



Student Reading Success Through Research and Collaboration

**Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC)
Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2020
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Meeting via Videoconference**

Members present: Kate Connealy, Katie Greving, Lolli Haws, Emily Hayden, Michael Scott, David Tilly, Sarah Vander Zanden, Corey Vorthmann, Shane Williams

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

Guests: Shan Seivert, Policy Liaison, Iowa Department of Education

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by IRRC Advisory Council (AC) Vice Chair Kate Connealy at 10:03 a.m.

2. Approval of agenda

On a motion by Emily Hayden and seconded by David Tilly, the agenda for the meeting was approved, with zero “no” votes.

3. Approval of December 2019 meeting minutes

On a motion by Shane Williams and seconded by Sarah Vander Zanden, the December 2019 meeting minutes were approved, with zero “no” votes.

4. Review of meeting outcomes

Deborah Reed highlighted meeting agenda items including ongoing work of the IRRC, Department of Education updates, recognition of outgoing members and annual election of Chair and Vice Chair positions.

5. Public comment

Vice Chair Kate Connealy allowed time for public comment. No members of the public were in attendance.



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6. Director's report (IRRC)

Deborah Reed focused on IRRC activities following school closures in mid-March. Previously social media content targeted professional educators. An immediate shift in focus was needed to support caregivers in facilitating children's learning at home. Staff dedicated extra time to develop new content including weekly blog posts, downloadable resources, a book study project for middle and high school students, and writing prompts for Grades 1-6. The IRRC's efforts are receiving positive response with several requests for continued resources.

Also, in March during school closings IRRC was physically moving offices on campus. With only a few days in the new location, office set-up is in progress.

(Council Chair Corey Vorthmann joined the meeting.)

Members discussed the increase in social media access and concerns regarding continuity in services for students in special education and their families.

Reed continued with IRRC updates on project suspensions due to loss of spring school data. The IRRC continues analyzing data to provide as much information as possible to partners and Iowa educators to assist with programs and make information available to the public.

Reed noted this new reality also leads to exploring new project possibilities. The IRRC is looking at Varied Practice Reading redesign for flexibly adjusting from in-person to online delivery. Similarly, the IRRC is looking on how to track literacy learning, how to deliver assessments, or other ways to collect student data that would allow evaluating impacts of different distance learning designs.

Reed provided time for comments and suggestions. Lolli Haws suggested providing guidance or methods for parents to track a child's reading progress and to choose books at the right level of difficulty for children. Emily Hayden suggested inquiring about funding opportunities that may be available to encourage partnerships for providing virtual support and the IRRC's efforts to flexibly shift to virtual instruction when needed.

Reed continued with a summary eLearning development and usage. Two modules were impacted with the cancellation of spring classroom filming. The IRRC is contemplating different scenarios whether to release the module without videos or delay the launch. Sarah Vander Zanden commented on the value of the videos and suggested delaying the launch or incentivizing the user to go back and watch the videos.



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Reed reviewed the module usage. Between March 15 and April 30 there was a 424% increase in users accessing eLearning modules. Within the first two weeks of school closures, the IRRC upgraded servers twice when they became maxed out with usage. Half of the total user number since the launch of each module has come since March 15. Members discussed users, and Kate Greving offered help with promoting the eLearning modules and any other IRRC resources.

Reed reported there is assistance needed in getting information about the facilitator guides out through the AEAs. Shane Williams will partner with Lolli Haws in communicating with AEA chiefs and ed services directors.

7. Iowa Department of Education update

David Tilly provided Department of Education updates, including the guidance offered to schools on school closures. A COVID-19 resource page was created on the Department's website to provide high-quality resources for teachers and parents. Policies and procedures process shifted to route through the Governor's office to ensure a consistent messaging. The Federal Cares Act application was submitted and approved for district funding. The Department of Education will next work with districts on Return-to-Learn Plans to provide guidance for return in the fall.

Shan Seivert provided legislative updates. Legislators are working on plans to accomplish action through teleconferencing and livestreaming committee meetings to continue the legislative process and allow the public to have access to meetings. Seivert said this legislative session will focus on appropriations bills and will not address policy bills. Unfortunately, Seivert said, this is the second session of assembly, so the policy bills will have to start over again next year.

8. Recognition of Advisory Council members

Reed recognized outgoing members, both institute of higher education representatives Emily Hayden from Iowa State University and Sarah Vander Zanden from the University of Northern Iowa. Certificates of appreciation were mailed in advance. Replacements will be named by the Department of Education Director.

9. Officer elections

Chair Corey Vorthmann called for nominations for the chair position. Kate Connealy nominated Vorthmann, and no other nominations were presented. On a motion by Connealy and seconded by Shane Williams, the motion to elect Vorthmann was approved, with zero "no" votes.

Chair Vorthmann called for nominations for the vice chair position. Vorthmann nominated Connealy, and no other nominations were presented. On a motion by Vorthmann and seconded by Sarah Vander Zanden, the nomination was approved, with zero "no" votes.



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10. Adjourn

Advisory Council members will receive email notification when the meetings for FY21 are scheduled. On a motion by Kate Connealy and seconded by Sarah Vander Zanden, the meeting was adjourned, with zero “no” votes at 11:18 am.