

Utah Paraprofessional Consortium/Utah Special Education Personnel Partnership Meeting

March 12, 2009

Attending: Phoebe Gillespie(NASDSE), Diana Fillmore (Granite School District), Kit Giddings, Marilyn Likins (USU), Lois Oestreich (SLCC), Marcia Larson (Granite School District), Brenda Straley (Jordan ATC), Pat Fender (AFT), Nan Kirkpatrick (UASE), Rob O'Neill (U of U), Peggy Milligan (USOE), Linda Alsop (USU), Bruce Schroder (Utah SPDG), Bob Morgan (USU), Melanie Reese (USU), Connie Nink

Date of next meeting: April 29, 2009 from 8:30 am until noon

Welcome by Diana Fillmore

Historical Background of *Utah Paraprofessional Consortium* given by Marilyn Likins

Bruce Schroeder introduced Phoebe Gillespie to the group. She conducted the bulk of the meeting. Phoebe directs the PIC (Personnel Improvement Center) which is a TA/D (Technical Assistance and Dissemination) project, a federally funded agreement between the US Dept. of Education, OSEP, and NASDSE (Nation Association of State Directors of Special Education)

Utah applied for services from PIC. PIC can provide many services and supports. Utah asked for help in developing pathways for getting individuals into the pipeline for paraeducator to teacher preparation programs. The intent is to create and retain more highly qualified Special Education teachers. Specifically, this grant is aimed at creating partnerships between IHE/CCs and LEAs.

The partnership with the Utah Paraprofessional Consortium seemed to be a natural fit since paraprofessionals are a prime pool of potential Special Education teachers and historically have shown that they are more likely to remain in the profession and in their community.

Ms. Gillespie addressed some of the challenges that are faced when recruiting and retraining teachers. Specifically she mentioned the challenge of personnel who are already working at full capacity who are unable to add increased tasks and responsibilities to their task queue. "If you don't replace what are you presently doing with the 'new thing', nothing will happen." The challenge becomes one of identifying less productive recruitment practices with more effective practices. Challenges include funding issues and how to provide oversight and follow through.

Some of the identified goals for today were to begin identifying:

- High need districts (districts needing a large number of Special Education teachers yearly)
- Ways to support effective, experienced paraeducators who are interested in becoming Special Education teachers
- Potential partnerships between IHEs and LEAs to get Special Teachers where they are needed most
- Potential paraeducator pool
- Needs of LEAs

The Utah Work Plan also includes

- Meeting with 2 and 4-year IHEs and LEAs to share their needs and resources
- Completing plans/agreements between IHEs, CCs and LEAs to recruit Special Ed teachers
- Implement the plans, using Project Pier online software (free) to monitor progress
- Report the impact of the plan

The estimated timeline for meeting benchmarks was:

- Convene partnership work groups (LEAs and 2 and 4-year IHEs) by 4/10/09
- Complete partnership plans by 5/30/09
- Post plans using Project Pier by 6/15/09
- Convene follow up partnership meeting to assess progress by 7/30/09
- Continue assistance toward plan
- By 9/1/09, Utah will decide if we want to continue or request additional services from PIC for 2010.

A rubric will be provided in the future. This rubric will help LEAs, CCs, and IHEs assess their present status and set future benchmarks.

The districts with the highest need (by numbers required) were identified as: Alpine, Davis, Granite, Jordan, Nebo, and Weber. A discussion followed to determine the present needs and practices of each of these districts in recruiting new teachers and who their potential partners could be.

District	Needs/Practices	Potential Partners
Alpine	34 new hires last year - 50% were not certified, likely people in alternative preparation programs	BYU, U of U, USU
Davis	35 new hires last year - most from USU's alternative preparation programs - about 1/4 to 1/3 were paraeducators	USU, Weber
Granite	35 new hires	USU (on Logan campus, through extension locations, and Alt Prep), U of U

Jordan (will become 2 districts)	53 new hires last year - actively recruit, centrally located between BYU and U of U	USU (20 through Alt Prep and extension), U of U (12 - relationship with superintendent), BYU
Nebo	21 new hires last year	BYU (proximity), SUU (online courses and local culture)
Weber	22 new hires last year	Weber (has option for dual licensure, mild/moderate program only), USU

In addition, we have about 70 charter schools with 7 new hires last year. Unknown was how many have non-licensed Sp Ed teachers? Need to find the data.

Present practices of the IHEs as reported in the meeting included:

- U of U:
 - State sponsored activities such as CEC recruitment fair
 - Partnerships with local LEAs to improve coursework
 - Scholarships (some available for potential Sp Ed teachers)
 - OSEP grants
 - Developed an infrastructure for distant education
 - New contract with state to find paraeducators who want to become teachers
- USU:
 - Recruitment Strategies: Outreach to alumni who are teachers: "Do you have a paraeducator who would make a good teacher?" Then obtain approval from the LEA to recruit them into a teacher education program - especially Sp. Ed
 - Paraeducator Appreciation Night at which they are not only recognized but given information about how to become teachers (high success rate)
 - Develop personal relationships with paraeducators
 - Provide distant education for mild/moderate program
 - Provide onsite coursework at extensions
 - Granite, Jordan
 - Davis, Weber
 - Alpine

Invitations to the next meeting will go to:

LEAs		IHEs	
Alpine	Weber	U of U	BYU
Davis	Jordan	USU	Weber
Granite	Canyons	SUU	SLCC
Nebo	Selected charter schools	UVU	Jordan ATC

Information needed from LEAs for the next meeting:

1) Number of paraeducators in Special Ed showing

- Level of education
 - high school only
 - associate degree
 - bachelor's degree - and area
 - advanced degree - and area
 - if some college but no degrees, how many credit hours
- gender
- ethnicity
- language (other than English) skills

Would like to be able to answer questions such as:

- How many male Hispanics have a bachelor's degree in math?
- How many speak another language?
- How many women are non-white?
- etc.

2) What are your current practices for moving paraeducators toward teacher education programs? For example:

- tuition support or reimbursement
- providing paid time off to do student teaching
- incentives for education