

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

**Paraprofessional Consortium  
January 16, 2003  
Utah State Office of Education  
Meeting Minutes**

**Future Meeting Dates:**

**February 26, 2003 - Jordan District Office, Boardroom B - 12:30-2:30 p.m.**

**March 27, 2003-SLCC – Larry H. Miller Campus - 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**April 23, 2003 - Utah State Office of Education - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.**

**Attending the Meeting:**

Diane Fillmore, Margo Thurman, Jill Morgan, Deanna Nyman, Yvonne Elherington, Jim Madsen, Richard Hyland, Ginny Eggen, Bruce Schroeder, Larry Abplanalp, Christelle Estrada, Marshall Garrett, Lyle Cox, Candace Peterson, Ginger Rhode, Karl Wilson, Patricia Bradley, Karen Mayne, Ann Miller, Linda Alsop, John Latkiewicz, George Miller, Sally Dyches, Elizabeth Jensen, Ginny Wimmer, Marilyn Likins, Cynthia Burchett, Laurie Lacy, Mary Baldwin

Peggy Dooling-Baker welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. She presented an overview of the Consortium's operating procedures, i.e., one group, one conversation and honoring all individuals contributions, and disseminated the Mission Statement for the Paraprofessional Consortium to all attendees. See Paraprofessional Consortium Mission Statement handout. Peggy emphasized the importance of the USOE moving forward with Consortium support in developing the role and responsibilities for all instructional paraeducators (e.g., Title 1, Special Ed., 504, ESL, etc.)

**Meeting Notes:**

## **TITLE I**

Title I Directors' Meeting-- Larry Abplanalp and Jim Madsen provided feedback. The draft standards were presented to Title I directors for their response along with No Child Left Behind implications for training and supervision. An update of the State's position was also presented and the work done by the consortium related to portfolio development. The directors expressed a sense of urgency for information to be disseminated at the local level and districts will need help in developing appropriate training and assessment practices. Some of the rural district directors are part time and will have difficulty meeting the requirements in the time allotted.

## **PARAPROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

Report from Standards Sub-Committee (Diane Fillmore, Peggy-Dooling-Baker, Margo Thurman, John L. Brian Sprague, Marshall Garrett and Marilyn Likins. Dianna presented a powerpoint update and disseminated the revised Standards (draft) and considerations from the last meeting that need to be discussed by the consortium. What is a "Paraprofessional"? The subcommittee agreed on the basic standards. Discussion focused on where we go from here. Who needs to review and provide feedback prior to having them submitted to the Board for approval. It was decided to submit an entire package for their consideration, standards, knowledge and skill competencies, and portfolio, and other assessment options. The Consortium reviewed and approved the following:

### **The Paraprofessional Will:**

- **Demonstrate professionalism and ethical practices.**

Paraprofessionals have a working knowledge of responsibilities and job expectations. Ethical practices are the foundation of all interactions.

- **Support instructional opportunities.**

Paraprofessionals assist and participate in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of learning experiences.

- **Support a positive learning environment.**

Paraprofessionals have a working knowledge of the learning environment – physical, social, emotional, and behavioral.

- **Communicate effectively and participate in the team process.**

Paraprofessionals interact proactively with students, parents, community, and staff to enhance student outcomes.

Diana also reviewed some of the possible competencies that might fall under each standard.

### **Concerns/Feedback expressed by consortium members included:**

- It is important to have the descriptors under each of the four standards. It helps to clarify the content areas.

- Quality standards – the question was raised, “Should the standards reflect minimal required performance or “highly qualified”?”
- Standards as they are written are not measurable.
- Competencies will be a way of measuring performance within each standard area.
- Are there any standards missing?
- All districts need to be on the same page in terms of requirements for training and assessment procedures.
- Paraeducators have pride in their work, it’s not for love of money and paraeducators are leaving the field because they are uniformed, frightened and can get other jobs for more money.
- Need to remember that this is federally mandated.

**It was recommended:**

- Because of time constraints (January 2006). Districts will need to ask their paraeducators if they will or will not meet these requirements in the time allotted.
- In order for the USOE to approve standards, it takes 3 readings and a minimum of 3 months for approval.
- Subcommittee will need to have a package deal to make a recommendation.
- Make an addition to all Standards to say “under the supervision of certified personnel”, will assist in....
- Need to decide who this applies to: e.g., Title I, Special Education, ESL, etc. and make sure that the core standards work for all of these groups. Specialty areas could be developed according to varying responsibilities. Are playground paraed. included in this group? If they provide instruction as well, the answer is yes.
- What about the “content” of what they teach? Reading, math, writing, etc. How do we address it in the standards?

**PORTFOLIO SUBCOMMITTEE**

The subcommittee - (Marilyn Likins, Jill Morgan, Ginny Wimmer, Linda Alsop, Deanna Nyman, Jim Madsen and Karen Mayne) will come up with basic guidelines and suggestions for the state office to consider for dissemination to the districts.

**Concerns/Feedback expressed by consortium members included:**

- The U.S. Department of Education has given the go ahead for portfolio development as an option for the “rigorous” assessment component.
- Need to think about content and type of documentation that might be put in a portfolio.
- Immediate action – districts and paraeducators will need basic guidelines for paraeducators in building a portfolio.

- Laurie L. indicated that she would be sending out a letter to districts informing them of the NCLB requirements and the USOE's options related to meeting these requirements.
- Cactus forms need to be filled out by Paraeducators and school administrators all district (paraeducators), especially Title I schools.
- Communication concerning portfolios and assessment and training options needs to go out ASAP

### **USOE UPDATE** – Karl Wilson & Laurie Lacy

Karl Wilson reported that the current federal requirements do not apply for the majority of special education paraeducators. Down the road it seems likely that similar federal requirements will be put in place for all paraeducators already in the schools, not just new ones entering the field. He stressed the need to work collaboratively on this now so that districts and paraeducators will already be working toward this goal.

Laurie Lacy stressed that many districts are at a loss and there is a sense of urgency to get going. Portfolios will provide an excellent option for paraeducators who are already on the job to begin the process of documenting their expertise and experience. It will be an entry point into the system and a way of tracking their professional development. A valid and reliable instrument needs to be developed. Many paraeducators are feeling threatened and they don't think they can pass the test. We need to provide as much information and support to assure that we don't lose these people.

### **Testing to comply with ESEA** – George Miller

**Parapro** is one assessment that will be approved (now available through ETS), but the USOE will be looking at various assessments as they become available to help paraeducators and districts meet the federal requirements.

Paraeducators need to be tracking their training and experience all along and not waiting until the cutoff date. Districts will need to provide training (assessment available) and contact USOE for options available.

### **PARAgraph** – Jill Morgan

- The Winter 2003 issue presents articles contributed by presenters at the Eighth Annual Utah Paraeducator Conference held November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002. Over 1,000 paraeducators, teachers, and district administrators participated in the conference in Ogden.
- The next issue will come out the end of March, 2003. Jill suggested that it needs to be focused on Title I issues stemming from the "No Child Left Behind" legislation and asked Laurie Lacy to write an article. She agreed.
- Jill said that the grant for continued funding had been submitted and that we should hear by the next Consortium meeting.