

Utah Paraprofessional Consortium

Minutes for March 31, 2010

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: Nan Kirkpatrick (USEA), Marcia Larson (Granite School District), Kit Giddings (UPDC), Marilyn Likins (USU), Melina Alexander (WSU), Jan Pace (Davis School District), Connie Nink (USOE), Betty Ashbaker (BYU), Diana Fillmore (Granite School District)

Future Meetings:

- May 5 Wednesday 1-3 pm @ UPDC

Idea storming for possible state based training for paraeducators

- Looked at what already exists (Pennsylvania, Rhode Island)
 - Pennsylvania's site (requires logon user name and password)
 - Focus is on Special Ed paraeducators
 - Video presentations – “talking heads”
 - Intended for present hires
 - No fee to the paraeducator
 - Certificates available for each of their 10 standards
 - Strengths of web based training
 - Easy access
 - Lower cost
 - Flexibility
 - Can track time the learner spends, who visits the site, when they visit, etc.
 - Weaknesses of web based training
 - Weaknesses in paraeducators in training hard to identify or remediate
 - Paraeducators may not have internet access

- Paraeducators need a certain level of computer literacy to effectively use the training
- Group decided that we needed to do a Needs Assessment. Members of the committee to do this are: Betty Ashbaker, Connie Nink, Jan Pace, Diana Fillmore
- Important ideas for state-based training:
 - Handbook should be part of the training
 - Find a way in include a portfolio and portfolio training
 - Include a way to track completed training (example: CACTUS)
 - Provide incentives to paraeducators (example: increased training = increased pay)
 - Provide a broad base of training – need to make training available and appropriate to all paraeducators, not just those in Special Education

Idea was presented and accepted by the group: Can the Paraeducator Handbook be presented at the Law Conference next August?

Paraeducator Conference Update

- Provo Marriott Hotel
- November 12/13th (Friday & Saturday)
- Cost: \$50/paraeducator

Legislative Update (Nan Kilpatrick)

- Three of the bills (SB 42, SB 43, and SB 94) impact current employees. SB 63 affects employees hired after Jul 1, 2011.
 - SB 42 increases the number of years (from 30 to 35) that an employee must accrue to retire with full benefits – **died in committee**
 - SB 43 prevents "double dipping" - however credits may continue to accrue – **passed**
 - SB 94 eliminates the requirement for employers to contribute 1.5% of the salary into a 401(K) account for employees hired on or after July 1, 1986 in the Noncontributory Retirement System – **did not pass**
 - SB 63 would eliminate the current retirement system for all new employees, replacing it with a choice between a defined contribution plan and a greatly reduced hybrid defined benefit/contribution plan. – **passed** New system:
 - Limits employer contribution to 10%
 - Requires 35 years for full retirement
 - Accrues benefit at 1.5% of salary per year
 - Requires the employee to pay any required contribution above the employer's contribution

Paraeducator to Teacher Pathways

- District and IHE partnerships were developed in conjunction with the Personnel Development Center (Phoebe Gillespie and Lisa Churchill) through NASDE
- Goal: Tap into the paraeducators as a pool for potential future teachers and develop pathways to make it possible for paraeducators to complete the education to earn their teaching credentials.
- Marsha Larsen presented Granite School Districts plan (as far as presently developed)
- Hopefully, program can be expanded to include more districts