



Student Reading Success Through Research and Collaboration

**Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC)
Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
December 16, 2020
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Meeting via Videoconference**

Members present: Beth Ades-Hanson, Kate Connealy, Katie Greving, Nandita Gurjar, Michael Scott, Jon Sheldahl, Deanna Stoube, Jen Stover, Corey Vorthmann, Shane Williams, Amy Williamson

Additional attendees: Deborah K. Reed, IRRC Director; Trish Sodahl, IRRC Administrative Services Coordinator

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by IRRC Advisory Council (AC) Chair Corey Vorthmann at 10:04 a.m.

2. Introductions

Corey Vorthmann introduced Amy Williamson, the new council member replacing David Tilly as the representative from the Iowa Department of Education.

3. Review of meeting outcomes

Corey Vorthmann highlighted meeting agenda items including seeking input from the Advisory Council members and receiving IRRC and Department of Education updates.

4. Approval of agenda

On a motion by Kate Connealy and seconded by Deanna Stoube, the agenda for the meeting was approved, with zero “no” votes.

5. Approval of September 2020 meeting minutes

On a motion by Katie Greving and seconded by Jen Stover, the September 2020 meeting minutes were approved, with zero “no” votes.





Student Reading Success Through Research and Collaboration

6. Public comment

Chair Corey Vorthmann allowed time for public comment. No members of the public were in attendance.

7. Director's report (IRRC)

Deborah Reed provided an update on eLearning modules. The new dyslexia module is geared toward practicing teachers. Katie Greving commented on behalf of Decoding Dyslexia Iowa that the module is a great resource. Deborah Reed continued with a summary of eLearning usage reviewing enrollment numbers, participant roles, popular domains, and in-state versus out-of-state numbers.

Deborah Reed provided time for comments and suggestions regarding the modules. Kate Connealy inquired about continuing access after completing the module, which was confirmed by Deborah Reed. Facilitator guides are available by request for professional development providers. Kate Connealy asked about access to Varied Practice Reading (VPR) passages. Deborah Reed replied passages are accessed digitally by teacher log-in, but the IRRC is working to improve digital access. Printed books for Grades 1-5 also are available to purchase at cost. Grades 6-8 are in a redesign phase after testing with Council Bluffs and Ottumwa. Cory Vorthmann inquired on the development cost and if the IRRC needs assistance advocating for additional funding. Deborah Reed replied cost is budgeted, although there are some output limitations due to small number IRRC staff and the way that work is completed on annual appropriations.

Deborah Reed continued with an update on IRRC's role in the new dyslexia legislation, SF 2356. These efforts include launching a new website page of information, developing and hosting the eLearning modules, creating and piloting the Dyslexia Specialist endorsement, providing assistive technology consultation appointments available both virtually and in-person, and serving on the Dyslexia Board. Kate Connealy asked how many families have had assistive technology appointments. Deborah Reed will look into this and provide the information at the May meeting.

The Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement is in the approval process including review by the Board of Educational Examiners, Department of Education, Administrative Rules Committee of the state legislature, and the University of Iowa system. The endorsement will be a post-baccalaureate program consisting of 18 credit hours, which includes a practicum in assessment and a practicum in instruction. The program is situated between the Reading endorsement obtained with initial certification and the Reading Specialist master's degree. The plan is to initiate the program in the fall of 2021 with 25-30 participants. There are 9 slots reserved for the AEAs. Corey Vorthmann encouraged slots to be reserved for the large urban districts and to make the courses accessible for

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Student Reading Success Through Research and Collaboration

participants through online and hybrid components. Katie Greving encouraged public comment at the January 14, 2021, Board of Educational Examiners meeting.

Other components of the Dyslexia Legislation include defining dyslexia, creating a Dyslexia Board and hiring dyslexia specialists which is dependent on Department of Education and AEA funding. Members discussed working collaboratively around the legislation. Shane Williams offered to work offline with Katie Greving to ensure the AEAs planned appropriately for their dyslexia specialist personnel. Jon Sheldahl asked Deborah Reed to present the plans to the AEA chiefs, and Shane Williams asked Deborah Reed to present the plan to the Ed Services directors. Beth Ades-Hanson shared she would communicate with the ISEA's legislative specialists.

Deborah Reed next updated the Council on the Marshalltown Grades 1-6 and Council Bluffs Grades 7-11 writing projects. The goals are to address increased accountability in ESSA, evaluate curriculum and instruction, compare scoring approaches, and potentially plan for professional development for teachers.

9. Iowa Department of Education update

Amy Williamson provided Department of Education updates. Of significant concern is the learning loss due to COVID. Amy Williamson referred to a McKinsey & Company report “COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime.”

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-student-learning-in-the-united-states-the-hurt-could-last-a-lifetime#>. The Iowa Department of Education continues to monitor research and data coming in and notes the importance of continued screening.

Amy Williamson shared information from the Iowa Department of Education Third Grade Literacy Work Session conducted November 18, 2020. Slides from the meeting are found at https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1YpIfYc57cF57QnSRCd_pZcE4xVYNZWbQETONDZeXr4o/edit?usp=sharing.

10. Adjourn

Next meeting is Wednesday, May 18, 2021. Based on the ability to have an in-person meeting, location and time will be communicated closer to the date.

On a motion by Kate Connealy and seconded by Shane Williams, the meeting was adjourned, with zero “no” votes at 11:33 am.

