the visually impaired to those students who are deaf/hearing impaired serving their needs in the Vinton-Shellsburg District would be handled with the same positive partnership already in place. Kirkwood Community College, located within 35 miles of Vinton-Shellsburg, is one of the few schools in Iowa where students can learn to teach signing.

If the decision is to move to a Regional Model for the delivery of services to both the blind/visually impaired and the deaf/hearing impaired students the IBSSS facility is already in place with space available to accommodate these populations. AmeriCorps (NCCC) and FEMA only occupy 63% of this facility allowing room for additional programming.

The Vinton-Shellsburg Community School Board in is full support of the IBSSS campus being used to serve the needs of deaf and hearing impaired students and would welcome the opportunity to be a partner in meeting their needs.

Thank you for considering our desire to continue to serve students with special needs here in Vinton-Shellsburg.

Sincerely,

Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District Board of Education  
Sue A. Gates, President

Received: Oct. 16, 2012

From:

**1. What might be the advantages & disadvantages of a regional model or centers to serve students? Regional centers may be in four or five locations in the state within an hour drive to receive services.**

**Advantages:**

- Close to home
- No Residential program
- Family involved in Deaf child's educational/extracurricular life
- Less residential students - plus for some families and saves state money
- According to the University of Nebraska study: they found out that at least 120 students would be best viable program to run for every students in their social well-being

**Disadvantages:**

- Too many regional centers when number of students is unpredictable; would be costly
- Who would run the regional centers? 1 or 4-5 directors?
- Too expensive to set up a regional school, and where? Urban or rural regional centers?
- Five regions is not enough to drive within an hour.
- Philosophy won't be as uniform as it would be in one educational setting-unless directed by a centralized administration or coordination.
- Too much separation, minimal or not much chance for sports events, various programs that would help with a total development of a deaf/hh students.
- Not fair to students to be placed under regional programs with qualified
- Hiring procedures? Hearing and deaf staff? Equal opportunity?
- What if some students prefer going to a different regional school, other than the one in their regional school?
- What if one of those regional schools has better programs that suit particular needs of a student?
- Break up of deaf peer groups current at ISD and increased isolation
- LRE likely will be more problematic here than in the Institution
- Increased need of interpreters (quality not available state-wide)
- Hardly a chance for Deaf to be involved in sports-extracurricular activities
- Difficult to meet accommodations (regional/mainstream school needs culturally sensitive training and to modify or provide equipment)
- If Deaf children take regional deaf classes, there will be smaller same age groups and it will be a challenge motivating the learning.
- Why pay 5 teachers to teach 3-10 students when less teachers can teach more students at ISD? Increased hiring & smaller ratios
- Why pay interpreters who are not ethically supposed to serve as teacher aides (as some schools expect currently) when ISD teachers can achieve much more.
- Why 5 regional? Council Bluffs, Des Moines, & Iowa City, Cedar Rapids might have more students than a 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> location
- Where will the current ISD teachers go? Hire dozens of new inexperienced, under-qualified teachers who may not sign fluently nor know about Deaf Education?
- Distancing from the trends in national Deaf Education collaboration and development
- Who will administer each regional? It should not be a local school district supervised. The regional "director" needs to have a "Deaf Education" administrator, which probably is financially unrealistic.

**General Agreement:**

1. This is a favorable option for parents
2. AEA and school district administrators prefer this for their own benefit, not in the deaf child's best interests
3. ASL language skill will be lowered & the deaf child will become more isolated in adult hood, as they generally do not socialize in the hearing world after graduation, & they will find it difficult to be skilled at both languages: English & ASL
4. If five regions were to take over the current ISD student enrollment, it is possible each region will have an average of 20 students (some may have 10 others may have 35-40). There cannot be K-12 grades in every region unless a class can hold one or a few students.

**2. If Iowa had regional centers what would be the advantages & disadvantages of maintaining the campuses at Council Bluffs and/or Vinton? Would their location allow for them to be used as regional centers?**

**Advantage:**

- Both schools have right facilities for a regional center
- Both schools are very much accessible to students each respective schools serve
- Both schools have been long (already) established to serve their respective students and to accommodate their needs.
- Both schools have already been serving as regional centers.

- Both schools have staff with expertise; their staff are certified and endorsed.
- (same as guiding question 1)
- More diverse deaf/hard of hearing children served (regional classes offering deaf education with a choice of mainstream classes)

**Disadvantage:**

- Pay five times the cost of staffing different area of expertise. Some staff members could be highly qualified or under qualified. All hearing staff may create audism toward deaf students.
- Some AEAs or local school districts may dissuade deaf students from attending regional school for the deaf.
- As they stated, parents have the rights to determine where their deaf/hh child(ren) go for their schooling
- All the same points as guiding question 1
- Expense quadrupled to accommodate deaf children
- AEA cooperation not easily assumed (why give money to regional centers?)
- More isolation of the Deaf-persons self-identity...with some going to deaf school, some going to regional center classes and others staying in the mainstreams school, each deaf child will have no or little interaction with their deaf/hard of hearing peers.
- Who stays at ISD, and who goes to regions? This will further cut down the number of students in a peer grade group

**General Agreement:**

1. This is parent-friendly
  2. This would be a test for AEA and school administrators to commit to or be regulated to concede to.
  3. The "Deaf" identity and deaf child's self-esteem will be minimized
- \*\*\*This is the WORSE option rated by this community.

**3. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of continuing to provide services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf blind on the campus in Council Bluffs & services for students who are blind, visually impaired or deaf blind from the campus in Vinton?**

**Advantage:**

- Both schools have been well-established; they have been doing their job for over 150 years
- Currently, ISD has a very deep-rooted connection with the community of Council Bluffs
- ISD has strong interactions with AEA in Council Bluffs; with Iowa Western Community College; with the local Vocational Rehabilitation Services; with the local school, such as Lewis Central
- Deaf Nebraska students able to attend ISD with paid tuition from state of Nebraska
- Closer and easier for parents and school districts to drop off at ISD
- Alumni coming home to ISD for various events such as Homecoming or sport events; long and strong relationship with its alumni
- Strong sense of belonging for deaf students when they have peers of their kind
- Good role models at the site; Normal socialization for students and their peers.
- Cost effective when students feel so belonged and when they feel like they are somebody important
- Both schools serve in best qualities and quantitative interests of each student
- Both schools have 13 years (and 4 Plus program) to work with each student before they leave school, they are not a long-term or life-long program where students/clients live the rest of their lives.
- ISD has one of the best school museums in the country
- Deaf children can learn alongside their peers
- Deaf school versus Deaf school historical and cultural experience
- This will offer a high number of Deaf-HOH student peers the state can have

**Disadvantage:**

- Geographical disadvantage... distance from home
- A question: why keep the Vinton school open if no students reside there?

**A Concern:** while supporting this option, there is need of efficiency. ISD currently needs more Deaf faculty and Deaf administrators to bring more positive self-identity to deaf children. Iowa is probably ranked among the nation in low "Deaf faculty-deaf student" ratio, thus making ISD graduates less optimistic of their future. Higher faculty ratios enhance the chances for Deaf students to go to college and achieve higher careers, and give back to society.

**General agreement:**

This is the best option of all.

While we favor this option, we were concerned that the case might be closed and no effort to improve ISD will be considered. (see disadvantages, point #2)

#### **4. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of providing services for students who are deaf, blind, visually impaired, hard of hearing or deaf blind on a single campus?**

##### **Advantage:**

- A single campus with separate facilities would be ideal; could save money
- See some of the same advantages listed for ISD on a single campus
- Vinton has a certain program in which they train blind students to live independently
- Standardized over Iowa with same qualified staff with their expertise. Socialized community—"take a whole community to raise a deaf child" so they can be educated by the community with great support.
- Economical
- No loss of Deaf school opportunity and historical value
- Larger enrollment of peers in same grade as possible (but Deaf and Blind don't mix in same class)

##### **Disadvantage:**

- Both schools might not want to leave their campus.
- We at ISD know our students and staff would prefer to stay on their current campus/school/employment. Students would hate to have their friendship broken if they have to relocate to their regional schools or to a different campus.
- Where would be that single campus?
- Deaf and blind children don't interact
- Deaf and blind teachers don't have the same skills so each faculty hired need to be assigned to one school (deaf or blind)
- Administrator needs to be familiar with both separate educational systems and accommodations. Usually one might have strength in one field.
- Classes have to be separate
- Visual friendly and audio centered classrooms
- Blind are categorized as a disability while deaf as a distinct culture and language group

##### **General agreement:**

1. If there has to be some financial reductions, the Deaf community would rather have Deaf-Blind schools merged.

#### **5. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of a single campus being located centrally in the state?**

##### **Advantage:**

- Ideally, it would be nice, but historically, it is not a feasible idea, with already established schools (ISD/Vinton).
- Des Moines would be equally accessible all around Iowa
- Des Moines is near the Capital and may bring better Deaf Awareness to legislators and the Governor
- Parents may have a better opportunity to visit the school and attend school activities/events.

##### **Disadvantage:**

- Where?
- Relocated to a rural community or an urban community?
- Relocation of staff or a completely new staff
- Hard to predict the number of at a single campus that is located centrally in the state
- Costly to build a similar campus as ISD; maybe even more million dollars to build a new campus.
- Difficult for Nebraska students to attend a central location; distance
- ISD at Council Bluffs has historic importance to the Deaf Community statewide and nationally-not central Iowa
- Students at Nebraska may no longer come to ISD if moved central
- Central Iowa does not have any college ASL or Deaf Culture classes offered nor any advanced ASL classes for parents or businesses.
- Awareness of Deaf community is not as positive in Central Iowa as it is in Omaha-Council Bluffs nor Cedar Rapids-Iowa City
- Deaf adults as role models, Deaf community socials and Deaf events do not occur regularly as in west or east Iowa.
- It would be more difficult to recruit to hire Deaf ISD staff/faculty and hearing staff/faculty who have good deaf community interaction or knowledge

##### **General Agreement:**

1. Why isn't Iowa City considered among the locations? University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College (in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City) have ASL classes and Deaf studies courses. The Deaf community and club is active/ They would bring a positive impact on the deaf child. Deaf community members and college students might help volunteer, interact and work at the deaf school.

## **6. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of a single campus located on the current Iowa Braille School campus in Vinton?**

### **Advantage:**

- Smaller campus to save money
- Blind facilities apparently are available and ready in Vinton
- Keep one school campus where the facilities are fit for blind children

### **Disadvantage:**

- The area used by IBSS is too small for deaf/hh students. Too isolated for deaf/hh students
- Too rural for the deaf where there is almost no Deaf community... Cedar Rapids and Cedar-Falls-Waterloo are a bit too far away from Vinton
- Omaha, NE and Council Bluffs has strong cultural values, for both deaf and hearing
- Vinton apparently does not have many service organizations like Omaha and Council Bluffs have (Sertoma, Rotary)
- Council Bluffs' economy depends on ISD dollars.
- The building and campus is too small for both schools
- Too isolated from the city
- Where are the Deaf people? Children will get a negative self-image unless they hope they would grow out of being Deaf! (harmful psychological effects)

### **General agreement:**

Thumbs down! This was not well received by our community even though it is the closest location to our Deaf community (Cedar Rapids Association of the Deaf)

## **7. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of a single campus located on the current Iowa School for the Deaf campus in Council Bluffs?**

### **Advantage:**

- See advantages listed from the guiding questions #3.
- ISD has staff (speech therapist/speech language teachers)
- Some staff from AEA Green Hills provide some programs, such as audio logical services
- About everybody signs
- ISD has deep-rooted historical impact; how ISD came to Council Bluffs in 1870
- ISD is across the highway from Lewis Central (Lewis Central and ISD has a long historical relationship almost from the beginning) as well as other public schools.
- Iowa Western Community College is only four miles for the Four Plus program; it has an interpreter training program. Metro Community College is Omaha, Ne is also one of the college for the Four Plus program.
- ISD is a member of Chamber of Commerce; ISD is very much part of the community
- ISD is about five miles across from Omaha and is almost right by the Interstate 29
- Easy access to ISD from the Interstate
- Excellent relationship with ISD Alumni; They come every year to ISD Homecoming; celebrate ISD in spring; attend ISD sport activities.
- ISD has many great programs available to students; Art program, extracurricular activities, athletic program, clubs, and organizations
- ISD has enough space to build a new campus for IBSS should it necessitates the school's relocation to Council Bluffs
- ISD has a rich heritage and legacy; its own School Museum (1855-present)
- ISD has a videophone in every building or every floor; ISD has all safety/alert system in all buildings
- Nurses at Health Center are registered nurses and knows sign language; available at all hours.
- University Medical Center, Mental Health, Boystown audiologist and cochlear implants
- Preserve ISD's Deaf history and legacy
- Lots more room/space
- Near large city for school and social activities (Council Bluffs and Omaha)
- Deaf in Nebraska can continue to enroll
- Stability for staff, faculty, students and the deaf community (no need to hire qualified staff, and take year to reach the qualified potential level)

### **Disadvantage:**

- Distance from home
- Council Bluffs as a location is still far for east lowans. Parents will be less involved
- Deaf children in east Iowa have to travel for hours repeatedly
- Need to make room for blind school and offices

- Need to bring awareness of blind people and sensitivity training among students, faculty and staff currently on campus (and the community)
- Same as guiding question #4 and #5 concerning mixing Deaf and Blind children)

**General agreement:**

The idea of both schools in Council Bluffs was well received in our group.

**8. What would be the advantages & disadvantages of centralizing the administration & coordination of services for students who are deaf, blind, hard of hearing, visually impaired or deaf blind**

**Advantage:**

- More contact with Board of Regents & legislators
- Each school has a director in charge of each programs, with an administrator in a centralized location
- May be cost efficient
- If central admin includes both Institute and mainstream services, there will be consistency with school districts serving deaf/HOH
- (cont. from above) this kind of administration will help evaluate the deaf child's progress better and suggest improvements. There needs to be no political division for the Deaf school and mainstream when it comes to giving the children choices and comparing options.
- The quality of mainstream deaf children supervision will improve. Local school principals and AEA staff who generally do not know enough about deaf children and will transfer their responsibilities to someone better at overseeing this.

**Disadvantage:**

- Contact and relationship between an administrator and staff and the students may be lacking or missing
- Finding a well-qualified and experienced administrator for both schools might be difficult
- Less visibility
- May not have the same rapport as other superintendents with the other schools for the deaf (nationwide or regionally).
- Can the administration when professionally seeing that a deaf child would do better in the Deaf school, make that decision or suggestion? Will parents, local school administrators or AEA personnel object to such occurrences and be justified in objecting?
- Travel and follow up with dozens of school districts questionable
- Would one person be qualified to represent/administer multiple groups: ASL/Deaf culture students; mainstream hearing impaired, Deaf-blind, and blind (visually impaired) students?

**General agreement:**

1. It is not easy to give an answer on this one
2. This administration must be part of CEASD.org to maintained quality of Deaf education.

**If decide to close ISD in Council Bluffs and move to central Iowa**

- Where will the campus held at?
- Where will we get the monies from?
- Cost more to build a new building - will that somehow save money?
- Parents will have to relocate again from their jobs so parents can be close to their child/ren from Council Bluffs.
- Waste of ISD architecture (ASL concrete, Lied Multipurpose Center that private donations gave as well as new science lab)
- If Council Bluffs ISD staff unable to relocate then hiring new staff will not be the same as the current staff of Council Bluffs
- Big adjustment for current ISD students to relocate

**If decide to have open satellite campuses statewide**

- Council Bluffs
- Des Moines
- North Eastern Iowa
- North Western Iowa
- South Eastern Iowa
- If those regions are a MUST then there should be no mainstream students in any local schools and attend all those regions provided
- There will be no athletic students due to small number of students per region
- Four times a year - ISD in Council Bluffs invite the deaf and hard of hearing per region to attend the Council Bluffs campus for "lock-down" party and overnights in the dormitories on weekends.
- What building will the regions be? Local schools? Build new buildings? Will that save money?
- Must have ASL fluency teachers in all regions

**If merge with blind school in Vinton**

- Vinton campus not big enough for all deaf/hoh and blind children
- No students reside in Vinton
- Cedar Rapids are
- Waterloo are
- Very small isolated town - will have to travel further to big cities
- Would have to build new buildings depends on the number of students
- Conflicts with Ameri-corps, will force Ameri-corps out of the dormitory to replace deaf students to reside there

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**Received: Oct. 16, 2012**  
**From: Jonathan Scherling**

*Good read for Iowa BoR*

*Jonathan*

*Click **HERE** for link sent in this letter.*

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**Received: Oct. 18, 2012**  
**From: Jonathan Scherling**

Hello my name is John Metteer and graduated from ISD. First of all, am I glad graduated from amazing ISD? Of course, they gave us the education, social and sports. I loved to go career classes, because they are my thing. I learned lot of stuff at ISD, so it was good experienced. Today I work at Omaha Standard Palfinger because of ISD. If it werent ISD then I wouldn't have that job. Now about the sports, at public school it will be hard for us to play because communications and too many students but at ISD, they gave us chance to play. Even play against another deaf school even I have friends who from another deaf school because of sports. Please don't close ISD down since they are our home!

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**Received: Oct. 18, 2012**

**From: Deb Willberg**

Deb Wilberg



October 17, 2012

Dear Committee Members:

I am a retired teacher of the visually impaired and take interest in your decisions concerning services to the blind and visually impaired as well as the deaf and hard-of-hearing, not because they affect my job but because I care about Iowa's students and the quality of the services they receive.

I know that we will probably not re-institute residential programming for visually impaired students, but I do believe that we lost an important part of the continuum of services for our students when that happened. I am hoping that the deaf community does not also lose that part of their programming.

I feel the Iowa Braille School has worked hard to make the statewide services model work for Iowa's visually impaired students and has made great strides in doing so. Perhaps services for deaf and hard-of-hearing could also use this model to serve some of its population. However, I firmly believe that not all students' needs can be met by the itinerant model and that regional centers could add opportunities for improved services for both populations. If students could travel on a daily basis to a classroom and receive intensive instruction as well as the opportunity to interact with other students with similar needs while living at home with their families, I believe we will be adding a valuable option to our continuum of services. I would note that students may not need these options for their entire K-12 education. There are certain times when visually impaired students need intensive instruction, whether that be when they are learning Braille, technology, independent living skills, orientation and mobility skills or other areas of the expanded core curriculum.

I don't think it makes sense to create permanent regional centers around the state based on current student populations. Our populations and their needs are constantly changing, and I think it would be more cost efficient and more educationally effective to be able to locate day programs in areas where there are several students who are in need of these services in any given year. That is why I think it makes sense to maintain a permanent regional center at the Iowa Braille School in Vinton to house our consultants and all of the specialized materials that are currently located there. They can then support a system of fluid regional centers around the state as they are needed. I would assume that arrangements could be made with local schools to house these classrooms which would afford students the opportunities to receive specialized educational opportunities in a general education environment. Possibly itinerant teachers could be used to offer this instruction in the regional centers which would then not require hiring additional teachers.

To disrupt the progress that has been made in setting up the statewide services at the Iowa Braille School seems unnecessary. In addition, there are already wonderful facilities and a supportive community to continue to offer short-term programming on weekends and during the summer without any added expenses. I think that the Iowa Braille campus is a perfect location for an intensive summer program that could serve both populations in this part of the state.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these issues as you decide how to best offer Iowa's blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing students the educational opportunities that they need and deserve.

Sincerely,  
Deb Wilberg

**Received: Oct. 18, 2012**

**From: Deb Willberg**

To all concerned.\,

I support the continuation of services at Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. It functions as a hub for Iowa based AEA's, library and school needs for all VI students, the accounting and business office for Iowa employee's, maintenance of state vehicles and short term focused class's, throughout the year, to support students class work and use of braille.

Why even consider closing an facility that is working? It is not wise for students or taxpayers.

Iowa Braille is a viable answer towards the regional needs that have been set forth. It's central location, staff, and established services (that can be expanded to fullfill the fluctuating needs of Iowa's VI and/or deaf students) should be valued not dismissed.

Expanding IBSSS use could open teaching opportunities for U of I and UNI students. Nearness to Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and Waterloo/Cedar Falls is a plus.

Please consider wisely the options set forth for you and regard expanding/ enhancing your present facility.

Sincerely,  
C. Kelley

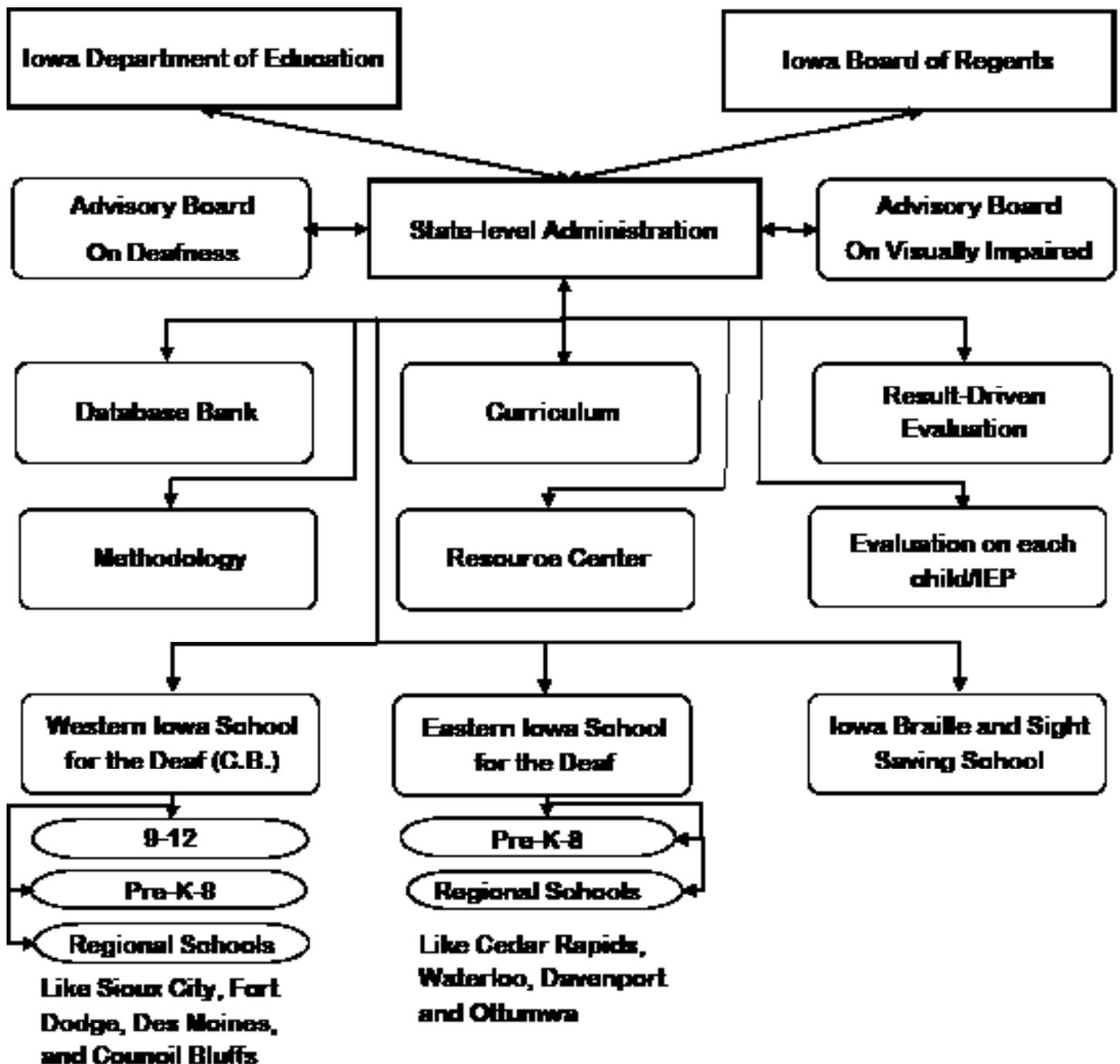
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*Continued next page.*

Received: Oct. 18, 2012

From: Jerry Siders/Deaf Community

# Deaf Community's Proposal to the Executive Council



## **Iowa Deaf Community's belief that every child:**

**Every child is entitled to a free and appropriate educational experience. But, in order to realize this goal for students who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH), the State of Iowa, *and indeed all states*, must recognize and accept its obligations and responsibilities as follows:**

- **Grant DHH students full access to their educational environments**
- **Expect DHH students to achieve the same high standards in place for all students and provide the appropriate support that will allow them to attain those standards**
- **Place DHH students in programs based on their communication needs**
- **Provide opportunities for DHH students to participate in all educational and social experiences, including activities with normal hearing students and adults**
- **Provide opportunities for DHH students to participate in education and social experiences with other DHH peers and adults**
- **Acknowledge that these rights fall within the realm of equal expectations for all students and accept the government's burden to guarantee that they are met**

**Contrary to these goals, facts identified by the National Deaf Education Project (Siegel, 2000) show that the target group falls below minimum standards:**

- **Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children graduate with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading aptitude**
- **DHH children gain only 1.5 years in literacy skill between the ages of 8 and 18;**
- **DHH children are overwhelmingly unprepared for college evidenced by a graduation rate of just 8%**
- **The earning capacity of DHH children is, on the average, 40-60% below that of their hearing counterparts. We must close the gap.**

### ***Iowa Example:***

- **On average, DHH students perform 2-3 years below their hearing peers (Johnson, 2000)**
- **The number of DHH students who receive the majority of their education mainstreaming in the general school classroom is 26% higher than the national average (US Department of Education, 2002).**

**Other factors in Iowa which contribute to poor achievement of DHH students include:**

- **Lack of access to qualified educational interpreters despite legislation mandating minimum qualifications**
- **Lack of current statewide program guidelines to promote standards of practice, staffing patterns, and caseload recommendations**
- **Lack of district-level leadership from specialists in educating children who are DHH**
- **Lack of a statewide system to promote teacher in-service, current research, and standards of practice**
- **Lack of effective teacher evaluation, which largely is the result of evaluators being unfamiliar with the education of students who are DHH**
- **Recruitment and retention problems, particularly in rural areas struggling with a declin-**

ing economy, coverage of large geographical areas, a broad range of hearing disabilities, and a disability that receives inadequate attention because fewer students are affected. We must close the gap.

As a result of the evidence presented during the feasibility committee's meetings, the Deaf community made the following recommendations:

1. Iowa should implement a coordinated statewide regional education system as an educational option that will effectively and efficiently meet the needs of DHH children.
2. DHH students should have access to quality academic and extracurricular programs that are communication-driven. Criteria for establishing these programs should be implemented.
3. Results- and communication-driven programs serving DHH students should be subject to on-going assessment to assure full access, student achievement, and high standards.
4. On-going training, mentoring, and a full spectrum of professional development activities should be implemented statewide to support and improve proficiency for specialty providers, general educators, administrators, and families.
5. Iowa Department of Education should collaborate with national and state agencies and higher education programs to recruit, train, and encourage retention of staff providing services to DHH students.
6. A system of community and parent education that leads to meaningful involvement that will result in full access and collaboration so that each child will have opportunities to maximize potential and achieve high standards should be implemented.
7. Iowa should develop and implement a funding system that will provide sufficient resources for a quality education for DHH children.

The Deaf Community proposes that both the Iowa Department of Education and the Board of Regents jointly develop goals and a timeline for implementation of a statewide regional system of education and support. It also wants them to implement this plan by:

1. Determining funding structure
2. Reporting regularly to stakeholders (Iowa Department of Education, State Board of Regents, Iowa School for the Deaf, Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, special education directors, local service providers, other pertinent state agencies and advocacy groups)
3. Reporting progress to the state legislature
4. Establishing advisory board for both Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Visually Impaired
5. Determining administrative structures
6. Developing criteria for student eligibility for regional programs
7. Determining regional educational and support services
8. Developing accountability, compliance, and evaluation components
9. Determining regional center staffing
10. Hire regional coordinators and establish offices

In the ending, we, the Deaf community believe that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students are

**being short-changed by the current state-wide educational system, and are ill-prepared to contribute meaningfully to society. We believe that our proposal will offer the best opportunities for success for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. We owe it to them to close the gap.**

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**Received: Oct. 18, 2012**

**From: Jeff Moran**

As an Iowa tax payer that lives in the area, I find it in the state's best interest to close the ISD facility. The amount of staff in ratio to the amount of students and the costly upkeep of such a large campus are reasons enough to close the campus. The state must spend millions on the campus and alot if not most of the students are hearing impaired not totally deaf. Alot of the students go to Lewis Central High School. The school is outdated and too much of an Iowa expense to keep open. Like I said before, the state would save millions by closing and sale of the property.

Jeff Morgan

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**Received: Oct. 19, 2012**

**From: Mike Hoenig**

October 18, 2012

Dear Feasibility Study Committee Members:

Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to comment on the future of services to children who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. I would have preferred to deliver these comments in person, but am unable to attend the hearing due to a previous commitment.

I am a 1980 graduate of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School in Vinton. The school prepared me in countless ways to be a fully participating member of my community. Thanks to the skills I learned while at IBSSS, I am gainfully employed, own and manage my own home, pay taxes, enjoy many recreational activities, and give back by serving on a number of state and local boards.

You heard the comments of Superintendent Gene McMahon at your September meeting. He asserted that there will always be some students in every state for whom a residential setting is the best option. Based on my own experience, that cohort of students goes far beyond those with multiple disabilities. At IBSSS, I received valuable mentoring from blind role models and learned daily living skills which serve me well today. I feel 100% confident that I would not have received such mentoring and skills training in my local public school.

IBSSS's residential component faced threats of closure as far back as the 1970's. Over the protests of alumni, family members and other interested persons, the Regents subjected our residential component to a slow, steady demise which was completed when the school closed its doors at the end of the 2010-11 academic year.

Now, in the name of efficiency, you are looking to close ISD. I hope that you've taken the time to review the many well-thought-out comments from ISD alumni. If you have, then you realize that by closing their school, you severely compromise their education and threaten their culture. Why would you want to do that?

In the name of efficiency, you are considering options which would combine education of blind and deaf children under one administration. In doing so, you would, in my opinion, dilute the focus on the specialized needs of both populations. Both superintendents who spoke to you in September stressed that the educational needs of

these populations greatly differ. Combining educational services for these two populations under one umbrella seems penny wise and pound foolish.

You've solicited comments from stakeholders, and we've spoken. You've told us that you value our input. Please prove it by listening to our comments and preserving separate educational services for deaf and blind children.

Mike Hoenig



October 19, 2012

**Members of the Feasibility Committee,**

**The Iowa School for the Deaf faculty appreciates this opportunity to share our responses to the eight guiding questions. Our opinions and perspectives have developed over many decades of training and experience educating the deaf and hard of hearing students in the states of Iowa and Nebraska.**

**Our first and foremost commitment is to do what is best for deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the state. It is our conviction that all of these students deserve educational, vocational, and cultural/social opportunities to help each student become successful and contributing members of society.**

**Furthermore, with greater collaboration within the state, and open access for families to make decisions for their own children, the Iowa School for the Deaf can grow and expand to support the deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the state of Iowa. We embrace the opportunity to include blind and visually impaired students on our campus. If they are to join our family, we will make all efforts necessary to be inclusive and welcoming.**

**We offer you a sincere thank you for devoting your time to this task that holds critical importance to the future lives of deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired and deaf/blind students in the state of Iowa.**

**Sincerely,**

**Iowa School for the Deaf Educational Faculty and Staff**

## 1. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of a regional model or centers to serve students?

Regional centers may be in four or five locations in the state within an hour drive to receive services.

### PROS

- Theoretically, the regional model may draw more students who are currently mainstreamed IF highly qualified, Deaf Education certified, sign proficient teachers can be found and hired for all regional centers.
- Some students will have less travel time.
- Perhaps, more parent involvement with the school could occur.

### CONS

- As required by federal law, the least restrictive environment may not be met in regional centers. The least restrictive environment for students with hearing loss needs to be a “language rich environment” in all areas of academic and social/emotional development.
- A critical mass of peers (in each grade level) and adults is essential for language and social development. Critical mass could be lost in a regional model. Research suggests a critical mass to be 3-4 students at each grade level, and a total number of students in a center based program to support at least 2.5 deaf education teachers as well as support services of an SLP, an audiologist, a psychologist or counselor, a lead interpreter, and a program coordinator - all of whom have expertise with this population.
- Regional programs (especially at the middle school and high school level) will still not have enough students to warrant a teacher in each subject area, impacting not only the programs’ quality, but its validity. In order to have a real high school program with a variety of core classes and electives you need a critical mass of students. Without this, you are essentially only giving students one option – mainstreaming.
- It would be doubtful that all students would live less than one hour away from each center. For students to ride a bus for one to two hours daily is neither feasible nor healthy for some students.
- All teachers at ISD are required to be dually certified in Deaf Education and their subject areas i.e., secondary Math, Science, English, and Social Sciences, Elementary Education, etc. It would be costly and challenging to duplicate this level of expertise in multiple locations. In addition to teachers it would also be difficult and expensive to find certified and qualified support personnel such as SLPs and counselors fluent in sign language and knowledgeable about deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Students may be placed where they cannot directly communicate with everyone in the building including the teaching staff. There will most likely be a lack of Deaf/HH role and language models.
- Opportunities to be involved in school activities or attending school functions at night will be hindered or inaccessible. There wouldn’t be enough students in regional programs for an athletic team to be able to compete against their peers (other deaf students).
- Small regional models would not be able to sustain an appropriate amount of communication partners outside the classroom setting. The school may be the only place students would have skilled sign language partners. The lack of direct communication after school hours would limit natural world learning and social interaction. Students might feel a sense of isolation without higher levels of discourse being available.
- This scenario is not economically feasible due to the additional transportation costs for vans/buses, drivers, and escalating fuel costs. Transportation safety would be a concern during the snowy, winter months since a higher percentage of students would be traveling long distances daily.
- Is there a national model that has been proven to be effective in a regional program model *in a state with a population similar to Iowa’s?*
- How would these regional centers be different than the existing mainstreaming programs?

2. If Iowa had regional centers, what would be the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining the campuses at Council Bluffs and/or Vinton? Would their location allow for them to be used as regional centers?

### PROS

- The ISD educational program and staff as well as the residential program are accredited by CEASD and AdvancEd.
- ISD's campus is well established in the area and has a well maintained campus with excellent facilities designed for deaf learners (i.e. Science Lab, LMC, technology etc.).
- Council Bluffs/Omaha has a large population of deaf residents who can be role models to help facilitate positive self-esteem for our deaf students.
- Several Nebraska, tuition paying, Deaf/HH students are currently served at ISD.
- ISD is across the street from both a Lewis Central District public middle school and high school. This allows students the opportunities to be involved in mainstreamed classes, additional elective courses, and college credited courses.
- Both campuses' buildings accommodate their students' specific educational and physical needs whether deaf, blind, or special needs.
- Highly qualified/dually certified teachers already exist at both sites.

### CONS

- The cost of multiple facilities
- Council Bluffs and Vinton might not be the center of the regional area.
- Not utilizing the ISD campus to its full potential.

**3. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to provide services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind on the campus in Council Bluffs and services for students who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind from the campus in Vinton?**

**PROS**

- The missions for each school (ISD/IBS) are viewed and respected with equal importance.
- ISD's campus is well maintained and is of great historical importance.
- ISD is well accepted and supported by the Council Bluffs and Omaha communities.
- Highly qualified teachers are already in both areas, and students would not have to be uprooted from their familiar school and friends.
- Council Bluffs has a strong deaf community and culture with access to the Deaf Club, interpreted church services & cultural events and performances in a larger metropolitan area.
- ISD is a gathering place for the Deaf community. Alumni return to campus for events such as Homecoming. Vendors bring technology specific to deaf and hard of hearing individuals to various events.
- ISD maintains connections and supports post-secondary educational opportunities for Deaf/HH students.
- ISD develops positive relations with competitive work environments in the area.
- The 4 PLUS program supports students transitioning to post-secondary education/work environments; these community relationships would be difficult to duplicate in other regions.
- IWCC BLAST program is closing in May 2013. ISD could collaborate with IWCC and local community school districts to include students on an IEP (with or without hearing loss) through the 4PLUS Program.
- Council Bluffs/Omaha area Vocational Rehabilitation counselors can communicate directly with clients, businesses and services and are aware of the various interpreting needs of their clients.
- ISD has the potential to draw students from regional/neighborhood states such as Nebraska and South Dakota.
- ISD's certified Driver's Education teacher is on staff to provide direct communication from the "front seat".
- ISD's staff Speech/Language Pathologists and school counselors, who are fluent in sign language, are the only school-based SLPs/counselors in the state who work exclusively with deaf and h/h students.
- Teacher assistants and substitute teachers are able to communicate directly with the students.
- Iowa licensed interpreters are available to the students, not non-certified "communication specialists".
- Interpreters are available to accompany students to health appointments such as cochlear implant/hearing aid services at the Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha.
- In Iowa there is no training program for teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- The University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) both have Deaf Education Teacher programs. The Iowa Western Community College and University of Nebraska-Omaha have interpreter training programs.

**CONS**

- The added expense of maintaining two administrative staffs and two physical campuses.
- The distance for students living in the eastern part of Iowa.

4. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of providing services for students who are deaf, blind, visually impaired, hard of hearing or deafblind on a single campus?

### PROS

- One administrative staff
- More cost effective for maintenance of a single campus.
- Several national models of deaf and blind students sharing the same campus but not the same educational staff

### CONS

- Highly qualified/dually certified teachers in either area would have to relocate.
- Both disabilities are low-incidence, but they are very different in their educational approaches and needs.
- Educational staffs are not certified to teach both deaf and blind.
- Most classes could not accommodate both visually impaired and deaf in the same classrooms, but certain exceptions are possible when deemed appropriate by educational staff knowledgeable in specialized areas.

5. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a single campus being located centrally in the state?

PROS

- Some students may be able to attend with less travel time.

CONS

- Many highly qualified/dually certified teachers may not be able to relocate.
- Many families of current ISD students have already relocated to be near the Council Bluffs campus.
- Nebraska students who are currently served by ISD in Council Bluffs would have to travel further or may choose not to attend thus impacting tuition revenue.
- Building a new campus and/or expanding the current facilities may be extremely costly.
- A multi-site regional program may be less attractive to other states such as Nebraska and South Dakota who might be interested in a regional school located in Council Bluffs.
- It would be a significant waste of taxpayer and grant money to not use ISD to its fullest capabilities.
- Any current program, i.e. Des Moines, would have to be expanded to include more certified teachers of the deaf.

## 6. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a single campus located on the current Iowa Braille School campus in Vinton?

### PROS

- Some teachers of the visually impaired live in the Vinton vicinity.

### CONS

- It could be costly to renovate the Vinton campus as the current facilities would need significant expansion or renovation.
- Within the local Vinton area, there is limited access to the educational, occupational and social/cultural opportunities of a larger city with a deaf community.
- Not utilizing the ISD campus to its full potential would be a significant waste of taxpayer, Lied Foundation, Iowa West Foundation and private donor funds.
- Both disabilities are low-incidence, but they are very different in their educational approaches and needs. Educational staffs are not certified to teach both deaf and blind; therefore, classes could not accommodate both vision impaired, and deaf students in the same classrooms.
- Many highly qualified/dually certified teachers may not be able to relocate.
- Many deaf/hard of hearing students and their families have relocated to be near the ISD campus.
- Nebraska students who are currently served at ISD would have to travel further or may choose not to attend thus impacting tuition revenue and the students' educational opportunities.
- A multi-site regional program may be less attractive to other states such as Nebraska and South Dakota who might be interested in a regional school located in Council Bluffs.

## 7. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a single campus located on the current Iowa School for the Deaf campus in Council Bluffs?

### PROS

- More cost effective for maintenance of a single campus, and one administrative staff.
- There are some national models of deaf and blind students sharing the same campus but not the same educational staff.
- Visually impaired students from across the region have attended the summer enrichment program on the ISD campus for the past few years with great success.
- The ISD educational program and staff as well as the residential program have been certified by CEASD and AdvancEd.
- ISD's campus is well established in the area and has a well maintained campus with excellent facilities designed for deaf learners (i.e. Science Lab, LMC, etc.). The size of the ISD campus would allow for expansion of our services to include blind students.
- The ISD campus accommodates deaf students' specific educational and physical needs. ISD is across the street from both a Lewis Central District public middle school and high school. This allows students the opportunities to be involved in mainstreamed classes, additional elective courses, and college credited courses.
- Certified teachers sign at or above their required proficiency level allowing for direct communication with the students.
- The 4 PLUS program supports students transitioning to post-secondary/work environments; these community relationships would be difficult to duplicate in other regions.
- IWCC BLAST program is closing in May 2013. ISD could collaborate with IWCC and local community school districts to include students on an IEP (with or without hearing loss) through the 4PLUS Program.
- Some students will have less travel time and would not have to be uprooted from their familiar school and friends. More parent involvement with the school could occur.
- Select ISD elementary teachers & SLPs are presently receiving deaf/blind training for the deaf/blind students currently attending ISD.
- Council Bluffs has a strong deaf community and culture with access to the Deaf Club, interpreted church services & cultural events and performances in a larger metropolitan area.
- ISD maintains connections and supports post-secondary educational opportunities for Deaf/HH students. ISD develops positive relations with competitive work environments in the area.
- ISD welcomes the hearing community and employers through a variety of activities such as: Job Fair, Job Olympics, & Special Olympics.
- ISD's staff Speech/Language Pathologists and school counselors, who are fluent in sign language, are the only school-based SLPs/counselors in the state who work exclusively with deaf and h/h students.
- Council Bluffs/Omaha has a large population of deaf residents who can be role models to help facilitate positive self-esteem for deaf students.

**(Continued) 7. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a single campus located on the current Iowa School for the Deaf campus in Council Bluffs?**

- Iowa licensed interpreters are available to the students, not non-certified “communication specialists”. Interpreters are also available to accompany students to health appointments i.e. Boys Town National Research Hospital for cochlear implant or hearing aid adjustments.
- Several Nebraska, tuition paying, Deaf/HH students currently attend ISD.
- ISD has the potential to draw additional students from regional/neighborhood states such as Nebraska and South Dakota.
- Iowa and Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation counselors serving ISD students can communicate directly with their clients, businesses, and services and are well aware of the various interpreting and supportive needs of their deaf/hard of hearing clients.
- The certified Driver’s Education teacher is on ISD’s staff to provide direct communication from the “front seat”. This service is provided at no charge to the parents.
- Staff on ISD’s campus (teachers, assistants, residence staff, nurses, cafeteria staff, facilities staff, transportation staff and substitute teachers) are able to communicate directly with the students.
- ISD is a gathering place for the Deaf community. Alumni return to campus for events such as Homecoming. Vendors bring technology specific to deaf and hard of hearing individuals to events.
- In Iowa there is no training program for teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.
- The University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) prepares undergraduate students to be highly qualified, dually certified Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing. This is a well-established relationship between UNO and ISD for practicum experiences and student teaching semesters.
- The University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) offers a graduate degree program in preparing individuals to be teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing or teachers of the Visually Impaired.
- The Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs offers a two-year associate’s degree program in sign language interpreting.
- The University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) offers a bachelor’s degree in education with training in sign language interpreting.

### **CONS**

- Both disabilities are low-incidence, but they are very different in their educational approaches and needs as noted by the specified training degrees.
- Educational staffs are not certified to teach both deaf and blind.
- Most classes could not accommodate both visually impaired and deaf in the same classrooms, but certain exceptions are possible when deemed appropriate by educational staff knowledgeable in specialized areas.
- Sharing a facility does not necessarily mean sharing educational resources thereby not reducing costs significantly.

8. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of centralizing the administration and coordination of services for students who are deaf, blind, hard of hearing, visually impaired, or deafblind?

### PROS

- One administrative staff could potentially be more cost efficient.

### CONS

- Services for deaf and visually impaired do not necessarily overlap and may not show a reduction in cost.
- Shared leadership may not have the depth of understanding of both Deaf and Visually Impaired disabilities and the implications for their educational needs.
- The administrative staff at each location has taken the time to learn the needs of their student population. If these positions are combined, depending on how those decisions were made, it may have a negative impact on the students.
- We are currently out of compliance with Iowa Code which states:  
**270.1 SUPERINTENDENT.**  
The superintendent of the school for the deaf shall be a trained and experienced educator of the deaf. The superintendent's salary may include residence in the institution, but no such allowance shall be made except by express contract in advance.

The task before you holds critical importance to the future lives of deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired and deaf/blind students in the state of Iowa.

#### **270.10 MERGER REQUIREMENTS.**

The state board of regents shall not merge the school for the deaf at Council Bluffs with the Iowa braille and sight saving school at Vinton or close either of those institutions until all of the following requirements have been met:

1. The department of management has presented to the general assembly a comprehensive plan, program, and fiscal analysis of the existing circumstances and the circumstances which would prevail upon the proposed merger or closing, together with data which would support the contention that the merger or closing will be more efficient and effective than continuation of the existing facilities. The analysis shall include a detailed study of the educational implications of the merger or closing, the impact on the students, and the opinions and research of nationally recognized experts in the field of the education of visually impaired and deaf students. The comprehensive plan shall further include a study relating to the programming, fiscal consequences, and political implications which would result if either a merger or an agreement under chapter 28E should be implemented between the school for the deaf in Council Bluffs and comparable state programs in the state of Nebraska.
2. The general assembly has studied the plans, programs, and fiscal analysis and has reviewed their impact on the programs.
3. The general assembly has enacted legislation authorizing either the closing or the merger to take effect not sooner than two years after the enactment of the legislation.

(Copied directly from Iowa Code)

**Received: Oct. 19, 2012**  
**From: Carolyn Hibbs**

October 19, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with a heavy heart that I write today. It is hard to believe that Iowa is seriously considering eliminating a residential component to services offered to blind and visually impaired students. There are parts of a complete curriculum for these students that will never be addressed properly with only an itinerant model of service or even just a day program to meet academic needs.

At minimum Iowa Braille School should be utilized as a regional center in whatever model is adopted. It is a facility well suited to the needs and instruction of blind students and is located in a community which supports and encourages student involvement in community activities. Our public school system is experienced in incorporating students with visual impairments into its classrooms. The majority of the cost of maintaining the campus is being met through its use by Ameri-Core. It only seems logical to me to utilize this facility rather than establishing all new locations.

It is not just tradition that shapes my concern about instruction for our visually impaired students. I have worked as a itinerant teacher and also at Iowa Braille during my teaching career. I understand each has a special place in meeting the needs of providing mastery in the special adapted techniques these students need to be successful in completing their education and also in achieving their potential in adulthood. Iowa must provide some program for more intensive longer term training in the areas of the expanded core curriculum if we are going to foster success and independence. Providing an associate in the classroom is a solution to some needs, but seldom prepares kids for the next step beyond high school. I am very concerned about programming for preschoolers and early elementary students as they begin to read and develop habits in daily living skills.

I would suggest that programs at other schools for the blind be explored. Many of them have updated their approach and are truly providing an important component in student's education. Having only one service option is not a way to support all the needs of blind students. In my experience, most parents who chose a residential program as a component of their child's program were amazed at progress and ability levels of their child. Short two or three week sessions will never be enough to achieve competence levels in adapted skills. Iowa Braille is a perfect setting for providing a program that immerses kids in learning adaptive skills and implementing them in a 24 hour routine. Let's utilize what we already have and not try to reinvent every wheel.

Sincerely,  
Carolyn Hibbs

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