

School Paraprofessional Advisory Council
Tuesday, May 27, 2008
CREC, 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Attendance: Robin Grondahl, CPAC; Marcia Cattnach, AFT Connecticut; Ann Dombroski, ACES; Kate Moran, LEARN; Cheryl Kaiser, Watertown; Jennifer Douglas, Education Connection; Craig Struble, SERC; Loyola Welsh, MEUI Local 506 SEIU; Nancy Vitale, EASTCONN; Susan Comey, CREC; Regina Birdsell, CAS; Tricia Silva, CREC; Darlene Brodbeck; ACES, Annie MacDonald, UE/CILU; Tony Maida, CES; Ellen Tyler, LEARN; Leigh Gold, West Hartford Education Personnel; Sharon Hagans, CSEA/SEIU.

Council members introduced themselves.

Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation: Iris explained the paraprofessional legislation that was passed last year, including the role of the advisory council.

CREC Modules: Tricia Silva, Administrator of Special Projects, Paraprofessional for CREC, explained the paraprofessional modules that have been created. Districts can purchase these modules. CREC has also developed a paraprofessional webpage (www.crec.org/paraprofessional) and a newsletter which will contain SDE updates.

SDE has been meeting with CREC to find ways of working together to publicize and make the modules available to districts. SDE has also suggested a module on Challenging Behaviors.

The council came up with the following suggested modules: Assistive Technology, Multi-age Classrooms, Paraprofessionals-in class suspension rooms, Extreme Behavior, Students with Physical Disabilities, and Data Collection-milestones.

Meeting with SERC: CSDE has met with SERC to finalize SERC's paraprofessional training for the coming school year. That training will include the annual statewide paraprofessional conference, tentatively scheduled for October 28th.

Many council members expressed their frustrations with obtaining professional development for paraprofessionals. Change needs to happen on the Administrator/School Board Level. They need to be educated about the importance of paraprofessionals and the need for paraprofessionals and teachers to collaborate.

Handouts: Members received copies of the Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals. These guidelines have been emailed to para district contacts and a hard copy sent to all Special Education Directors. We need to be careful to emphasize that this document applies to **all** instructional paraprofessionals, not just special education paraprofessionals. Iris can email the document to organizations that would like to display on their website. It was suggested that the Commissioner be asked to mention the guidelines at the Back to School Meeting, to call attention to the document.

A module has been developed to give paraprofessionals an overview of the CALI components so that they will be better able to support teacher planned instruction. These one day trainings are free of charge for Title I districts identified in need of improvement or in priority school districts. (Flyer attached)

Recommendations: Council members made some suggestions for improving paraprofessional professional development:

- Districts should be required to submit paraprofessional professional development plan. The Guidelines can act as a resource for districts as they develop the plan.
- Districts should be mandated to conduct on going paraprofessional evaluations, create job descriptions, and develop mentoring programs.
- Legislation may be the only way to implement the changes that we want. Iris will go back to SDE to discuss next steps.

Upcoming meetings: The committee scheduled the following meeting dates for the 08-09 school year. All Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m.-11:30 am at CREC, except.* This meeting will be held at SERC, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT

September 16, 2008

November 18, 2008*

January 27, 2009

May 19, 2009

February 3, 2009 (snow day)

In the event of cancellation because of snow, CREC's direct line is 860-247-2732.

Respectfully submitted by Iris White