

Utah Paraprofessional Consortium

Minutes for February 10, 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: Jerry Bowler (SUU), Nan Kirkpatrick (USEA), Marcia Larson (Granite School District), Kit Giddings (UPDC), Marilyn Likins (USU), Melina Alexander (WSU), LeNise Zylstra (Jordan School District), Diana Fillmore (Granite School District)

Future Meetings:

- March 31 Wednesday 1-3 pm @ UPDC
- May 5 Wednesday 1-3 pm @ UPDC

Utah Paraeducator Handbook

- Was developed under the auspices of the USOE to provide a standard for the training and orientation of new and existing paraeducators.
 - It clearly outlines the distinction of roles between teachers and paraeducators
 - It is organized around the approved standards for Paraeducators
 - The "Core Competencies" apply to all paraeducators
 - The "Supporting Competencies" are more specialized. Some may apply to all paraeducators. Other will apply only to paraeducators in certain roles.
- Is intended to be used in multiple ways:
 - as an orientation for newly hired paraeducators
 - source of training of existing paraeducators (pieces of the manual can be used to develop in-service training)
 - reference material for all paraprofessionals
 - resource information for teachers and administrators
- It can be downloaded from the internet from two different locations: (PDF format)
 - UPDC website
 - <http://updc.org/para-handbook/>
 - UtahParaprofessional website

- <http://utahparas.org/Utah-Special%20Education-Paraeducator-Handbook.pdf>

Legislative Update (Nan Kilpatrick)

- There are four bills which will affect the retirement programs of employees in the Utah Retirement System
- 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
 - SB 43 prevents "double dipping" - however credits may continue to accrue
 - 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.
 - 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.
- USEA concerns:
 - The current program is financially sound and well funded - even with losses in 2008 because of investment returns. Historically, losses have been recovered. USEA expects to recover the losses from 2008.
 - Benefits of the USEA are an important piece to attracting and retaining quality employees.
 - In the past, lower salaries have been accepted with the understanding that public employees could have a secure retirement. However, the turnover of legislative members has resulted in a loss of understanding of these agreements.
 - USEA encourages legislatures to study the long term effects before making changes to the Utah Retirement System.
- All educators are encouraged to contact their Representative and Senator. You can find their contact information at:
 - House of Representatives
 - <http://www.le.state.utah/house/members2005/membertable1add.asp>
 - Senate
 - <http://www.utahsenate.org/roster.html>

Paraeducator to Teacher Pathways

- District and IHE partnerships were developed in conjunction with the Personnel Development Center (Phoebe Gillespie and Lisa Churchill)
- There have been 4 meetings so far. In the future, we to be able in involve more districts and IHEs in the process.

- 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.

District Budget Concerns: How are district budgets affecting paraeducators?

- Salt Lake and Davis School districts used stimulus funds to hire paraeducators then paired them with excellent teachers with the intent of getting the paraeducators into training programs to become teachers.
- in many other districts, it's "not pretty"

Paraeducator training & supervision in charter schools (Kit Giddings)

- Often, charter schools who are well established are doing a good job and using paraeducators appropriately
- Newer schools often lack the experience and training needed to use paraeducators appropriately. Funding issues are common.
- Kit is using the monthly round table for
 - training on compliance issues
 - professional training
- Kit is also developing an "e newsletter" to disseminate information. It will contain an article on paraeducators in every issue.

Utah Paraeducator Conference

- November 2011 in Provo
 - 12/13th or
 - 19/20th
- Cost: \$50/paraeducator