

Paraprofessional Consortium

August 12, 2002

Minutes

Attending:

Marilyn Likins, Diana Fillmore, Dave Forbush, Margo Thurman, Jill Morgan, Deanna Avis, John Latkiewicz, Jan Pace

John Latkiewicz:

- Rick Graham @SLCC exploring idea of adding a new module, perhaps as a workshop, for introduction to Paraeducator program. College credit may be possible. Suggestion was made to make this and other paraeducator classes available to high school students as part of concurrent enrollment.

Marilyn Likins:

- Gave an update of USEA and the “rigorous assessment”. Three assessments are being considered by Sandy Johnson, Utah State Office of Education (USOE). The most likely to be used is an assessment by ACT. This assessment is different than the college entrance exam taken by high school students. It consists of three modules, lasts approximately 3 hours and will assess reading, writing, and math skills.
- School districts and directors are very concerned about complying with the law concerning the assessment because they cannot hire new paraeducators who do not meet the criteria established by the “No Child Left Behind Act”.
- Concern was expressed that this assessment does not assess how a paraeducator instructs or interacts with students and other skills of the paraprofessional.
- Marilyn offered to support Sandy by doing a pilot test of the proposed assessment on a sample group of paraprofessionals so that feedback on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the ACT assessment would be available.
- There are no known existing assessments that would measure the academic levels of paraprofessionals along with instructional skills, ability to work with students, skills specific to the individual role of the paraprofessional, etc. ETS is apparently developing one that will be available sometime in November.
- The group felt that the best long term solution was to develop or find such an assessment. Also, we need to have those who make the decisions involved.
Question: Does holding meetings of the Utah Paraprofessional Consortium away from SLC make it too difficult for the people from the USOE to attend?
- The NRCPP is considering a task force to address the assessment issue and, possibly, come up with an assessment.
- More information on pending legislation and issues on this subject and its possible impact on the reauthorization of IDEA is available at www.nrcpara.org and going to “Legislative Updates.”

Jill Morgan:

- Was approached by the Western Governor's University about having an article in the PARAGraph. The PARAGraph should not promote specific training programs other than giving information on availability, allowing readers to make their own decisions.
- It was also decided that it would be appropriate to have a panel discussion at the conference in the fall discussing/teaching paraprofessionals how to evaluate whether or not a training program (e.g., Salt Lake Community College, Western Governor's University (WGU)) will meet their needs. An article on this subject will be included in the PARAGraph as well as having a table displayed at the State Paraed. Conference.

Actions to be taken:

- Marilyn and John will meet with Rick Graham to learn more about the ACT assessment on Friday, August 16th.
- Marilyn will send out an email to the group with more information about the pilot testing of the assessment (e.g., stipends, gas mileage, amount of time, etc.) Group members are invited to find paraeducators who will be willing to participate.
- Marilyn will talk with some individuals at the USOE to explore ways of increasing cooperation, communication and support.

Future Meetings:

- Sept. 18, 2002 10:30 – 12:30 USU or perhaps SLC (You will be notified)
- Oct. 24, 2002 10:00 – 11:00 Larry H Miller SLCC campus