



Student Reading Success Through Research and Collaboration

**Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC)
Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
September 5, 2019
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Department of Education – Des Moines**

Members present: Kate Connealy, Katie Greving, Erin Sale, Michael Scott, Deanna Stoube, Sarah Vander Zanden, Corey Vorthmann, Ryan Wise.

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 10:02 a.m.

2. Approval of agenda

On a motion by Michael Scott and seconded by Ryan Wise, the agenda for the meeting was approved, with zero “no” votes.

3. Introductions

Council members and staff introduced themselves and explained their affiliations and roles on the council.

4. Approval of May 2019 meeting minutes

On a motion by Ryan Wise and seconded by Sarah Vander Zanden, the May 16, 2019 meeting minutes were approved, with zero “no” votes.

5. Review of meeting outcomes and role of council

Chair Corey Vorthmann reviewed the role of the council and expected outcomes of the meetings. He described the work of the council as advocating and supporting literacy instruction in the state of Iowa, communicating the IRRC’s work, and providing perspective and feedback from the various groups that members represent. He added that members benefit from the opportunity to



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learn what others are doing, to see first-hand what is happening at the state level, and to share information with constituents they serve.

6. Public comment

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

7. Council perspective on role

Chair Corey Vorthmann asked council members to reflect and share perspectives on their roles, what they bring to the AC, ways to support the IRRC, and their support for literacy education. Council members described their roles and responsibilities and how those relate to the core mission.

8. Bylaws review

Deborah Reed provided a copy of the IRRC AC bylaws, highlighting for new members procedural information. Reed noted the main role of the members is to provide input and advice, communicate the work of the IRRC externally, and serve as a connection between the group they represent and the state-level literacy efforts. Furthermore, Reed said the goal for the council is to keep coordinated and moving forward together in the best interest of students. Members were asked to take time to review the bylaws and ask questions. A question was asked on how meetings are structured to distinguish between the IRRC and the Department of Education reports. It was noted that meeting agendas and minutes are publicly posted with this distinction.

9. Director's report (IRRC)

Deborah Reed updated council members on progress made on development of IRRC eLearning with the successful launch of the Dyslexia Overview, Effective Literacy Instruction, and Varied Practice Reading modules. Additional modules are planned. The modules are also now available to out-of-state participants with a pay structure based on the length of the module. Accompanying tools including facilitator's guides have also been developed for the modules intended for in-service teachers. The facilitator's guides provide additional resources and suggestions for how literacy coaches, AEA consultants, or other professional learning leaders can support teachers in applying what they learn online to their classroom instruction.

Deborah illustrated the importance of implementation fidelity by reviewing the progress from the old model of face-to-face delivery of the Early Literacy Blueprint Initiative training sessions as well as findings from projects with Green Hills Area Education Agency (AEA) and the Council Bluffs Community School District (CSD). Reed asked for AC input on communicating about the facilitated sessions. Comments included: communicating with the literacy leadership in schools—particularly those schools identified as targeted and comprehensive, sharing with literacy



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organizations in the state, continuing to work with the AEAs who issue the continuing education units; and ensuring that teachers of special education and of English learners also were aware of the opportunities.

Reed then provided an overview of middle school projects with Cedar Rapids CSD, Grant Wood AEA, Marshalltown CSD, and Sioux City CSD/Northwest AEA. Reed asked for council input on how to scale the middle school efforts while maintaining the work on early literacy. Suggestions included communicating at the Iowa Reading Association Conference, Iowa Reading Councils, school boards, and Iowa Association of School Boards conference in November.

Reed concluded by updating council members on the writing evaluation project in Marshalltown CSD Grades 1-6. In response to council questions, Reed replied said results will be made available when the project concludes.

10. Professional development: Evaluating effectiveness

Reed presented a thorough explanation and provided examples how to evaluate effectiveness of curricular materials, strategies, or programs. She described the definition of different research designs, reviewed statistical significance and practical significance, and discussed what influences effect sizes. Study scenarios were presented to demonstrate how the effectiveness of a study is determined.

11. Iowa Department of Education update

Ryan Wise provided updates and next steps regarding the new Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). The administration of the test went relatively smoothly with approximately 75% of schools completing the test online and about 25% completing paper tests. He then described the process used to set proficiency levels and explained that this process will be presented to the Iowa State Board of Education for review and approval. District analysis will follow, and the Iowa performance profile is expected to be completed by December. Council discussion included concern with how the test will be mapped to growth from the old test for measuring school performance. Wise replied that determining those issues and communicating the information to schools is ongoing.

12. Dyslexia Task Force update

Katie Greving provided updates on the state Dyslexia Task Force report due November 15 to the legislature. She noted that there are several other potential initiatives in progress. Reed added this task force is a dedicated group of volunteers who lend their expertise and reach a consensus to present to the legislature.

13. Adjourn



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Next meeting is December 19, 2019.

On a motion by Michael Scott and seconded by Kate Connealy, the meeting was adjourned, with zero “no” votes at 1:42 p.m.