

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**WORK PLAN TO IMPLEMENT IBSSS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the IBSSS work plan to implement the IBSSS Task Force recommendations approved by the Board of Regents in June 2005.

**Executive Summary:** IBSSS developed a work plan to define further the recommendations approved by the Board and to specify time frames for their implementation.

**Background:** The IBSSS Task Force, created by the Board of Regents, developed seven recommendations that examined the future needs and solutions for all students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities. The premise for the work plan is that a long-term educational approach for all students in Iowa who are blind or visually impaired, including those with other disabilities, can be accomplished only through coordination and collaboration with other education entities that share responsibility for these students under federal and state mandates.

**Details of the Work Plan:**

- Recommendation 1 – *The Board of Regents and the State Board of Education will create a coordinating council to review all services which support the education of students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.* A Coordinating Council will be created by September 15, 2005 and will review all services which support the education of students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities, by October 15, 2005. The review will include an assessment of unmet needs of children who are blind or visually impaired, aged birth to 21, and their families. The Coordinating Council will present its findings to the Board of Regents and to the State Board of Education by February 1, 2006.
- Recommendation 2 – *Provide equitable and timely access to services for students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with additional disabilities.* Using the results of the assessment, the Coordinating Council will identify gaps in the availability or timeliness of services by September 30, 2005. Options, including interagency agreements, to provide access in an effective and efficient manner will be identified by November 15, 2005. By February 1, 2006, the Council will include recommendations regarding the delivery of services by providers and the coordination of such services to assure that they are complementary, are provided in the most effective and efficient manner, and make maximum use of existing fiscal and personnel resources.
- Recommendation 3 – *Begin discussions between IBSSS and the University of Northern Iowa with the objective of creating a rigorous academic program for students with visual impairments.* Preliminary discussions have begun between IBSSS and the University of Northern Iowa. Recommendations regarding the feasibility of establishing such an academic program will be presented to the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education by February 1, 2006.

- Recommendation 4 – *Create a structure at IBSSS that is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of students for the core and expanded core curriculum, regardless of the students' primary program location.* The IBSSS structure will be reviewed by the interim superintendent regarding the School's flexibility to meet the needs of students for core and expanded core curriculum, regardless of the students' primary program location. A report of the findings and recommendations will be provided to the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education by February 1, 2006.
- Recommendation 5 – *Explore further collaboration between IBSSS and UNI and SUI to enhance services for students with multiple impairments and pursue efficiencies in the delivery of services.* Preliminary discussions have begun and will become more detailed through the participation of UNI and SUI on the Coordinating Council. Recommendations will be presented to the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education by February 1, 2006.
- Recommendation 6 – *Intensify efforts between IBSSS and other agencies to inform parents of children with visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities, of all the services available statewide.* Existing outreach efforts will be reviewed by IBSSS and the Department of Education. By September 30, 2005, the Coordinating Council will conduct an assessment of outreach efforts to inform parents. Recommendations will be presented to the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education by February 1, 2006.
- Recommendation 7 – *Convene a group to develop standards and benchmarks for achievement of the expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities.* IBSSS, in coordination with the Department of Education, will convene a group by July 30, 2005 to begin developing standards and benchmarks for achievement of the expanded core curriculum. Preliminary recommendations will be presented to the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education by February 1, 2006. The standards and benchmarks will be disseminated statewide by May 2006.