



Illinois State Advisory Council

2008



2009

Annual Report



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Memorandum

To: Governor, Senators, Representatives, and other Interested Parties

From: Suzanne B. Woods, Chair
Illinois State Advisory Council on the
Education of Children with Disabilities

Subject: Annual Report 2008-2009

On behalf of the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC), we are pleased to submit this report summarizing the Council's activities and accomplishments during its 2008-2009 sessions.

ISAC had experienced attrition of members whose terms had expired or who had resigned due to personal reasons. We are pleased to announce in this report that we are now, thanks to recent gubernatorial appointments, nearly a full Council, with the exception of the following: two spots for parents of children with disabilities, one spot for a student with a disability, one spot for a Regional Superintendent, and one spot for a LEA Superintendent. We hope soon to have people named to these positions as each of these are integral to the work our Council does on behalf of children with disabilities in the state. Members now represent most areas of the state as parents of children with disabilities, persons with disabilities, one member at large, educators, and governmental service agencies. We are pleased to announce that now members of the committee will also represent the two teachers' unions, Illinois Federation of Teachers and Illinois Education Association. ISAC committees include: Executive, Access, Bilingual, Comprehensive State Plan, General Supervision/Due Process, Family Communications, Finance, Legislation, Personnel Development, Transition, and Rules and Regulations.

The Council once again provided comment on state and federal proposed rules implementing the *Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004* (IDEA). ISAC provided public comment both to ISBE and to other legislative venues in order to get the special education rules into statute. The Chair provided public comment to the State Board of Education regarding the emergency Part 401 Rules. Two members of the Finance Committee also provided public comment regarding a more equitable funding for special education. In the spring, ISAC members held a legislative breakfast at the Capitol in order to educate legislators about the importance and duties of ISAC. The breakfast, as well as the decorations, were completely prepared by special education students in various programs from around the state. ISAC has also continued to analyze the effect of the No Child Left Behind initiatives on students with disabilities, address the critical shortage of highly qualified personnel in special education, expressed concern about the lack of funding to provide adequate special education services, monitored Illinois' progress regarding educating children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, and changes that have been made regarding the Illinois Alternate Assessment and Due Process System. ISAC established a new standing committee, Transition, in order to look closely at this important element of a student's education. This year ISAC was one of the sponsors for the Illinois Statewide Transition Conference attended by more than 900 students, parents, and professionals demonstrating the importance of transition to families in the state. ISAC members continue to provide public testimony both before the Illinois State Board of Education and before legislative committees on issues that impact students with disabilities.

ISAC appreciates your support in making a free and appropriate public education a reality for all students in Illinois. Thank you for your commitment to maintaining the level of services necessary for every student to attain his or her individualized program goals.

Mission Statement

The role of the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities is to be a proactive body, advising the Governor, Legislature and State Board of Education on current issues relating to the education of children and youth with disabilities, as well as the unmet needs of these children and their families. It is also the responsibility of this Council to encourage new strategies and technologies, while advocating high standards of excellence throughout Illinois.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Letter to ISBE relative to the Rochester CUSD 3A withdrawal
- Appendix B: Letter to Aimee Veith from Chair
- Appendix C: Letter to ISBE relative to the Genoa Kingston CUSD 424 withdrawal
- Appendix D: Letter to ISBE relative to the Pontiac CCSD 429 withdrawal
- Appendix E: Letter to ISBE relative to the Indiana Creek CUSD 425 withdrawal
- Appendix F: Letter to ISBE relative to the Sandwich CUSD 430 withdrawal
- Appendix G: Letter to ISBE relative to the Byron CUSD 226 withdrawal
- Appendix H: Letter to ISBE relative to the Sycamore CUSD 427 withdrawal
- Appendix I: Letter to ISBE relative to the Hinckley Big Rock CUSD 429 withdrawal
- Appendix J: Letter to ISBE relative to the Manteno CUSD 5 withdrawal
- Appendix K: Letter to ISBE relative to the DeKalb CUSD 428 withdrawal
- Appendix L: White Paper on High Expectations from Transition Committee



ILLINOIS STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities Annual Report for 2008-2009

Identity and Purpose

Identity

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily mandated by state and federal law to provide advice and policy guidance to the Governor, General Assembly, and the State Board of Education with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities and the unmet needs of children with disabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of the Council is to:

- 1) Provide advice and policy guidance to the Governor, General Assembly, and the Illinois State Board of Education with respect to:
 - a) special education and related services for children with disabilities; and,
 - b) unmet needs of children with disabilities.
- 2) Advise the State Board of Education regarding:
 - a) all rules and regulations related to the education of children with disabilities that are to be promulgated by the Board;
 - b) modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans; and,
 - c) qualifications for hearing officers and the rules and procedures for hearings conducted under Section 14-8.02 or Section 14-8.02a.
- 3) Assist the State Board of Education in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the United States Secretary of Education.
- 4) Advise the State Board of Education in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- 5) Advise state and local education agencies regarding educational programs and materials that may be provided to children with disabilities to enable them to fully exercise their constitutional and legal rights and entitlements as citizens, including those afforded under the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Illinois Human Rights Act.

- 6) Advise the State Board of Education in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
- 7) Comment publicly on rules and regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities and the procedures for distribution of funds.

Council Membership

Membership The members must be citizens of the United States and of Illinois and are selected on the basis of their knowledge of, or experience in, the education of children with disabilities. Members are to be broadly representative of Illinois' population in regard to developmental, physical and mental disabilities, race, ethnic background, gender, and geographic location.

The membership of the Council is established by statute and includes twenty-three (23) persons appointed by the Governor and four (4) ex-officio voting members:

*Governor
Appointed*

Nine parents of children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 years currently receiving special education services at public expense:

Elizabeth Conran	St. Charles	4/06
Nora Donoghue	Highland Park	8/07
Deb Fornoff	Washington	8/07
Heather Perkins	Rockford	8/07
Rick Ramirez	Moline	8/07
Kristine Stanley	Peoria	8/07
	Heights	
Stanley J. Valentine	East Peoria	8/03

Five individuals with disabilities, including one student or former student who is at least 18 and no older than 21 years of age at the time of his or her appointment and who is receiving special education services at public expense or received those services at the time his or her high school program terminated.

Anel Gonzalez	Riverside	08/07
Kyle Packer	Effingham	03/04
Rahnee Patrick	Chicago	08/07
Susy Woods	Chesterfield	08/07
One regional superintendent of schools	Position Vacant	
One representative of an institution of higher	Suzanne Lee	Champaign 08/07

education that prepares special education and related services personnel

One teacher of students with disabilities Carrie Janes Aurora 08/07

One superintendent of a public school district Position Vacant

One director of special education cooperative or special education administrator from a school district of less than 500,000 population Jim Surber Lisle 08/07

One representative of a public charter school Elizabeth Purvis Chicago 08/05

One representative of a private school serving children with disabilities Mike Otte Oak Forest 03/04

One representative of a vocational, community, or business organization that provides transition services to children with disabilities Sharon Slover Harvard 08/05

One at-large member from the general public Jennifer Naddeo Barrington 08/07

Ex-Officio Members Teresa Garate, Chicago Public Schools District 299
Lane Walls, Department of Corrections
Frances Elbert, Department of Children and Family Services
Marjorie Olson, Department of Human Services/ORS

ISBE Staff David Andel, Division Administrator, Special Education Services
Kathy Stratton, Program Specialist, Special Education Services

Other Representative Marva Campbell-Pruitt, Illinois Coordinating Council

Committees

Standing Committees

Executive Committee
Access
Comprehensive State Plan
General Supervision/Due Process
Finance
Legislation/Interagency Communications
Family Communications
Rules and Regulations
Bilingual Special Education
Personnel Development
Transition

Ad-Hoc Committees

By-Laws Committee
Communications Committee
Nominating Committee

**Council Meeting Schedule
2008-2009**

DATE	TIME	MEETINGS	LOCATION
Wednesday, September 10, 2008 Thursday, September 11, 2008	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	ISBE - Springfield
Wednesday, October 8, 2008 Thursday, October 9, 2008	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	Jacksonville (details will follow)
Monday, November 3, 2008	1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Executive Committee	Telephone Conference
Wednesday, December 10, 2008 Thursday, December 11, 2008	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	ISBE - Springfield
Tuesday, January 6, 2009	1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Executive Committee	Telephone Conference
Tuesday, February 10, 2009 Tuesday, February 10, 2009 Wednesday, February 11, 2009	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Joint ICC/ISAC Meeting Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	ISBE - Springfield
Tuesday, March 10, 2009	1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Executive Committee	Telephone Conference
Wednesday, April 22, 2009 Thursday, April 23, 2009	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	ISBE - Springfield
Wednesday, May 6, 2009	10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Special Business Meeting	Bloomington – details TBD
Wednesday, June 10, 2009 Thursday, June 11, 2009	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Committee of the Whole Business Meeting	Eisenhower Cooperative Crestwood, IL

Public participation is invited during the business meetings. Reasonable accommodations are available upon request. Individuals requiring special accommodations should contact the Illinois State Board of Education (voice: 217/782-5589 and TTY: 217/782-1900) at least one week prior to the meeting date to allow time for making accommodations.

Critical Issues Identified for Discussion

The Council identified the following as priorities for discussion in 2008-2009:

- Response to Intervention-ASPIRE
- State Improvement Plan Progress
- Bilingual concerns
- Transition
- Post Secondary Outcomes
- Due Process
- Increased funding for special education
- Continuous Improvement Plan
- Legislation Relevant to Special Education

Council Minutes

Copies of approved minutes of the Council meetings from June 8, 2006 through June 12, 2007 are available at the links given below. Individuals having difficulty accessing the minutes are asked to contact Kathy Stratton at: 217/782-5589 (Voice), 217/782-1900 (TTY), or 217/782-0372 (fax).

September 11, 2009

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/isac_min_091108.pdf

October 9, 2008

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/minutes/isac_bm_minutes_100908.pdf

December 11, 2008

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/minutes/isac_bm_minutes_121108.pdf

February 11, 2009

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/minutes/isac_min_bm021109.pdf

April 23, 2009

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/minutes/isac_bm_min_042309.pdf

May 6, 2009

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/minutes/isac_bm_050609.pdf

June 11, 2009

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/minutes/isac_bm_min_061109.pdf

Public Participation

The Council provides an opportunity for public participation at every business meeting. During this period of time, participants sign in and are provided five minutes to address the various issues and concerns they have.

Council Actions

September 11, 2008

1. The ISAC carried the motion to have the Chair of ISAC send a letter to the Joint Commission on Administration Rules in support of changes in the 401 Rules.
2. The ISAC moved to add an additional meeting on May 6, 2009 to address additional district withdraws.

October 9, 2008

1. The ISAC carried a motion that ISBE use a weighted risk ratio of 4.0 or higher for a particular racial/ethnic group for significant disproportionality in educational environments where there are at least 20 students in the racial/ethnic group in question and at least 20 students in the comparison group, remaining consistent with the criteria used for significant disproportionality with regard to identification. Including asking that ISBE staff share how, through the focused monitoring process and State Performance Plan evaluation, it will comprehensively monitor, target, and support improvement in districts with regard to disproportionality by race/ethnic group across educational environments.
2. The ISAC carried a motion recommend that ISBE add the languagethree consecutive years...to the current definition of significant disproportionality in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year for SPP 4.
3. The ISAC carried a motion on behalf of the Bilingual Committee that ISAC request the ISBE Certification Administrator to run a report of the Certification Database for all personnel (including teachers and related service personnel) with either a Bilingual and/or ESL endorsement and share this report with the Bilingual Committee of ISAC by the next ISAC meeting on December 10-11, 2008.
4. The ISAC carried a motion requesting from ISBE the latest due process annual report and all other related dispute resolution conflict data for the 2007-2008 school years to review and provide input as set forth in the ISAC by-laws.

December 11, 2008

1. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency consider obtaining the following information that was not present in the Comprehensive Plan for Withdrawal of the Rochester CUSD 3A from SASSED.
 - a. A plan for provision of appropriately certified staff to serve students with disabilities as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).
 - b. Assess impact to the remaining districts in the Cooperative.
 - c. Obtain the Cooperative Separation Agreement.
 - d. Obtain approval of the ROE relative to the separation.

Upon receipt of the above information ISAC recommends that ISBE approve the withdrawal of the Rochester CUSD 3A from SASSED.

2. The ISAC carried a motion to approve the finance committee's presentation and information and share both with the Illinois State Board of Education's Finance and Audit Committee in Wheaton, Illinois on December 3, 2008.
3. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to the Governor's Office and House and Senate members to stop all financial cuts to education, special education, disabilities services, and mental health services. We are already underfunded on all of these programs.
4. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to Aimee Veith, under Susy Wood's signature, acknowledging her testimony and directing her complaint to ISBE.

5. The ISAC carried a motion asking ISBE staff to report back to ISAC about whether there is a pattern in the nature of special education complaints involving provision of special education services to address secondary disabilities.

February 11, 2009

1. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE recommending that ISBE approve the withdrawal of Genoa Kingston CUSD 424 from the DeKalb County Special Education Association.” After discussion, Ms. Conran made the following amendment: “We recommend that ISBE request the district to assess their current support services for ELL students with special education needs.” Marjorie Olson seconded the motion for the amendment. The motion to amend the first motion was approved.
2. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE recommending that ISBE approve the withdrawal of the Pontiac CCSD 429 from the Livingston County Special Services Unit.
3. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to the legislators and the Governor in support of the ISBE recommended FY10 Budget.

April 23, 2009

1. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency obtain the following information that was not adequately presented in the Comprehensive Plan for withdrawal of the Indian Creek CUSD # 425 from DCSEA.
 - a. The district provide further information regarding procedures for identifying students with a Specific Learning Disability (RtI).
 - b. The district provide further information relative to their provision for the continuum of placements available.
 - c. The district provide further information relative to provision of training and implementation of Assistive Technology.
 - d. The district provide further clarification of provisions for professional development of both regular education staff relative to special needs students in their class and special education staff.
 - e. The district provide further clarification of provision for transition services for students.
 - f. Further the ISAC had concerns relative to parental involvement in the withdrawal process.Further the ISAC has concerns relative to Reading Performance, Parental Involvement, and Students placed in the Least Restrictive Environments. Upon receipt of the above information the ISAC recommends that the ISBE consider accepting the Comprehensive Plan for Withdrawal of the Sandwich CUSD from DCSEA, if the ISBE determines that the withdrawal will meet the requirements found in Illinois Statute and the Illinois Administrative Code.
2. The motion carried to send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency obtain the following information that was not adequately presented in the Comprehensive Plan for withdrawal of the Sandwich CUSD # 430 withdrawal from DCSEA.
 - a. The district provide further information regarding procedures for identifying students with a Specific Learning Disability (RtI).
 - b. The district provide further information regarding provisions for special needs student's whose first language is not English.
 - c. The district provide further clarification of provisions for professional development of both regular education staff relative to special needs students in their class and special education staff.

- d. The district provide further clarification on the district's plan to provide for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.
- e. The district include the results of the surveys given to stakeholders.

Further the ISAC has concerns relative to reading performance, parental involvement, and students placed in the Least Restrictive Environments. Upon receipt of the above information the ISAC recommends that the ISBE consider accepting the Comprehensive Plan for Withdrawal of the Sandwich CUSD #430 from DCSEA, if the ISBE determines that the withdrawal will meet the requirements found in Illinois Statute and the Illinois Administrative Code.

3. The motion carried to write a letter to the Governor, the legislators and Dr. Koch concerning the extreme need for the printing and distribution of "The Educational Rights Guide for Students Who Receive Special Education Services" to school districts, who in turn, distribute to parents.
4. The motion carried to send a letter to the General Assembly in support of the ISBE and Governor's proposed FY-2010 Budget relative to special education.

May 6, 2009

1. The motion carried that a letter to sent to ISBE requesting the agency obtain the following information that was not adequately presented in the Comprehensive Plan for withdrawal of the Byron CUSD # 226 to withdrawal from Ogle County Special Education Cooperative (OCEC).
 - a. The district needs to identify provisions for how they will meet the needs of low incident students. (i.e. hearing impaired, multiple disabilities, visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing and physically handicapped students)
 - b. The district needs to identify provisions for the transfer of the 17 students the plan indicates will be returning including but not limited to how they will meet the IEP needs of each student, staff hired to fulfill the required services, professional development for teachers and administrators.
 - c. The district needs to obtain Approval of the Regional Board of Trustee's in order to determine the impact of the withdrawal on all stakeholders including the children and families impacted by the withdrawal.
 - d. The district needs to include provisions for the full continuum of services for students.
 - e. The district needs to provide further clarification for the provision of supervision of the special education programs in the district.
 - f. The district needs to provide additional information that indicates their ability to meet the children's needs relative to transition from school to work, education, and independent living.
 - g. The district needs to provide further information that indicates their ability to meet the needs of special education children whose first language is not English.
 - h. The district needs to acknowledge that the IEPs of the 17 students (and all students with special needs) are ultimately the responsibility of their district.
 - i. The district needs to further clarify its provision for cooperating with other districts within the region given the limited resources available.
 - j. The district needs to further clarify its provisions for Professional Development of regular education teachers relative to special needs students

- k. The district needs to further clarify its provisions for Professional Development of special education teachers

Upon receipt of the above information the ISAC recommends that the ISBE consider accepting the Comprehensive Plan for Withdrawal of the Byron School District 226 from Ogle County Special Education Cooperative (OCEC), if the ISBE determines that the withdrawal will meet the requirements found in Illinois Statute and the Illinois Administrative Code.

2. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency consider the Sycamore CUSD #427 withdrawal from DCSEA as complete.
3. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency consider the Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD 429 Comprehensive Plan for Withdrawal from DCSEA as complete.

June 11, 2009

1. The ISAC carried a motion to enter closed session at 10:50 a.m. for the purpose of discussing recommendations for Impartial Due Process Hearing Officer Renewals.
2. The ISAC carried a motion to come out of closed session at 11:25 a.m.
3. The ISAC recommended the renewal of all 15 hearing officers.
4. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency obtain the following information that was not adequately presented in the Comprehensive Plan for withdrawal of the Manteno CUSD # 5 from KASEC prior to approval of the withdrawal plan:
 - a. A written strategic plan of improvement relative to the gap in learning.
 - b. Further define the district's services for students relative to transitioning from high school to post secondary, career, and independent living.
5. The ISAC carried a motion to send a letter to ISBE requesting the agency obtain the following information that was not adequately presented in the Comprehensive Plan for withdrawal of the DeKalb CUSD # 428 from DCSEA prior to approval of the Comprehensive Plan that clearly define the plans for ELL services.
6. The ISAC carried a motion for the Transition Committee to distribute the White Paper on High Expectations.
7. The ISAC carried a motion to adopt the proposed 2009-2010 ISAC Meeting Schedule.
8. The ISAC carried a motion requesting ISBE to update or create and post on its website a statewide directory of school service personnel and educators qualified to serve English Language Learners. The directory should include contact information and information about the types of services and languages in which the individual is qualified.

Barriers to Success

1. There is inadequate economic support to school districts to implement the mandates of IDEA04 and NCLB. The level of services and the quality of services available to Illinois school age children who have disabilities is significantly uneven throughout the state. A fair and equitable formula which would improve the ability of some smaller and rural districts to cope with the mandates resulting from IDEA04 and NCLB, is imperative. Programs to train those “highly qualified” teachers mandated by NCLB are victims of this inadequate funding.
2. Staffing levels within the Department of Special Education at ISBE remain inadequate to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, families, school personnel and ISAC.
3. ISAC is often requested to provide advice on special education matters without adequate time to meet, evaluate, discuss and make recommendations.

Accomplishments

During the period covered by this report, ISAC has accomplished the following:

1. ISAC gave Public Comment on the Part 401 Rules.
2. The ISAC Ad Hoc Communications Committee created and distributed a Newsletter to stakeholder groups twice this year including General Assembly Members, educators, and parents of children with a disability.
3. ISAC members were active participants in the planning and organizing the State Transition Conference.
4. The ISAC Transition Committee spearheaded a statewide stakeholder group that is working to champion transitioning across the state.
5. ISAC had a representative present at the ISBE Budget Hearings held around the state.
6. ISAC hosted a Legislative Breakfast in the Rotunda of the Capitol Building with special education students from schools across the state greeting the legislators, preparing and serving the breakfast.
7. Members of ISAC continue to be active participants on the ISBE Alliance for School-based Problem-solving and Intervention Resources in Education.
8. Members of ISAC participated in the LEA Determination Stakeholder group. The stakeholder group meetings identified the means by which an LEA would be identified to one of four categories: meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention, or needs substantial intervention in regards to explicit sections in the State Performance Plan.
9. The ISAC reviewed nine Comprehensive Plans for withdrawal:
10. ISAC continued to review the Comprehensive Plans as requested.
11. Participation on the ISBE stakeholder group preparing the parents guide.
12. Participation in interviews of Due Process Hearing Officers.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter to ISBE relative to the Rochester CUSD 3A withdrawal

December 11, 2008

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Rochester Community Unit District 3a. to withdraw from Sangamon Area Special Education District (SASED).

The ISAC reviewed the Comprehensive Plan on June 11, 2008 and reported the summary to the Council. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Rochester District Superintendent, Pupil Services Director of the district, parents of an a Rochester student with special education needs, and the Special Education Director of SASED.

On June 12, 2008, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE approve the Comprehensive Plan for withdraw of the Rochester CUSD 3a from SASED given they provide the following information to the ISBE:

1. A plan for provision of appropriately certified staff to serve students with a disability as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).
2. Assess impact to the remaining districts in the Cooperative.
3. Obtain the Cooperative Separation Agreement.
4. Obtain approval of the ROE relative to the separation.

We believe that Rochester CUSD 3a will have the capacity to provide excellent services to children with disabilities and appreciate the work completed on the comprehensive plan.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Conran
Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix B: Letter to Aimee Veith from Chair

December 24, 2008

Ms. Aimee Veith
Illinois School for the Deaf
125 Webster
Jacksonville IL 62650

Dear Ms. Veith:

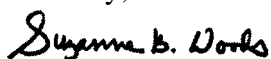
The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) appreciates your efforts to bring to our attention some of the difficulties faced in securing appropriate services for students who have complex educational needs as a result of multiple disabilities.

Because our role is to address systemic issues, we are not able to respond to your individual situation. However, we want to assure you that you were heard and that we are sensitive to the issues you present.

We will be asking ISBE staff to report back to us about whether there is a pattern in the nature of special education complaints involving provision of special education services to address secondary disabilities. We would encourage you to review information about the special education complaint process (you can access this information by calling 217-782-5589 or at the following website http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/complaint_investigation.htm) and consider whether this would be an appropriate course of action in your situation.

We want to acknowledge your effort in sharing your thoughts through your statement and letter. Your commitment to ensuring the needs of Illinois students with hearing loss are met is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Susy Woods
Chair, ISAC

Appendix C: Letter to ISBE relative to the Genoa Kingston CUSD 424 withdrawal

February 10, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Genoa CUSD 424 request to withdraw from Dekalb County Special Education Association.

The ISAC reviewed the Comprehensive Plan on February 9, 2009 and reported the summary to the Council. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Genoa district representatives and a parent of a child with special education needs, and the Dekalb County Special Education Association.

The ISAC recommends that the ISBE advice Genoa District CUSD 424 to assess the current support services for students with ELL who have special education needs.

On February 10, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to advice the ISBE approve the Comprehensive Plan.

We believe that District 424 will continue to provide excellent services to children with disabilities and appreciate the work completed on the comprehensive plan.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix D: Letter to ISBE relative to the Pontiac CUSD 429 withdrawal

February 10, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Pontiac CCSD 429 request to withdraw from Livingston County Special Services Unit.

The ISAC reviewed the Comprehensive Plan on February 9, 2009 and reported the summary to the Council. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Pontiac district representatives and a parent of a child with special education needs, and the Livingston County Special Services Unit.

On February 10, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to advise the ISBE approve the Comprehensive Plan.

We believe that Pontiac CCSD District 429 will continue to provide excellent services to children with disabilities and appreciate the work completed on the comprehensive plan.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix E: Letter to ISBE relative to the Indian Creek CUSD 425 withdrawal

April 25, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Indian Creek CUSD #425 from the Dekalb County Special Education Association (DCSEA)...

The ISAC Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on April 21, 2009. On April 23, 2009, a presentation and question/answer period was held with representatives of the Indian Creek CUSD #425

On April 23, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE request the Indian Creek CUSD #425 provide the following information prior to the ISBE determination of approval of the Comprehensive Plan.

- a. The district provide further information regarding procedures for identifying students with a Specific Learning Disability (RtI).
- b. The district provide further information relative to their provision for the continuum of placements available.
- c. The district provide further information relative to provision of training and implementation of Assistive Technology.
- d. The district provide further clarification of provisions for professional development of both regular education staff relative to special needs students in their class and special education staff.
- e. The district provide further clarification of provision for transition services for students.

Further the ISAC had concerns relative to parental involvement in the withdraw process.

Upon receipt of the above information the ISAC recommends that the ISBE consider accepting the Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw of the Indian Creek CUSD #425 from DCSEA, if the ISBE determines that the withdraw will meet the requirements found in Illinois Statute and the Illinois Administrative Code.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix F: Letter to ISBE relative to the Sandwich CUSD 430 withdrawal

April 25, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Sandwich CUSD #430 from the Dekalb County Special Education Association (DCSEA)...

The ISAC Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on April 21, 2009. On April 23, 2009, a presentation and question/answer period was held with representatives of the Sandwich CUSD #430.

On April 23, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE request the Sandwich CUSD #430 provide the following information prior to the ISBE determination of approval of the Comprehensive Plan.

- a. The district provide further information regarding procedures for identifying students with a Specific Learning Disability (RtI).
- b. The district provide further information regarding provisions for special needs student's whose first language is not English.
- c. The district provide further clarification of provisions for professional development of both regular education staff relative to special needs students in their class and special education staff.
- d. The district provide further clarification on the district's plan to provide for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.
- e. The district include the results of the surveys given to stakeholders.

Further the ISAC has concerns relative to reading performance, parental involvement, and Students placed in the Least Restrictive Environments (LRE).

Upon receipt of the above information the ISAC recommends that the ISBE consider accepting the Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw of the Sandwich CUSD #430 from DCSEA, if the ISBE determines that the withdraw will meet the requirements found in Illinois Statute and the Illinois Administrative Code.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix G: Letter to ISBE relative to the Byron CUSD 226 withdrawal

May 6, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Byron School District 226 from the Ogle County Special Education Cooperative (OCEC)..

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on May 6, 2009. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Byron School District Superintendent, Board President, and parents of the Byron School District whose children receive special education in the district. During the public comment portion of the meeting The OCEC Attorney, Special Education Director, and numerous Superintendents whose districts are serviced by the OCEC were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to numerous concerns regarding the impact of the Byron withdraw from OCEC..

On May 6, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE request the Byron School District 226 provide the following information prior to the ISBE determination of withdraw from OCEC.

The district needs to:

- a. identify provisions for how they will meet the needs of low incident students. (i.e. Hearing Impaired, Multiple Disabilities, Visually Impaired, Deaf and hard of hearing and physically handicapped students)
- b. to identify provisions for the transfer of the 17 students the plan indicates will be returning to their home schools including but not limited to how they will meet the IEP needs of each student, staff hired to fulfill the required services, and professional development for teachers and administrators relative to meeting the students.
- c. obtain Approval of the Regional Board of Trustee's in order to determine the impact of the withdraw to all stakeholders including the children impacted by the withdraw.
- d. include provisions for the full continuum of services for students.
- e. provide further clarification for the provision of supervision of the special education programs in the district.
- f. provide additional information that indicates their ability to meet the children's needs relative to transition from school to work, education, and independent living.
- g. provide further information that indicates their ability to meet the needs of special education children whose first language is not English.

- h. acknowledge that the IEP's of the 17 students (and all students with special needs) are ultimately the responsibility of their district.
- i. further clarify it's provision for cooperating with other districts within the region given the limited resources available.
- j. further clarify it's provisions for Professional Development of regular education teachers relative to Special Needs students
- k. further clarify it's provisions for Professional Development of Special Education Teachers

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix H: Letter to ISBE relative to the Sycamore CUSD 427 withdrawal

May 6, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Sycamore CUSD #427 from the Dekalb County Special Education Association (DCSEA)...

ON May 6, 2009 the Chair of the ISAC Comprehensive Planning Committee presented a summary of the Sycamore CUSD # 427 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw from DCSEA. On this date a presentation and question/answer period was held with representatives of the Sycamore CUSD #427.

On May 6, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE consider accepting the Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw of the Sycamore CUSD #427 from DCSEA, if the ISBE determines that the withdraw will meet the requirements found in Illinois Statute and the Illinois Administrative Code.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix I: Letter to ISBE relative to the Hinckley Big Rock CUSD 429 withdrawal

May 6, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429 from the Dekalb County Special Education Association (DCSEA)...

ON May 6, 2009 the Chair of the ISAC Comprehensive Planning Committee presented a summary of the Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD # 429 Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw from DCSEA. On this date a presentation and question/answer period was held with representatives of the Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429.

On May 6, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE consider accepting the Comprehensive Plan for Withdraw of the Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429 from DCSEA, if the ISBE determines that the withdraw will meet the requirements found in Illinois Statute and the Illinois Administrative Code.

Further, the Council would like to commend the Hinckley CUSD #429 on their outstanding efforts in educating their student with special needs, their actions are exemplary.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Appendix J: Letter to ISBE relative to the Manteno CUSD 5 withdrawal

June 11, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Manteno School District #5 from the Kankakee Area Special Education Cooperative (KASEC).

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on June 10, 2009. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Manteno School District Superintendent, Board President, and parents of the School District whose children receive special education in the district. During the meeting the Special Education Director and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to withdraw.

On June 11, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE request the Manteno School District #5 provide the following information prior to the ISBE approval determination of withdraw from KASEC:

1. A written strategic plan of improvement relative to the learning gap for special education students.
2. Further define the districts services for students relative to transitioning from high school to post secondary, career, and independent living.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Conran

Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Cc:

Manteno #5

Kankakee Area Special Education Cooperative (KASEC)

Appendix K: Letter to ISBE relative to the DeKalb CUSD 428 withdrawal

June 11, 2009

Dear Dr. Ferguson,

The Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) is statutorily created by Section 14-3.01 of the School Code of Illinois. The purpose of the Council includes advice to the State Board of Education regarding modifications or additions to county or regional comprehensive plans. To this end, I write regarding the Comprehensive Withdraw Plan of the Dekalb School District 428 from the Dekalb County Special Education Association (DCSEA).

The ISAC Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and reported the summary to the Council on June 10, 2009. On this date, a presentation and question/answer period was held with the Dekalb School District Superintendent, Board President, and parents of the School District whose children receive special education in the district. During the public comment portion of the meeting The Special Education Director and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to address the Council relative to withdraw.

On June 11, 2009, the ISAC carried a motion to recommend the ISBE request the Dekalb School District 428 provide the following information prior to the ISBE determination of approval for withdraw from DCSEA.

1. _Clearly define the plan for ELL services.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Conran
Committee Chair: Comprehensive Planning Committee

Cc:
Dekalb #428
Dekalb County Special Education Association (DCSEA)

High Expectation: Priority One for Successful Transition

A White Paper from the Transition Committee of the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC)

The Transition Committee of ISAC is a diverse group, made up of parents of children with disabilities, school and special education administrators, educators, advocates, agency staff, and others who support improved opportunities for young people receiving special education services. The core values defined by this committee regarding transition are as follows:

1. High expectations lead to success in life.
2. All students can and will succeed.
3. The greatest level of independence possible is an expectation.
4. Students must be prepared for post-secondary education and/or employment with adult services and supports in place.
5. All students have a right to quality education that yields successful outcomes.
6. Transition services must be infused seamlessly into the educational process.

In discussion of the transition issues that impact families with transitioning youth, the conversations repeatedly return to what is believed to be the singular most important condition for transition success. Time after time, it is concluded that “high expectations” for all students is the critical element for success. The absence of “high expectations” is primary on the list of barriers to student accomplishment in transition. The need for “high expectations” is also number one on the list of priorities for continuous improvement of transition processes.

Extensive research on the effect of “high expectations” has revealed a strong correlation between collective expectations and the ultimate success for a student enrolled in any educational program. Simply stated, when “high expectations” exist, students succeed. This doesn’t mean that supports are unnecessary. On the contrary, eliminating the need for complete autonomy is sometimes the difference between perceived failure and success. In summary, having “high expectations” means working to achieve dreams, not dismissing them.

A wealth of information is available regarding strategies that make transition effective, thereby producing successful outcomes for young adults. So why does a gap continue to exist between what is known to work and what is actually observed? Why do students, parents, and educators who want more than standard transition options continue to spend the majority of their time convincing those who hold the keys to funding and support that there are greater possibilities?

Parents, educators, service providers, and others who support students and young adults with disabilities must have a vision beyond what is typical, what is currently available, and what has been done successfully in the past. A report from Cornell University’s Employment and Disability Institute 2008 population survey showed that only 17.6% of men and women who have a condition that limits their ability to work are, in fact, employed. This speaks volumes about our inability to overcome an outdated paradigm when it comes to those with special needs and their opportunity for employment.

How do we know that there are greater possibilities for students with disabilities in transition in Illinois? We know because there are young people with disabilities working with and without supports in all workforce arenas. We know because there are young adults with disabilities attending college. We know because young adults with disabilities own and run their own businesses. We know it is possible, because it occurs! These scenarios are not made reality by the young adults with disabilities alone. These young adults may have family members who spend countless, unpaid hours advocating for them. Additionally, these students may have had teachers, social workers, or job coaches who went to great lengths to cultivate exciting and meaningful opportunities. Finally, these students may also have other adult role models, friends, and mentors with disabilities who demonstrate how very possible it is to live a positive, healthy and successful life with a disability. Unfortunately, this circle of support and confidence is much too rare, but nonetheless vital to transition success.

Changing the paradigm is not an easy task. Belief in the unlimited potential of all human beings and the understanding that everyone has a right to be a contributing member of society is, unfortunately, not yet a universal value. No one ever admits to low expectations, but the evidence is clear as seen in the unemployment statistics. If a way is found to gain acceptance of this new paradigm, wouldn't the transitioning process be inevitably better?

There are many legitimate systemic issues that impact transition planning. It is recognized that a significant increase in funding is necessary to provide the services and supports needed by transitioning students. Furthermore, a lack of transportation resources remains a serious limitation to successful transition planning statewide. These are undeniably major issues that must be addressed.

Additionally, Illinois participates in a structured and well-established system or "institutionalized" culture. There is optimism about the prospect for great change in the near future, but this culture continues to limit imagination when it comes to transition. Currently, students with the most significant disabilities are encouraged to consider sheltered workshops before making real efforts at community employment. Sheltered workshops, like institutional residential settings, are obsolete in many states. All work is honorable but efforts must be made to expand customized and community-integrated employment opportunities for those whose interests are elsewhere, beyond the traditional "food, filth, and flowers." All realms of interest deserve exploration and respectful effort. Students of all ability levels need the opportunity for real work and the satisfaction of contributing to the communities to which they belong.

Few of us would choose to live in congregate settings with people unfamiliar, and often dissimilar to ourselves. However, in practice, relatively few options beyond this exist for young people with disabilities in Illinois. About 67% of high school graduates elect to attend college. For most young adults with disabilities, this goal is unreachable because the supports and services needed to participate are simply unavailable.

Students with disabilities are frequently blamed for failures that occur in their own education or vocational programs. When students are unsuccessful at learning a new concept or skill, they are frequently assumed to be incapable, or unwilling. Opportunities are denied as a result. It is rare for the system or program to be challenged.

"In 1984, Anne Donnellan, a respected researcher in special education, wrote that "the criterion of least dangerous assumption holds that in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the

likelihood that students will be able to functional independently as adults." Furthermore, she concluded "we should assume that poor performance is due to instructional inadequacy rather than to student deficits." In other words, if a student does not do well, the quality of the instruction should be questioned before the student's ability to learn. Thus, for Donnellan, the least-dangerous assumption when working with students with significant disabilities is to assume that they are competent and able to learn, because to do otherwise would result in harm such as fewer educational opportunities, inferior literacy instruction, a segregated education, and fewer choices as an adult."

From: <http://disabilitysolutions.org/newsletters/files/six/6-3.pdf>

Personal creativity and resourcefulness should be the primary focus of repair efforts. To best facilitate continuous improvement for students with disabilities, the question must be "how" rather than "why."

In conclusion, we (parents and caregivers, educators, administrators and agency personnel) need to ask ourselves:

- ✓ Is every means available being used to find out what the student really loves
- ✓ and wants for his/her future?
- ✓ Are possibilities being built around those individual dreams?
- ✓ Has the transitioning youth's family, school district, and agency made a commitment to a philosophy of high expectations?
- ✓ Is outdated and narrow thinking challenged when it is encountered, both personally and professionally?
- ✓ Are the programs and policies that support transition congruent with high expectations?
- ✓ If the answer to any of these questions is "no", a starting point for individual and/or systemic efforts for change is offered.

This committee is devoted to addressing the important issues outlined above. It is understood that change is a process and that work must be within the boundaries of the respective systems. Furthermore, it is known that individuals joining together around a common vision are powerful and this transition committee intends to contribute positively to the expeditious evolution of the transition process in Illinois. "High expectation" was chosen as this committee's first priority because all committee members unanimously agreed that it is the key to success.

Please join in the effort to promote and advocate for high expectations and expanded transition opportunities for students with disabilities in Illinois. The ISAC Transition Committee includes: Marva Campbell-Pruitt – Illinois Interagency Coordinating Council, Beth Conran - Parent, Deb Einhorn – Family Matters PTIC, Melanie Fleenor – ISBE, Deb Fornoff – Parent, Teresa Garate – Special Education Administrator, Phil Milsch – Attorney and Advocate, Rahnee Patrick – Individual with a Disability, Rick Ramirez – Parent, Mike Padavic – Special Education Administrator, Sharon Slover – Transition Coordinator, Susan Walter – ISBE

For additional information about best-practices and/or the current status of transition in Illinois, please see the following resources:

Illinois State Board of Education

Contact Sue Walter, 618-651-9028 or swalter@isbe.net , or Melanie Fleenor, 217-782-5589 or mfleenor@isbe.net.

<http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/Default.htm> - Illinois State Board of Education, Special Education

Services Homepage

<http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/total.htm> - Illinois State Board of Education, Secondary Transition

Webpage

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/ta_projects.htm - Illinois State Board of Education, Technical

Assistance Projects

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/annual_partB.pdf - Illinois Annual Performance Report, Part B, 2007 – 2008

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/state_performance.pdf - Illinois State Performance Plan, Part B

http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdf_reports/annual_performance_report06-07.pdf - 2006 - 2007 Annual State Report on Special Education Performance

Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation Services

Contact Marva Campbell-Pruitt at 312-814-5081 – Voice, 312-814-5849 – Fax, 888-440-8995 – NexTalk or Marva.Campbell-Pruitt@Illinois.gov

Boards/Councils

<http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/isac.htm> - Illinois State Advisory Council on

Education of Children with Disabilities

<http://www.isbe.net/iicc/default.htm> - Illinois Interagency Coordinating Council

Federal Resources

<http://psocenter.org/Docs/Resources/SecondaryTransition/TransitionResourceDirectoryfinal.pdf> -

Descriptions of Federally-Supported Projects and Centers that Focus on Youth Transition