

Paraprofessional Consortium Meeting

November 19, 2008

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: Marilyn Likins, Diana Fillmore, Kit Giddings, Pat Fender, Betty Ashbaker, Mary Baldwin, Larry Alplanalp, Nan Kirkpatrick

Special Acknowledgements:

- Peggy Fratto, a member of the consortium, died from cancer. She was a valued member of our consortium and worked diligently to improve the training and skills of paraeducators in Granite School District.
- Gail Johnson, who is leaving us on a much happier note: retirement.

Dates set for future meetings: to be held at UPDC, polycom available - webcam will be available in the future. Because of technical issues, we need **2 weeks** notice to set up polycom access if more than one person desires to attend our meetings via polycom.

January 13	(Tuesday)	1-3 pm
February 11	(Wednesday)	1-3 pm
March 12	(Thursday)	1-3 pm
April	no meeting	
May 14	(Thursday)	1-3 pm

Pending Legislation for Paraeducators:

- No known legislation is proposed at this time
- For paraprofessionals to qualify for the T. H. Bell scholarship, it would be desirable to add a phrase which would specifically include paraprofessionals to line 16 of the present bill. Pat Fender and Marilyn will look at the document and talk with Ronda Menlove.
- It is anticipated that the legislature will be focusing on cutbacks. Estimates of the cutbacks range from 5-10%. It is NOT anticipated that there will be increased funding for the Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarships.

High Turnover Rates of Paraeducators-Discussion prompted by Larry Abplanalp:

- High turnover rate for paraeducators in his district and statewide results in increased spending to training of new hires and less qualified paraeducators working with our students. He felt that directors hire paraeducators with limited hours (19 hours typically) per week to avoid paying costs such as benefits. As a director, he has found that one full time, well- trained paraeducator can do the work of 3 part time poorly trained

paraeducators while providing higher quality service. A discussion of how to prompt/support systems change in this area ensued.

Personnel Center Services (PCS):

- Bruce Schroder received an invitation to participate in a conference call from the NASDSE
- The consortium had planned on participating in the call but were prevented because of accessibility.
- The PCS is funding four different projects for which a state can apply:
 - Preparation Program Partnerships - selected states will be assisted in providing increased opportunities for candidates to access special education related programs for high need districts.
 - Personnel Data Management - selected agencies will be assisted in identifying data sources and enable them to focus on data reporting requirements
 - supply and demand data
 - attrition and retention data related to reasons for leaving the field
 - models for predicting retirement rates
 - Community-based Special Education Career Awareness Campaigns f
 - Attracting, developing, and supporting new and existing personnel
- Applications are due the week of Thanksgiving.
- Ways were discussed for consortium members to support the state in any application they may choose to make.

Thank you letters

- Letter from the consortium to the Legislative Education Committee.
 - Bob Morgan sent Kit Giddings a rough draft for the letter to the Education Committee.
 - The final draft was approved by those in attendance. The letter will be signed by Diana Fillmore on behalf of the consortium and sent prior to Thanksgiving.
 - A copy of the letter will be emailed to members of the consortium
- Letter from scholar recipients to Rhonda Menlove.
 - Marilyn will contact Sid Dickson for a list of those who received the Paraeducator to Teacher scholarship last year.
 - A letter will be sent to those recipients suggesting they thank Rhonda Menlove for "leading the charge" to make this scholarship possible.
- Discussion also included honoring Rhonda Menlove for her sponsorship of the bill. This could take place at the Paraeducation Conference in the Spring.

Training Program Updates

- Betty Ashbaker is doing a personnel project called "Latinos In Action." This project is helping Latino students to become aware of careers in education. High school students do a practicum 1 hour per day at an elementary school. The intent is to give them support in finishing high school and provide exposure to higher education possibilities. One desired outcome is for these students to enter the career of teaching Special Education. Several students have continued and enrolled in college.

Mission Statement: We anticipate the presentation of our mission statement and objectives to the State Board of Education. Gail Johnson is facilitating this and will let us know how we can help.

Newsletter: The Utah PARAGraph has been printed and will be distributed shortly. There should be three issues per year published.

National Paraeducator Conference: April 29 – May 2nd

- Don't miss the 28th National Conference for Paraeducators held in conjunction with the 14th Annual Utah Paraeducator Conference. It is being held in Salt Lake City on April 29th-May 2nd, 2009.
- Website for conference is www.nrcpara.org
- Conference registration is: <http://www.nrcpara.org/conference/registration>