

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

**Paraprofessional Consortium
May 21, 2003
Larry H. Miller Campus
Minutes**

Future Meeting Dates:

June 24, 2003 – USOE, South Board Room June 24 from 1:00-3:00

Attendance:

Cynthia Burchett, Ginny Eggen, Sharon Neyme, Marshal Garrett Deanna Nyman, Margo Thurman, Karl Wilson, Diana Fillmore Marilyn Likins, Peggy Dooling-Baker, Elizabeth Jensen, Linda Alsop

Peggy Dooling-Baker welcomed everyone and opened the meeting saying goodbye to Jill Morgan who will be returning to Wales. Jill was unable to attend Consortium as it conflicted with a going away party at Utah State University. In appreciation of Jill's service to the Consortium, paraeducator development at a state and national level as well as founder and editor of the PARAgaph, the committee will present Jill with a professionally framed copy of the PARAgaph.

Peggy reviewed today's meeting agenda: Updates from Standards Committee, Portfolio Committee, the PARAgaph and Salt Lake Community College Request.

Peggy stated that there has been some confusion at the last meeting about the Utah Paraprofessional Consortium and how long it has been in existence. A two page historical summarization will be disseminated to all new members of the para consortium or handed out at meetings. The group norms were developed in 1990 to facilitate discussion and support the mission statement of the Utah Paraprofessional Consortium. Peggy reviewed the Group Norms:

- One Group-One Conversation
- Honor individuals
- Gandhi Principal
- Silence is Permission.

Peggy stated that all committee members have an equal voice and opportunity. Wherever you are, apply the Gandhi Principal, silence is permission and if you don't speak up then permission is assumed (e.g. if you are emailed and do not reply).

Updates:

Paraprofessional Standards: Marshal Garrett & Diana Fillmore

Diana Fillmore and Marshal Garrett disseminated an updated draft of the paraprofessional standards. The Standards Committee examined documents from states who also have approved standards and competencies as well as the Utah Special Education Standards for Paraprofessionals that were approved in May 1985. It was emphasized that the committee did not want to reinvent the wheel and to keep in mind that this is still a rough draft and will continue to evolve.

A discussion followed in regard to the Standards and Competencies. Comments included:

- If a paraprofessional meets the “highly qualified criteria from NCLB it does not necessarily mean they are effective in the classroom. Example: passing the PARapro but not an effective instructor.
- The goal of the standards and competencies is to identify what it is that paraeducators must do to be effective and to train and provide feedback in those key areas. The standards can help community colleges, districts and universities design inservice and preservice programs.
- As the standards are developed, people need to keep in mind that options are available: 48 semester hours in higher ed, an associate degree or a formal assessment (ParaPro, Western Governors, or district), and portfolios for existing paraeducators.
- We need to get the message out to districts and have a better dialogue to help them understand the process that we are recommending.
- Districts will need more than just guidelines if they choose to develop their own assessment. It needs to be based on a foundation of requisite skills and knowledge.
- Karl Wilson asked Marshal if he has had any dialogue with other districts. Marshal stated that some districts are holding back until fall. Districts seem to be confused about the process and need additional information related to options other than the “test”.

They are looking for assistance in helping their paraeducators to pass the test. They don't realize that the portfolio will be an option nor how simple it will be to put it in place. The portfolio process will be a less stressful for paraeducators. Districts just need to be informed and then receive the support to help implement the requirements. Some districts are doing it on their own. The majority are not.

Standard 1 - Demonstrate Professionalism and Ethical Practices Core Competencies include:

- Carry out responsibilities in a manner consistent with all pertinent laws, regulations, policies and procedures was moved from Related Competencies to Core competencies.
- Cynthia Burchett asked why this was moved up to Core Competencies. The reason is that paras are already doing that and confidentiality is a very important factor along with understanding what the policies are in the districts. This allows districts to tailor it to their own needs. It will also give districts data to support corrective practices.

Standard 2 – Support Instructional Opportunities

These five Core Competencies are coming from the NCLB Law and state approved special education standards. If districts develop their own assessments these are the key knowledge and skills required according to NCLB upon which to build alternative assessments. Just need to make sure they are reliable and valid.

A discussion followed in regard to Standard 2. Comments and concerns included:

- Cynthia stated that these Core Competencies started out with many and now have been trimmed down to the most critical ones that will meet the needs of all paraeducators from data collection, monitoring, instruction and behavior.
- Districts do not want more and this committee is committed to not providing more, this will be up to the districts.
- Peggy emphasized that we need to make sure we incorporate NCLB's emphasis on assisting with instruction, what it is that paraeducators do to support learning.

Standard 3 – Support positive learning environment

A discussion followed in regard to Standard 3. Comments and concerns included:

- Sharon Neyme stated that Standard 2: Demonstrate the ability to record relevant information about learners to assist in the learning process is closely related to Standard 3: Provide objective

documentation of learner performance....and Standard 4: Provide relevant feedback and make recommendation regarding student performance. Marilyn Likins stated that it is important for paraeducators to know how to document both academics and behavior and then be able to communicate student performance to their supervisors. Deanna Nyman stated that if this is not in there, you could end up in court. The committee voted to remove it from Standard 3 because they felt it was captured under Standard 2 and to leave it in Standard 4.

Standard 4 – Communicate effectively and participate in the team process

A discussion followed in regard to Standard 4. Comments and concerns included:

- Paraeducators, teachers administrators and others need to recognize that paraeducators are members of an instructional team. Sometimes teacher and para do not communicate and as a team. A para should be able to make comments to the teachers i.e., "We have been trying this with Johnny and it has not been working what about trying this?" Marshal stated that the district should be responsible to make sure that teacher/para are working as a team.
- Sharon recommended that bullet 3 under Standard 4 be moved into Related Competencies. The committee voted and it was decided that bullet 3 move to Related Competencies.

Other Standards Notes:

- A definition of Related Competencies needs to be developed and placed next to definition of Core Competencies at the bottom of page. The standards committee will come up with a definition.
- Marshal thanked the committee for their time and acknowledged the revisions and growth as we have gone through the feedback process.
- Marilyn stated under Related Competencies under Standard 2 the last bullet should say Assist in providing objective documentation using observations and functional assessments. Under Standard 3, the second bullet should say Assist in maintaining an environment conducive to the learning process. The fourth bullet should say Assist in monitoring learners and make appropriate decision while coaching or tutoring in different settings. The last bullet should say Assist in providing medical care and teach self-care needs
- Related Competencies in the 4 Standard areas will now be referred to as Supporting Competencies.
- Diana Fillmore asked where does the committee want to go. The feedback concerning this draft will go out in the minutes and any

comments and concerns, please email Peggy Dooling-Baker at: doolingbaker@m.ogen.k12.ut.us. A package will be going to the State Board, school district and USEP in July.

Standard committee will meet June 5th at 10:30-12:00 possibly at Davis District Kendall Building.

Portfolio: Marilyn Likins and Elizabeth Jensen

- Gail Johnson was not there to report. Marilyn L. and Elizabeth J. volunteered to present information.
- Marilyn stated that the Portfolio committee met with Gail Johnson and Joan Patterson. There was excellent attendance. The next Portfolio Meeting is schedule for May 29th, 2003
- Marilyn disseminated and highlighted the draft copy of the Portfolio Lines of Evidence. The outcome of the meeting was not to dictate what district would do only what is necessary for documentation and provide a number of options on how to meet the various competencies.
- Marilyn stated that her committee did Standard 2: Support Instructional Opportunities. If a paraeducator attended a training, they would keep their agenda, handouts, etc. Using examples Marilyn stated in order for a paraeducator to assist in delivering instruction according to teacher a paraeducator is supposed to have knowledge, then what line of evidence would be considered a must versus optionsl. Coursework and grades or inservices would be examples of lines of evidence that paraed. could use for documentation. The committee needs to determine how many lines of evidence are necessary. The portfolio committee was thinking of recommending a minimum of two.
- Elizabeth Jensen stated that on the second page not all areas will be necessary for that competency. The portfolio committee will need to look at some alternatives. It was the consensus of the group that one might be considered a “must” and Paraeducators can pick from one of those. The document had some errors and needs to be retyped. Paraeducators on the portfolio committe felt that it was very doable and not threatening at all. As it now stands, porfolios will be for existing paraeducators and Utah will use it as a rigorous assessment option.

Next portfolio and state group will meet on May 29th from 9:00-2:00, Room 38 at USOE

SLCC

Peggy stated that SLCC has not had a program advisory committee for sometime and John L. did not receive any feedback in asking the

paraeducator consortium to act as the advisory board for SLCC. He would like to meet 30 minutes before or after every 3rd or 4th meeting. The consortium will ask John to present an overview of the SLCC program and ideas about where it needs to go in terms of future development.

Linda Allsop stated she would be glad to support staying before or after for about 20 minutes. Will have it in writing to go out with the minutes. Hopefully other schools will also develop paraeducator programs as well. If that occurs, it was suggested that we could rotate meetings for each college/university to present.

Please email Peggy (doolingbakerp@m.ogden.k12.ut.us) if you have any ideas to make the consortium meeting more meaningful or if you have any items or concerns that should be added to the agenda.