

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Board of Regents  
**From:** Board Office  
**Subject:** Annual Report of the Iowa School for the Deaf Advisory Committee  
**Date:** July 6, 2001

**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 procedures based on current educational policy; and (3) to forge linkages between the universities and the School for research and professional development opportunities.

During the 2000-01 school year, the Advisory Committee met three times. Since ISD was in the process of seeking reaccreditation during this academic year from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the Council of Education Administrators of Schools of the Deaf (CEASD), the Advisory Committee spent much time discussing the findings contained in ISD's self-study document, the relationship of ISD's Strategic Plan to its new school improvement plan, and additional performance measures or benchmarks. A number of recommendations were made that were incorporated in subsequent drafts of the ISD Strategic Plan.

In 1999-2000, the Committee, in its advisory role, determined it would focus on five areas in 2000-2001. The first was the improvement of remedial reading skills of ISD students. The second was transitional programs that 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. At each meeting, these two topics, along with relevant data, were discussed and reviewed.

A third area was the anticipated need for more teachers and administrators of deaf and hearing-impaired children. The ISD Advisory Committee closely followed the development of the University of Northern Iowa's proposals for training programs for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. At its spring

meeting, the Committee learned that the University of Iowa was in the process of developing such a program. The Committee has not had the opportunity to review the SUI plan.

The ISD Advisory Committee also received reports on faculty and staff training (the fourth area) at each of this year's meetings. Such training is a major goal of the proposed ISD Strategic Plan, with a number of new benchmarks. Meeting the needs of residential and non-residential students through a revised academic calendar was the fifth area explored by the ISD Advisory Committee. This topic received less attention than the other four areas.

### **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 first meeting of the academic year (fall) was held on the ISD campus and the subsequent meetings were conducted electronically with ICN connections to the university campuses.

A number of the university members on the Advisory Committee have expertise in fields that relate to the unique mission of the Iowa School for the Deaf. They appreciate the work performed by the ISD administration, faculty, and staff. The Committee commended ISD personnel for the extensive efforts made in preparing the self-study, surveying parents and community members, and developing innovative strategies, such as the "curriculum walkabouts," i.e., special event days when visitors learned about different programs at the facility.

The Committee took seriously its responsibility to offer advice to the ISD Superintendent and staff. As the *Procedural Guide* indicates, the tasks of the Advisory Committees are "to assist the two specialized schools in governance by the development of such items as annual reports, long-range plans, program review structures, development of mission statements. . . . A major task of the committee is to help develop specifics of the plan for governance of the two specialized schools, such as detailed educational programming and policies, research and resource needs, and relationships with other agencies."

The ISD Advisory Committee members offered suggestions and recommendations regarding the ISD Strategic Plan, and school improvement plan. A number of members have served on accreditation teams and were aware of the increased emphasis upon student outcomes and school improvement models that are mandated in accreditation reports. As a result of comments made, the institution made changes that resulted in greater clarity in its Strategic Plan. Certain indicators and benchmarks were made more precise as a result of input from Advisory Committee members.

The topics receiving the most attention this past academic year included: (1) remedial reading, (2) transitional training, (3) teacher preparation, and (4) staff

professional development. The revised academic calendar received less attention.

### **Remedial Reading**

Last year, Superintendent Johnson reported that ISD was the only special school to participate in the Northwest Evaluation Association's study of reading abilities of students. In that study, most ISD students were found to be reading at the 35<sup>th</sup> percentile or below. During the current year, data indicated that ISD students are above the mean of similar students, and have made small gains in reading comprehension when compared with students without disabilities.

### **Transitional Training**

ISD received a grant from the Iowa Department of Education to initiate a Transition Alliance Program (TAP). The goal of this program is to have ISD work with a variety of educational and community organizations to improve students' transition to the world of work and post-secondary opportunities. Early signs are that the program is successful. 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. This year, the Advisory Committee planned to ask university personnel who are responsible for coordinating special services for graduates of ISD to visit the institution. The invitations were not made this year, but will be done in 2001-2002.

### **Teacher Preparation**

The Advisory Committee reviewed the developing UNI proposal that the Regent universities jointly offer a preparation program for teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing. Members of the Advisory Committee had reservations about the plan that would have required teacher candidates to attend some classes out-of-state. The Committee heard summary reports on the "white paper(s)" prepared by Regent university faculty members on the proposed solutions to preparing needed professionals for the education of visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing individuals. Consultant Holman obtained additional data about programs in other states that was helpful in the discussions. The Advisory Committee has not had the opportunity to review a new program proposal being developed by the University of Iowa.

### **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 to 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 2000, there were 139 students on-campus (compared with 155 students last year) and 104 off-campus students (compared with 112 last year). Additional students enrolled throughout the year. To better serve the needs of both off-campus students and on-campus students, ISD revised its school calendar to include a summer session.

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.

### **Appointments to the ISD Advisory Committee**

The following individuals have been nominated by their presidents to serve two-year terms (September 1, 2001 to August 31, 2003) on the Iowa School for the Deaf Advisory Committee:

- Dr. Richard Hurtig, chair of the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology (SUI -- administrator)
- Dr. John Schuh, chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ISU -- administrator) [reappointment]
- Dr. Joseph Smaldino, professor in the Department of Communicative Disorders (UNI – faculty) [reappointment]

Superintendent William Johnson recommends that the current consultant, Dr. Gary Holman, and Iowa consumer representative, Ms. Shirley Hicks, be reappointed. If approved, their terms will expire August 31, 2003. Superintendent Johnson has reported that the current Nebraska consumer representative wishes to be replaced. At a later time, a person will be recommended. The nominee's term would expire August 31, 2003.

The Regent Exhibit Book contains the ISD Advisory Committee membership list from 2000-01 and copies of the minutes of the three meetings held during the academic year. The Fall meeting was held October 27, 2000. The Winter meeting was held February 23, 2001. The Spring meeting was held April 23, 2001.

  
Charles R. Kniker

Approved:   
Frank J. Stork