

Paraprofessional Consortium Meeting

January 13, 2009

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

In Attendance: Melina Alexander, Marilyn Likins, Diana Fillmore, Pat Fender, Jan Harris, Linda Alsop (via telephone), Bruce Schroder, Stephanie Murdock, Betty Ashbaker, Pat Fender

Dates set for future meetings: to be held at UPDC, polycom available

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|----------|------------|--------|
| March 12 | (Thursday) | 1-3 pm |
| May 14 | (Thursday) | 1-3 pm |

National Association State Directors, Personnel Development Center:

- Utah's proposal was accepted
 - UASD has a strong interest in recruiting paraeducators for paraeducator to teacher certification programs,
 - establishing & supporting these programs, and developing pathways to support paraeducators as they access these programs.
- There is a need to look at existing data concerning paraeducators and developing an infrastructure to support paraeducator training
- Will develop a database containing information on paraeducators
 - Title I paraeducators are currently in the CACTUS database
 - Database will benefit everyone
 - Will permit the tracking and monitoring of
 - number and location of paraeducators
 - training and education of paraeducators
 - Will permit the dissemination of information to paraeducators regarding training opportunities, etc.
- Looking for ways to support the training and improving the skills of paraeducators - two pathways:
 - Some paraeducators want to remain paraeducators
 - Other paraeducators who wish to become certificated teachers
- Proposal does not come with funds, instead resources to achieve goals will be provided

Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarship:

- There needs to be a link on the UtahParas.org website which provides information about the scholarship
- Paraeducators need to get involved in encouraging funding for this scholarship
- Need to provide an action list for paraeducators to follow

State Paraeducator Handbook:

- USOE has decided to develop a handbook for paraeducators. However, it may also be useful to teachers and administrators. It would be useful for orientation, training, and learning purposes.
- Needs to be completed by spring
- A committee to write the handbook will be organized by Marilyn Likins. It is desirable to have a broad spectrum of participants, including paraeducators (seasoned and newly hired). Currently, the committee consists of Betty Ashbaker, Melina Alexander, Diana Fillmore, Marilyn Likins, and Pat Fender. Others will contribute information and feedback.
- An email will be sent out from the consortium to invite members of the consortium to contribute information and effort.
- Those who participate in the actual writing of the handbook may receive some compensation. A secretary will be hired to do the word processing.
- The handbook will be available in printed form and downloadable in PDF format from internet.
- Items to be included may include: background information, explanation of roles and responsibilities of teacher & paraeducators, knowledge and skills required, higher education training programs available, behavior management, effective instruction, etc.

Pending Legislation: No known legislation is proposed at this time

Training Program Updates:

- Linda Alsop - Deaf Blind Program
 - Two programs (one for deaf-blind, one for blind) available
 - Goal: nationally recognized certificates and standards
 - In both programs, an associate degree will be available. Others may earn certificates reflecting lesser levels of training.
- Jan Harris - SLCC
 - Program will be inactive for the time being because of funding issues resulting from low enrollment.
 - Ideas were explored to increase the number of students. Contact information was given to her so she could contact others who may be able to provide more ideas.
 - Need support from school districts if they are to be able to provide the training that districts say they need.
- Melina Alexander - Weber State
 - Experiencing similar challenges to SLCC
- Dilemma of higher education in training paraeducators:
 - Paraeducators unable to afford their programs (money and energy)
 - Lack of financial compensation (increase pay) by most school district - so they have no motivation to pursue higher education

Newsletter: The Utah PARAGraph has been printed and has been distributed.

National Paraeducator Conference: April 29 – May 2nd

- This conference is a combined state/national conference.
- Registration is done online at the following website: www.nrcpara.org

- Administrators and teachers will also find valuable information available at this conference.