

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  
September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004  
Utah State Office of Education  
Minutes**

**Attendance**

Peggy Dooling-Baker, Bruce Schroeder, Connie Nink, Deanna Avis, Pat Ault, Michelle Friz Elizabeth Jensen, Marilyn Likins, Pat Fender, Gail Johnson, Rebecca Rich, Bob Morgan, Linda Alsop, Beth Rodriguez, Peggy Fratto and Mary Baldwin

**Future Meeting Dates**

Peggy welcomed every one. Pat Fender, Rebecca Rich, and Beth Rodriguez introduced themselves as new members.

Future meeting dates were scheduled to facilitate attendance:

- **Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup>**, 2004 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at the Larry H Miller Center
- **Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**, 2004 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Davis ATC. Will have a tour at 1:00 p.m. for people interested.
- **Thursday, January 6<sup>th</sup>**, 2005 at 2:00 – 4:00 at USOE
- Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005 or Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 – Will leave times open.
- **Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>**, 2005 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. – Granite School District
- **Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>**, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Davis ATC .
- Before setting the August meeting date, districts will go back to check with their district/agencies for the best date in August.

**PARAgraph Update**

Funding has been approved and the newsletter should be coming out the end of October. Carol Harrington is working on the budget and upcoming issue.

## **Updates on Paraeducator Training Programs**

**SLCC** - Pat Ault stated that credit vs. non-credit has been resolved at SLCC, and SLCC is getting closer to a final decision regarding the future of the program.

- At the consortium's request a meeting with SLCC is scheduled to discuss the future of the Paraeducator Degree Program.
- Beth Rodriguez, Dept of Ed. At SLCC, will be taking Pat Ault's place on the committee. Pat stated that this would be her last meeting. Beth and Dale Smith will be taking over the program and each one of the classes that are offered will be viable for paraeducators. Marilyn will email Beth the core courses and articulation information from the previous agreements that Kate M. had.

**USU** - Bob Morgan stated that pilot courses for the on line paraed. program will be starting next semester. Bob stated that the articulation letter that was written several years ago is still good and needs to be revived.

- A subcommittee needs to focus on articulation – what it is and what it should look like. Marilyn Likins will head up the first meeting. Interested members should contact Marilyn.

**Davis ATC** – Michele Friz stated that she met with Davis School District to present her paraeducator training program and she has also met with Gail Johnson from the USOE regarding the possibility of having the DATC program serve as another avenue for a paraeducator to become “highly qualified”. When it was made clear to Davis that the Davis ATC program offers just one more option to meet the criteria for “highly qualified” the group was more responsive. Michele stated that she had several principals from Davis School District call to say that they would like to send people to the DATC program.

## **Rule Update**

The Utah Standards for Instructional Paraprofessionals were approved by the Board along with the Portfolio. Because portfolios are not listed in the state rules approved by the Board, many districts have expressed questions and concerns:

- Portfolio development expires in January 2006 and is not listed in the rules. Why not?
- Because it is not listed is a Portfolio still an option to meet the highly qualified criteria under “assessment”?
- Were the standards approved the same time the portfolio was approved? Gail Johnson, USOE, indicated they were but clearly

there needs to be better dissemination of the information.

Principals may not know about it and not aware of what they need to do for their paraprofessionals. District personnel other than the superintendents should know

- It would also help to put a date on the approved standards.
- The Utah Standards were approved in April, 2002 as well as the Portfolio and if the board who approved it was not clear on the standards and portfolio, it will need to be taken back to the board for approval on how the assessment ties into Standard 1.
- Need to indicate on email addresses that options are available. List a definition of assessment and portfolios as options, but need to get the exact wording on it to let people know that Portfolio is time limited and expires January 2006 – the board approved it to that date only. If they leave the field and come back after January 2006, they will be hired as a new employee and have to take an assessment.

### **Standards/Supporting Competencies**

The Supporting Competencies are still being worked on but a copy was distributed and discussed. As a new member to the Consortium, Connie Nink asked, “What is the purpose and the need for these Supporting Competencies?” Marilyn L. provided some history about the development of standards, core competencies and supporting competencies for Utah. When the Consortium began to work on the standards, immediately following passage of NCLB, they received a lot of feedback and participation from different districts and agencies. In the initial draft document all of the supporting competencies were considered core but as a result of feedback over time, were placed in a “supporting competency” category. The Consortium felt that while the Core Competencies would serve to help districts address NCLB, a combination of the Core and Supporting Competencies will help districts and community colleges/universities develop their training programs.

The Standards Subcommittee met and differentiated Supporting Competencies from Core Competencies. The definition for Supporting Competencies was also modified. It now states: *“Supporting Competencies are: Additional knowledge and skills demonstrated by paraprofessionals while on the job. Some supporting competencies such as ‘Respect Confidentiality’ may be considered by districts as a required competency for all paraprofessionals even though it was not approved as a ‘Core Competency’. Other supporting competencies may only be required for specific roles (i.e. personal assistants, job coaches, computer lab aide, etc.). Training programs both at a district or university/community college/applied technology center should address such role distinctions and skill needs.”*

Although the Core have been approved by the Utah Board of Education, there is still work to be done on the “Supporting Competencies”. The goal is to make sure that the competencies are not redundant, are relevant and comprehensive, and use consistent language. A copy will be sent out to the Consortium for follow-up comments. Dianna F. or Marilyn will email everyone the supporting competencies as they now stand. Consortium members are encouraged to go back to their districts, look at their own training programs, review and edit. Final decisions will be made at the next meeting on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Marilyn will also send out some state web sites that also have comprehensive standards and competencies.

Peggy Fratto said that Granite District appreciated having the standards and competencies as a model upon which to base their training. She indicated that the specific competencies helped them to determine key areas for training.

### **National State Legislators Meeting**

Marilyn stated that she attended a National State Legislator meeting in Santa Fe, NM. The purpose of the meeting was to examine NCLB and its impact on schools. Marilyn and Kathy Chavez from New Mexico presented on NCLB’s impact on paraprofessionals and their districts. The meetings revolved around:

- Timelines
- What are major concerns for states, districts and paraprofessionals after January 2006
- What has been done in other states?
- What does “highly qualified” mean and does it vary state to state?
- Can qualified and ongoing personnel development be reworked into the law vs. taking a test
- When “No Child Left Behind” comes up for reauthorization, what will happen to the law? What parts of the law need modification?

Marilyn stated that it was a worthwhile trip and was excited that the state legislators were concerned about NCLB’s impact on paraprofessionals and their districts. More importantly they were looking for solutions to some of the problems the law created.

### **Next Month**

- Review Standards/documentation/supporting competencies.
- Review funding available for training, i.e., Title I – Gail Johnson
- The Articulation letter
- DATC training program for Paraeducators – Michele Friz
- Update on SLCC paraeducator program and decisions that have been made

- Update on USU paraed program.