

STUDENT LIFE AT ISD

John Cool, the Director of Student Life at the Iowa School for the Deaf (ISD), Council Bluffs, spoke to Club members about his work there. Cool explained that ISD had 110 children in the school last year, ages two and above. They also provide services for an additional 77 students in other area schools. They have about 12 students in pre-school and 8-12 in most grades. Sixteen students graduated last year, with seven expected to graduate next year and 12-13 the following year. About 60% of the children at ISD have other issues, such as health or mental problems. Most graduates go on to college, but a large percentage do not graduate. There are currently 22 deaf students at IWCC. Cool noted that one of the best programs at ISD is that students there can access any classes at Lewis Central School through an agreement with that school. Interpreters are provided for the students through ISD.

There are about 500 deaf students in mainstream schools in Iowa. Cool said that ISD focuses on families. For most deaf children, their parents do not develop good communications skills for speaking to children. Therefore, when students come to the campus and get adjusted there, they really enjoy the environment because everyone is friendly and communicative. For some children, it takes them a year to adjust to ISD, but afterwards they do not want to leave.

Cool said that children want consistency. Families are a big part of ISD programs. Students are all bussed to their home at least once a month. ISD also has five bus routes to various parts of the state every Friday and Sunday where parents can meet the bus and have their child at home for the weekend. Since ISD is a school, they have a regular nine month school program with children at home for the summer.

Cool noted that ISD is adequately funded from state and federal sources. ISD has a new \$8.7M multipurpose recreation/sports/meeting facility that is used by about 1100 visitors each month.