

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Annual Report of the Iowa School for the Deaf Advisory Committee
Date: July 7, 2000

Recommended Actions:

1. Receive the report.
2. Approve the appointments to the ISD Advisory Committee.

Executive Summary:

The Iowa School for the Deaf Advisory Committee presents its annual report as specified in the Board of Regents' *Procedural Guide* §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 policy based on current educational policy; and (3) to forge linkages between the universities and the School for research and professional development opportunities.

During the 1999-2000 school year, the Advisory Committee met three times. At each of the meetings, it reviewed ISD's Strategic Plan, encouraging the Superintendent and staff to further refine and update statistics. The consultant gave reports or provided information on national trends and issues at each meeting. In addition, he shared insights on changes in accreditation processes for the North Central Association and the Council of Education Administrators of Schools of the Deaf (CEASD).

Five topics received much discussion during the year. The first is that remedial reading skills of ISD students need to be improved. The second concern, reflected in the results of a survey of alumni and anecdotal evidence, is that greater attention needs to be given to transitional programs which would help the 80-85 percent of ISD graduates who attend post-secondary institutions to have more successful experiences at community colleges or four-year institutions. A third concern is the anticipated need for more teachers and administrators of deaf and hearing impaired children. Members of the Advisory Committee provided data for and later reflected upon the "white papers" presented at the February 2000 meeting of the Board. The ISD Advisory Committee is supportive of efforts made thus far in exploring potential jointly-sponsored training programs for special education teachers, who will be needed in the state.

Faculty and staff training was the fourth area of discussion. It is emphasized in the ISD Strategic Plan. Meeting the needs of residential and non-residential students through a revised academic calendar was the fifth topic covered. As the institution prepares for upcoming accreditation visits, it is revising its curriculum, improving faculty and staff training, and identifying more specific ways of assessing student achievement. Next year, the Advisory Committee will ask university personnel who are responsible for coordinating special services for graduates of ISD to visit the institution.

Background and Analysis:

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 topics receiving the most attention this past academic year included: (1) remedial reading, (2) transitional training, (3) teacher preparation, (4) staff professional development, and (5) revised academic calendar.

Remedial Reading

Superintendent Johnson reported that ISD was the only special school to participate in the Northwest Evaluation Association's study of reading abilities of students this past year. In that study, most ISD students were found to be reading at the 35th percentile or below. Consultant Gary Holman added that, while this is not inconsistent, nationally, with the reading levels of other deaf and hearing impaired children, it is a concern that should be addressed by ISD faculty.

Transitional Training

The ISD Advisory Committee reviewed the results of a survey of alumni (sent to 160 graduates with a response rate of 34 percent). Of those responding, 73 percent were employed, and 5 percent were not seeking employment. ISD graduates have an unemployment rate of 22 percent, which is far below the national average of disabled workers -- 60 percent -- but the faculty and staff, as well as the Committee, believe the vocational training component of the curriculum as well as transitional skills training could be modified to better assist graduates in their future endeavors. ISD staff reported that 80 to 85 percent of its graduates are accepted into post-secondary programs. Some of these students opt to work rather than continue their education. Of those that do continue, more go to community colleges than four-year institutions. A goal of ISD is to work with higher education institutions to better enable ISD alumni to succeed in their post high school academic programs.

Teacher Preparation

The Advisory Committee reviewed the proposal that the Regent universities jointly offer preparation programs for teachers of the visually impaired and the deaf and hearing impaired. Members of the Advisory Committee support the concept of offering these programs. Realizing that costs for what is likely to be low enrollment programs must be covered, some Advisory Committee members are exploring grant possibilities. In addition, Consultant Holman indicated that he would obtain additional data about programs in other states.

Staff Professional Development

The Advisory Committee heard reports on professional development opportunities for ISD faculty and staff. The Committee encouraged the Superintendent to support such programs and also promote the concept of joint professional meeting presentations by ISD faculty and Regent university faculty members. Also, the Advisory Committee encouraged ISD faculty to partner with Regent university faculty in joint teaching, research, and service activities. The Committee learned that the Sign Language Proficiency Training program at ISD continues to be successful.

Revised Academic Calendar

The mission of ISD includes serving students who are off-campus. In Fall 1999, there were 155 students on campus and 112 students off-campus. Additional students enrolled throughout the year. To serve better the needs of both off-campus students and on-campus students, ISD may revise its school calendar to include a summer session. The proposal to the Board for the revised curriculum would not be presented to the Board for another year.

The terms of Advisory Committee members are for two years with no limits on numbers of terms served. 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.

The following individuals have been nominated by their presidents to serve two-year terms (September 1, 2000, to August 31, 2002) on the Iowa School for the Deaf Advisory Committee: Dr. Brenda Jo Falgier, full-time faculty member, who teaches in the Sign Language Program (SUI); to be named (ISU); and Dr. Roger Kueter, professor and head of the Department of Teaching (UNI). Dr. Kueter is being nominated for a second term. This past year he served as chair of the ISD Advisory Committee.

The terms of the current consultant and the consumers will expire in August, 2001.

The Regent Exhibit Book contains the membership list from 1999-2000 and copies of the three meetings held during the year. The Fall meeting was held September 27, 1999. The Winter meeting was held January 24, 2000. The Spring meeting was held April 17, 2000.



Charles R. Kniker

Approved: 

Frank J. Stork