



Executive Summary

Illinois School for the Deaf

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Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School

Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?

The Illinois School for the Deaf (ISD) was founded in 1839 and is located in the central part of the state in Jacksonville, Illinois. Jacksonville is a rural community with a population of 19,000 people. For the past 176 years, the school has offered residential programming for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and live more than 25 miles from Jacksonville, and day programming for students who live within 25 miles of Jacksonville. ISD's longevity speaks not just of history but also of a school that is dynamic and evolving so as to provide students who are deaf and hard of hearing with the best and most up-to-date education.

ISD offers educational and residential programming for students in grades PK through 12 and a transition program for students ages 18-21, totaling approximately 225 students. An outreach program for infants and toddlers, aged birth to 3 is also offered. The students represent a diversity of ethnicity, disabilities (including a broad continuum of degrees of hearing loss and secondary disabilities), socio-economic status, residency status, and educational background. The programming at ISD provides a language and cultural environment that challenges students with curricula designed to fit their needs, faculty and staff trained in deaf education, as well as inclusion with a peer group of students who share similar communication modes. Residential and day students are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of sports and extracurricular activities that help them become well-rounded and productive adults. Many members of the ISD staff and faculty are deaf or hard of hearing, providing adult role models who are successful in postsecondary endeavors and in overcoming challenges the students will face as adults.

School's Purpose

Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

The mission of the Illinois School for the Deaf is to educate students who are deaf and hard of hearing to become responsible, self-supporting citizens.

The vision of the Illinois School for the Deaf is to educate students to become responsible, self-supporting citizens. Our schools will be safe learning communities that encourage students to attain their highest potential in reading, writing, and mathematics. We will empower our students to explore technological trends and the employment opportunities of the future.

We will achieve this through:

Providing a safe, healthy, and respectful learning, living, and working environment.

Providing an accessible ASL and English bilingual communication environment, respecting all forms of communication for deaf/hard of hearing individuals.

Using each student's unique educational and developmental needs documented in Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) to guide their educational program.

Utilizing, maintaining and updating cutting edge technology that meets current business standards.

Providing an instructional program for deaf and hard hearing students that is most effective when guided by the Seven Principles of Student Success (Freeman & Freeman, 1998).

Providing a supportive and caring atmosphere in order to develop a positive self-esteem and skills necessary to be successful in an ever changing world.

Serving the community as an informational resource in current trends and research in the field of Deaf Education and American Sign Language.

Sharing the responsibility of educating our students between the parents, students, school and residential personnel and the community.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.

Notable Achievements:

Academic Academy

- Implementation of Cued Speech in reading and language classes
- Online registration and report cards as well as posting daily announcements on ISD websites to increase communication with stakeholders
- Hosting 2 foreign exchange students
- Developed 3 CTE programs of study
- Established team teaching
- AGBMS award

Areas of Improvement:

- Recruitment and hiring of licensed educators, administrators, and related service staff
- Serve a broader population of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students throughout the state of Illinois
- Continue to explore and implement research based strategies to increase academic achievement for Deaf and hard of hearing students
- Develop further CTE Programs of Study & enhance the Transitional Living Program

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

Students at ISD are treated with respect and are supported in their choices whether they embrace American Sign Language (ASL), Cued Speech, spoken language, use of hearing aids, or cochlear implants. ISD has a spectrum of professionals on staff including special educators, speech therapists, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, school psychologists, nurses, mental health professionals and audiologists. ISD utilizes researched-based programs such as Direct Instruction in reading, language, and math and Everyday Math as the foundation for our educational programs. Additionally, the Unique Learning Systems curriculum is utilized in the functional life skills and transition skills classes. A variety of advanced technology and instructional tools such as SmartBoards, computer labs, iPads, and specialized vocational equipment are available to enhance learning. ISD continues to be a leader in deaf education in the state and nationwide.