

Paraprofessional Consortium Minutes

May 13, 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.

Follow up on Mission Statement and Objective: The Mission Statement and the supporting Objectives will be submitted as an information item to the Board of Education in either September.

Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarship Program: Application forms have been developed and distributed. Paraeducators interested will need to submit the application to their principal who will forward the application to their district. The district will send it to the committee.

Building a Legislative Presence to Support Paraeducator Legislation (follow up on steps identified in our last meeting):

- During the summer months, we need to provide information and education to legislators.
 - Information needs to be in a packet to be distributed in the late summer or early autumn
 - Information should be straightforward without extraneous fluff or graphics
 - This packet should have information which demonstrates cost effectiveness, need (for example, a large number of people who applied for the scholarship yet unable to receive any funding), etc.
 - This packet needs to go to all legislators.
 - It would be ideal to have a presentation to share with legislators on the Education Committee during their interim meetings.
- We need to have paraeducators who can come on little notice to speak to legislators when their input is needed. These people need to be identified and prepared ahead of time.
 - These paras still need to be identified
- We also need to build a database of paraeducators who will send emails (from their home email accounts) to legislators as it approaches time for key votes. The emails need to be brief and the sender needs to tell their personal story. Members of the database would be notified when it is time to send their emails and whom they should contact.
 - An email account (UtahPara@gmail.com) has been set up for this purpose.
 - Emails will be sent to paras, once we have email addresses, inviting them to become involved in the legislative process. They will be given the guidelines (see above) to follow.
 - Several possible sources for para's emails were identified.
 - Any individual who wishes to be part of this process can send an email to the account UtahPara@gmail.com and will be added to the contact list.

This email address may be sent to your junk mail box. Please check there.

If emails from this address show up there, please add this address to your safe list.

- We need to have examples of letters and emails for people to access and use as guidelines.
 - Bob Morgan developed a sample letter to be used. Marilyn will edit it for our use.
 - We need to develop some sample emails for people to look at as they compose their own.
- Use the Utahparas.org website to distribute information and provide contact points.
 - Scholarship information is presently on the website
 - A letter/flyer will be sent to all paras who supplied email addresses when they registered for the last para conference. This letter/flyer will inform paras of the scholarship. Diana Fillmore will develop the letter. Mary Baldwin will distribute it.
- Include input from institutions of higher learning, heads of departments (Special Education, Title I, ESL, etc.), administrators, etc.
 - No input received at this point
- Include a flyer in the Utah ParaGraph newsletter with information and contacts.
 - Diana Fillmore will develop the flyer and send to the editor
- Assemble data on paraeducators who are currently enrolled in programs to become teachers or who have completed the licensure requirements – How do they compare with other students in areas such as GPA, completion rates, and retention rates once they start teaching. Bob Morgan felt that he could find some data. Other possible sources were also discussed.
 - Bob Morgan has begun this process. He has about 5 years of data to be analyzed. There are roughly 200 students in this data. About 40% of these students are former paras. The data will analyze their GPA, practicum grades, university honors, etc.
 - He spoke with a doctoral student who has developed some videos showing the value of paras as potential teachers.
 - He has identified some students who recently graduated who could write letters supporting this legislation.

Marilyn Likins and Diana Fillmore will act as liaisons between the consortium and the USOE in disseminating information. Anyone wishing to play even a small role may contact either Marilyn (marilyn@nrcrepara.org) or Diana (dfillmore@graniteschools.org).

Next Meeting Dates at the UPDC (2290 E 4500 S) with polycom available

- August 12 2-4 pm
- September 24 2-4 pm

In attendance: Marilyn Likins, Diana Fillmore, Pat Fender, Deb Armstrong.