

# Paraprofessional Consortium Meeting

May 23, 2007

**In Attendance:** Kit Giddings, Nan Kirkpatrick, Bob Morgan, Diana Fillmore, Marilyn Likins, Jan Pace, Mary Baldwin, Tim Reisen, Marilyn Lofgren, Peggy Fratto, Linda Alsop

## Dates set for future meetings:

August 9	1-3 pm	UPDC To be determined
September 13	1-3 pm	
October	To be determined	

**State Rules Update:** A letter was from the Para Consortium sent to point out missing pieces to bring state rules into compliance with the law. As a result, the state rules now include (pg 279-280, section 4)

Related services personnel and paraprofessionals. The qualifications include qualifications for related services personnel and paraprofessionals that:

- a. Are consistent with any state-approved or state-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services; and
- b. Ensure that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession: (1) Meet the requirements; and (2) Have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis.
- c. Allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under Part B of the IDEA to students with disabilities

Marilyn Likens and Anna Lou Pickett met with legislators on a committee headed by Ted Kennedy in Washington, DC in regard to IDEA and the reauthorization of NCLB. Three concerns were addressed:

1. The need for ongoing training for paraprofessionals once they have been hired, having already met the NCLB requirements.
2. The need for training teachers and other certificated professionals to supervise paraprofessionals.
3. The need to conduct a national study to assess the impact of paraprofessionals on student outcomes.

### **Program Updates:**

- SLCC: Tim Reisen is leaving to work at the U of U. Gwen Bellon will be retiring and working part-time for Tim at the U. It is not known who Tim's replacement will be. Options are being explored at SLCC regarding the status of the ParaEducator program. It was decided that Marilyn Likens, Jan Pace, and others will meet with concerned parties at SLCC to provide input and address concerns of the consortium about the continued success of the program. The goal is to find ways to help it to be successful.
- USU: Bob Morgan reported on a study recently conducted. The results indicated that while Special Ed directors were interested in having people who have completed training from USU, they did not have money they were willing to use to support paraprofessionals to fund the expenses of the training. As a result, the program will be in a holding pattern for now. Ideas were explored to find out what interest paraprofessionals and Title I directors had in the program. Also explored were ideas to help pay for the tuition of those seeking training, since paraprofessionals pay tends to be low.
- Weber State TAP: Marilyn Lofgren reported that there has been substantial interest in their program which seeks private money to provide financial support to teachers, paraprofessionals, and school volunteers who seek training to improve their skills. They have 60 graduates from the program at the present and a long waiting list. She was invited to present information on her program at the Para Conference in November.
- Deaf-Blind Program: Linda Alsop said her program had received a national award: Blackboard Exemplary Course Award. Marilyn Likens shared information on her program at the National Paraprofessional Conference in Albuquerque last month. There was a great deal of interest expressed. Linda is looking at ways to keep the program going after her grant expires. Several

ideas were explored, including sending information directly to those who were in the leadership sessions of the national conference, using the USU general associate degree program as part of her program, allowing those who want the certificate but not the college credit to take the class at a lower cost, offering classes on a Master's degree level, etc. They are also exploring the possibility a certificate or endorsement that would be recognized nationwide. In addition, she has used pieces of her curriculum to train students working on their Master's degree. Because of the low incidence of the disability, there has been interest in online coursework.

**Information Item:** Jan Pace requested a concise brochure or handout that explained the programs available to paraprofessionals - making it easy to explain options and contain the contact information. It would also be a good idea to have this information on the Utah Para website ([utahparas.org](http://utahparas.org)). Marilyn Likins ([marilyn@nrcpara.org](mailto:marilyn@nrcpara.org)) requested that those who have programs send her an email with a summary of their program and contact information within the next week.

**Para-educator Training Money:** Money is a key ingredient to making ongoing training attainable for most para-educators. There was some discussion on possible sources. This included:

- Bob Morgan has 2 grants for recruiting paras that want to become teachers.
- Large school districts have up to \$20,000 that can be used to pay for training of classified personnel - of which paras are a part.
- In the upcoming legislative session, we need to look at ways to request money for training - especially since it is mandated by NCLB and a part of state rules.

**Conference Update:** Next year's conference will be held November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 2007 in Ogden at the Eccles Conference Center. A call for papers will be going out soon. The committee is in the process organizing the conference and lining up speakers.