

Paraprofessional Consortium Meeting

Sept. 3, 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.

Attending: Marilyn Likins, Diana Fillmore, Linda Alsop, Bob Morgan, Vicki Ahlstrom, Kit Giddings, Connie Nink, Brue Schroeder, Mary Baldwin, Yvonne Etherington, Pat Fender

Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarships

- 180 paras applied, 17 paras received funding (about 1 of each 11 applicants)
- Challenges faced in distribution of the scholarships:
 - Short time line to get out the information to concerned parties in a timely fashion
 - Identifying criteria for awarding the scholarship
 - Setting up a vetting committee and process
- It was important for the committee to have diversity to ensure appropriate use of the scholarship.
- Syd Dickson headed the committee.
- Information and paperwork was sent to the HR directors of each district and charter school. Copies were sent to the head of Special Education and Title I in each district. In addition, the application paperwork was posted at www.utahparas.org
- Since this is ongoing funding, new questions and challenges have arisen concerning future scholarships.

Supporting future legislation increasing funding for Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarships

- Para Consortium views the Para to Teacher Scholarships as a win-win solution to the teacher shortage issue while supporting paraeducators who wish to grow professionally.
- Bob Morgan was able to gather information covering 5 years concerning the academic performance of paraeducators who are enrolled in teacher preparation classes. It supported the theory that paras who have previous experience do better academically, especially when they do their practicums. Consortium members decided that this information needs to be shared with legislators - preferably at an interim committee meeting or during caucus. Since this data is in a raw, technical form, Bob will write a summary explaining the results.
- A flyer was developed to share with paras inviting them to participate in the legislative process. This flyer will be distributed. Paras who chose to be involved will be provided with guidelines on how to do this appropriately and effectively. A sample letter will be provided. They will be encouraged to express their own views and their own stories in their own way.

- Marilyn Likins and Diana Fillmore will contact Rhonda Menlove to share Bob's data and inform her of our actions.

Mission Statement and Objectives need to be shared with the State Board of Education for approval. Will ask Gayle Johnson to present them.

ParaGraph - New issue soon to be released.

National Para Conference April 30 - May 2. Information is (or will shortly) be posted on the national para website (www.nrcpara.org). Soon, links will be added to www.utahparas.org and www.updc.org which will take users to the NRC website. Registration, call for papers, exhibitor info, and general information will be available online. This conference is a combined state/national conference. Attendees may sign up for several different registration options:

- 1,2, or 4 day options
- Teacher/Para rates
- Early Bird specials

Future Meeting Dates - all at UPDC with polycom available

Sept 24	1-3 pm Wednesday
Oct 21	1-3 pm Tuesday
Nov 19	1-3 pm Wednesday
Jan 13	1-3 pm Tuesday