

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Board of Regents  
**From:** Board Office  
**Subject:** July 8, 2002  
**Date:** Annual Report of the Iowa School for the Deaf Advisory Committee

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**Recommended Action:**

Receive the report.

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**Executive Summary:**

Advisory  
Committee  
Purposes

The Iowa School for the Deaf Advisory Committee presents its annual report as specified in the Board of Regents' *Policy Manual* §1.07. The Advisory Committee serves a three-fold purpose: (1) to advise the Board of Regents on policy matters relating to the education of deaf students; (2) to advise the Superintendent regarding the development of procedures based on current educational policy; and (3) to forge linkages between the universities and the School for research and professional development opportunities.

Major Activities

In 2001-2002, the Advisory Committee met twice, once in the fall (October 26, 2001) and once in the spring (March 29, 2002). At the first meeting, on the ISD campus, the Committee decided to change its priorities for the year, primarily focusing on learning what could be done to improve the reading levels of ISD students. A related priority is enhancing the transitional skills of students for post-secondary education and the world of work. In addition, the members received a number of reports, including those from:

- Superintendent William Johnson – enrollments on- and off-campus; the impact of reduced funding on programs; re-accreditations, and the Lied Recreational Complex.
- Consultant Gary Holman – national trends at schools for the deaf.
- Chair Richard Hurtig – establishment of the teacher preparation program at the University of Iowa for Educators of the Hearing Impaired.

The second meeting was also held on the ISD campus. ISD teachers from the elementary, middle grades, and high school shared a variety of research-based methods used to improve reading. Achievement levels of students were discussed. The ISD Advisory Committee recommends that improvement of reading abilities continue to be the top priority next

year at ISD. It urges ISD to have at least one more program in the fall that would focus on what reading specialists at similar institutions are doing. Further, the Advisory Committee recommends that Area Education Agency reading specialists and Regent university faculty be invited to participate in programs sponsored by ISD.

Future of the  
ISD Advisory  
Committee

In G.D. 5, one of the recommendations being considered by the Board this month in its Organizational Review is the future of the Advisory Committees of the Iowa School for the Deaf and the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. A proposal to the Board, supported by the Board Office and the current Advisory Committee, recommends that the Board of Regents replace the current Advisory Committees with School Improvement Committees.

The Advisory Committees were advisory to the Board of Regents. The new School Improvement Committees are advisory to the Special Schools. The Superintendents of the Special Schools would appoint members of the teams, using guidelines developed by the Board Office. University representatives and Board Office staff would be included on the two teams.

In light of that proposal, no new names are proposed for the ISD Advisory Committee for 2002-2003.

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**Background:**

Membership

The Advisory Committee consists of a faculty member and an administrator from each university, a consultant in deaf education from outside the State of Iowa, and two "consumers," one from Iowa and one from Nebraska. The first meeting of the academic year (fall) was held on the ISD campus on October 26, 2001. That meeting and the spring meeting, March 29, 2002, were at ISD, with some members attending via ICN connections.

Priorities in  
Previous Year  
(2000-2001)

In 2000-2001, the topics receiving the most attention were:

- (1) remedial reading
- (2) transitional training
- (3) teacher preparation, and
- (4) staff professional development.

In effect, the Advisory Committee urged that the first two priorities receive emphasis in its programs for 2001-2002.

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**Analysis:**

- Change in Focus      It is important to note that the ISD Advisory Committee changed its focus and format at the fall meeting. Instead of receiving reports, it decided that future meetings should focus on specific educational issues or problems. Classroom teachers and staff were to be invited to discuss how they were addressing the concerned area.
- Fall Meeting      The reports presented at the fall meeting contained the following information and trend analysis:
- Fall 2001 enrollment (compared with Fall 2000)
    - 139 on-campus (143)
    - 90 off-campus (115)
    - 13 students from Nebraska (26 in initial year)
  - Accreditation – both North Central Association and Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) grant five-year re-accreditations. However, ISD's continuous school improvement model requires annual reports.
  - Impact of Budget Reductions -- \$800,000 reduction (to date) will result in:
    - faculty layoffs
    - delays in equipment purchases
    - maintenance repair postponements
    - cancellation of tuition reimbursement for staff training.
  - National trends (Gary Holman reporting)
    - limited number of applicants for superintendent positions
    - national goals are being set as well as a national agenda for research
    - student populations at deaf schools are declining.
- Teacher Preparation      Dr. Richard Hurtig reported at the fall meeting that the University of Iowa will be prepared to offer its new program for teachers of the hard of hearing, accepting students for Fall 2002. Some of the developments relative to the new program include:
- The professional degree in the field has become a doctoral degree rather than a master's degree
  - There have been discussions with the University of Northern Iowa regarding graduates from UNI enrolling in the new program.
  - The SUI program is described in detail in a report to the Board of Regents at its March 2002 meeting – docket item SUI A-4.

## Spring Meeting

The March 29, 2002 meeting began with three announcements:

- The teacher training program at SUI will work with ISD and area AEAs for placement of student teachers.
- One of the recommendations in the Board's organizational review will focus on possible changes in the role of the Advisory Committees of ISD and IBSSS.

The remainder of the meeting related to reading programs for K-12 students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

## Reading Programs

- Consultant Gary Holman shared results of a survey of 12 successful reading programs for deaf children.
- Teachers from ISD explored their answers to three questions:
  - Why do deaf and heard of hearing students have difficulty reading?
  - What teaching methods have been used at ISD?
  - What are ISD teachers and students doing now?

## Current Activities

A summary of what is being done now includes:

- American Sign Language (ASL) and English signs.
- A hearing-based reading program.
- ISD has supplemental English to ASL, including use of phonics and independent reading.
- Elementary classes have a book club
- Middle school has a higher-level reading group which is reading novels; LIFE students (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grades) read Milestones and novels for fun.
- Use of Kansas University's "Strategies for Writing."

## Assessment Issues

The Advisory Committee members raised questions about assessment (how student improvement in reading would be evaluated, as well as program strategies evaluated). ISD teachers shared their impressions and observations to date. The ISD strategic plan calls for students being tested as they compare with normed students of similar ages/grades as well as with students in other deaf institutions. Regarding programs, ISD teachers stated:

- A strong structured program works best.
- Faculty is looking for additional structured reading programs and supplemental materials.
- ISD has many special needs students now, who need additional instructional time in reading.
- Teachers work with parents to reinforce reading concepts.

## Future Meetings

In the future, additional meetings on the topic of reading may include, in person or via electronic means, specialists from Gallaudet University, or staff from other programs in Alabama and Louisiana.

Appointments to the  
ISD Advisory  
Committee

Since the Board is likely to take action soon that may replace the current ISD Advisory Committee (see G.D. 5), no nominations for new members are provided by Regent universities or the Superintendent.

The terms of Advisory Committee members are for two years; there is no limit on the number of terms a member may serve. Terms are staggered so that an institution has either a faculty or administrative vacancy each year. The presidents of SUI, ISU, and UNI nominate faculty and administrators when replacements are to be made.

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The Regent Exhibit Book contains the ISD Advisory Committee membership list from 2001-2002 and copies of the minutes of the two meetings held during the academic year.

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Charles R. Kniker

Approved:   
Gregory S. Nichols