

# Paraprofessional Consortium Meeting

December 6, 2007

UPDC

*The mission of the Utah Paraprofessional Consortium is to promote training and support for paraprofessionals, leading to improved outcomes for children, youth and families.*

**In Attendance:** Melina Alexander (Weber), Lois Oestrich (SLCC), Marilyn Likins (USU), Diana Fillmore (Granite), Kit Giddings (UPDC), Pat Fender (AFT), Gayle Johnson (USOE), Linda Alsop (Deaf-Blind via speaker phone)

**Dates set for future meetings:** to be held at UPDC, polycom available

February 12	(Tues)	2-4 pm
March 13	(Thur)	2-4 pm
May 13	(Tues)	2-4 pm

**Pending Legislation:** Ronda Menlove is sponsoring HB66 bill, "Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarship Program." Informational flyers and PowerPoint Shows were developed and disseminated to be shared with all educators. Comments need to be sent to legislators before January 21<sup>st</sup>. All are encouraged to share these flyers.

This legislation will have a big impact on existing training programs, allowing many paraeducators to improve their education and become teachers, eventually, if that is their goal. There seems to be strong support for this legislation.

**Paraeducator Database:** One of the goals of our consortium has been to build a database of paraeducators. Gayle Johnson explained that only personnel who require licensure/qualification can be tracked through Cactus. At this point, about 3500 paraeducators are on the Cactus system. Only 87 have not met the "qualified" status. Some or all of those may or may not be in a role that requires meeting this requirement - they may have left or been reassigned. Ideas were discussed to find out how many paraeducators are in the state. Getting names will be much harder and turnover will affect the accuracy of any list.

**Mission Statement:** The activities to support the objectives listed in the mission statement were reviewed. Objectives 3 and 4 were primarily the focus. Previously recommended changes were approved. A few additional changes were made.

**Newsletter:** The Utah PARAGraph will be published soon.

### **Training Program Updates**

- USU - has an online program, Instructor: Tammy Pettigrew, low enrollment is a challenge. The proposed legislation could have a positive impact
- Weber State - continuing their development of a 2 plus 2 associate degree which will move into a bachelor's degree, along with concurrent enrollment for high school students. They want to link with SLCC to improve articulation of students transferring from SLCC.
- SLCC - sponsoring an early childhood conference which would be an excellent training opportunity for paraeducators. Consortium will help to distribute information about this conference.
- Deaf/Blind - Linda Alsop reported progress being made (via speaker phone)
  - The 3<sup>rd</sup> course (under SLCC) has concluded with 16 students earning a Certificate of Completion, with a few more finishing up work for their certificates. This is worth 9 credit hours.
  - Now partnering with USU to allow participants to make this work part of either an associate degree or as part of their graduate degree
  - Course 1 is beginning again. There are 17 students throughout the US and 1 student from Spain enrolled.
  - There is discussion on how to make this online work have a practicum as one of its components.
  - Program will become and 8 credit hours with 2 classes of 4 credit hours each. This will make it possible for the certificate to be completed in 1 school year. There may be additional work credit (1-6 credits) available.
  - It may also become a program with multiple levels of certification, reflecting the amount of training that has been completed.
  - The Hadley School for the Blind wants to partner with this program to provide similar training for paraeducators that work with visually impaired students. A memo of understanding will be signed in the near future, allowing for the development of this program.

- DATC - new director of programs is JoAnn Matern. The viability of the program is still in question. Classes are still being held for those who have started the program.

**Spring Training for Paraeducators:** Gayle Johnson offered to fund training for paraeducators. It was decided that training should cover portfolios, training opportunities (including higher education), linkages between 2yr and 4 yr programs, and the standards should be included. It will be held at the Jones Center (382 E. 3605 S., Salt Lake City) on March 14<sup>th</sup> from 12 - 4 pm. Lunch will be served. If this is successful, we will find ways to expand it to other areas of the state and other methods of delivery, if appropriate and needed. Any paraeducator who has the desire will be welcome.

Diana Fillmore will email the minutes, standards, etc. to Tom Johnson to be posted on the UtahPara website.