

Thursday, June 23, 2016

Office of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission
Attn: John Miller
528 South Fifth Street, Suite 209
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Dear Director Miller:

I am writing to you to express concerns about the IDHHC's exclusion of the Illinois Association of the Deaf (IAD), Illinois School for the Deaf Alumni Association (ISDAA) and Jacksonville Community Center for the Deaf (JCCD) from the steering committee advising the IDHHC on strategic initiatives to ensure a comprehensive vision is set in place to secure candidates for the ISD Superintendent position.

I affirm the IAD's position in that IDHHC shall include representation from IAD, ISDAA and JCCD on the steering committee. The inclusion of representatives from all three organizations on the committee will help ensure the IDHHC establishes a comprehensive, unbiased vision for its efforts in securing qualified applicants for the ISD Superintendent position. At the same time, this inclusion will demonstrate to the community at large that members of the community are valued constituents, an imperative part in repairing IDHHC's image and strengthening IDHHC's relationships with the greater community.

The IAD, in partnership with ISDAA and JCCD, continuously lobbied the Department of Human Services and Governor's Office to be inclusive of the Deaf community in the search for the next ISD superintendent. Further, the three organizations, along with many community members, have also been extremely vocal in expressing concern with the issues that have transpired at ISD. These concerns are shared amongst the more than four hundred (400) IAD members and eight local and statewide organizations affiliated with the IAD.

The IDHHC has been well aware of the various issues at ISD, but have not taken a position to put a halt to issues of audism and oppression on ISD's campus. Instead, representatives from the IDHHC, including you, have expressed neutrality and IDHHC's stance on representing all deaf and hard of hearing community stakeholders.

Unfortunately, this is not the case with the IDHHC's latest actions.

We all want the best for the children. As we look to secure the next superintendent of ISD, it is time for the IDHHC to collaborate with community-based organizations (e.g., IAD, ISDAA and JCCD) and the community members you serve.

Sincerely,