From
Barbara S. O'Brien
Administrative
Assistant and Blogger

Personnel News:

State of Connecticut Education Commissioner, Mark K. McQuillan has appointed Anne Louise Thompson as the next Chief of the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) effective February 15, 2008. She can be reached at (860) 713-6912 or annelouise.thompson@ct.gov. For the past eleven years Ms. Thompson has served as an Education Consultant in the BSE. She is recognized for her work with the *P. J. et al. v. State of Connecticut, Board of Connecticut, et al. Settlement Agreement* and has coordinated the Least Restrictive Initiative (LRE) for the BSE. Ms. Thompson previously served as a Director of Special Education and special educator with the RESC and public

Updates from Student Assessment

Testing Window

The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) testing window is from **March 3-March 31, 2008**. Fixed testing dates include:

CMT Direct Assessment of Writing	Tuesday March 4, 2008
CAPT Interdisciplinary Writing One	Tuesday March 4, 2008
CAPT Response to Literature	Wednesday March 5, 2008
CAPT Interdisciplinary Writing Two	Thursday March 6, 2008

Science will be administered to students in grades 5 and 8 as well as grade 10.

Parent Brochures/ Training Resources

CMT
http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/cmt/cmt_gen4_resources.htm
CAPT
http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/capt/resources.htm
Skills Checklist
http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/assessment/checklist/index.htm

Online Typed Response

This spring there is a change in submission method for students who are receiving special education services and students identified under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act using a word processor accommodation. If their accommodations data was submitted on the accommodations website by January 18 they will respond online for the March 2008 testing period for select subtests. The online response will be for the CMT Reading Comprehension and Direct Assessment of Writing sections and the CAPT Interdisciplinary Writing, Response to Literature, and Reading for Information sections. All of these word processor accommodated responses will also be submitted in a printed format. The submission for the printed responses will be in the same manner as in previous years, through special handling outlined in the District Test Coordinators' manuals.

Contacts

Janet Stuck	Joe Amenta
(860) 713-6837	(860) 713-6855
janet.stuck@ct.gov	joseph.amenta@ct.gov

Timelines for English Language Learner Data Submissions.

March 14	Tests to be scored by the CTB McGraw-Hill must be received in their office. (If you chose to have the publisher score the tests)
April 16	CTB McGraw-Hill returns scores to school districts.
May 15	Scores are due to CSDE.

Ms. Thompson comes to this position with extensive knowledge of Connecticut, its children, parents and schools, as well as national and international educational experiences.

Continuing Development of New Modified Assessment

The United States Department of Education has provided the opportunity for states to develop a new assessment for special education students whose disability has precluded them from achieving grade-level proficiency and whose progress is such that they will not reach grade-level proficiency in the same time frame as other students. Connecticut's Bureau of Student Assessment has been working closely with the Bureau of Special Education to develop this new alternate assessment. Special education directors have received preliminary guidance and eligibility documentation and will

Please note that in 2007-2008 you will be required to use Form B of the LAS Links and must alternate between Form A and B in subsequent years. LAS Links scores for exiting English Language programs are no longer banked.

Please note that the first nine fields are reported in the Public School Information System, and use the same codes.

Please contact George Michna (george.michna@ct.gov) or Michael Sabados (michael.sabados@ct.gov) if you have any questions regarding the ELL Database Application.

Annual Performance Report

Connecticut submitted its Annual Performance Report (APR) for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Part B on February 1, 2008, to the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The Annual Performance Report measures Connecticut's performance against 20 indicators based on 2006-07 special education data. The indicators can be found in the State Performance Plan Part B, which monitors the state's implementation of IDEA. Both documents have been posted to the Bureau's website. Public dissemination of both documents will be made to superintendents, directors of special education, institutes of higher education, parent organizations and other state agencies.

OSEP will review Connecticut's performance and make a determination as to whether the state meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention or needs substantial intervention. Based on the 2005-06 Annual Performance Report submitted last year, Connecticut was one of nine states to meet requirements.

Annual Collection of Evaluation Timeline Data
Please note that the Department will again be collecting data from every district regarding indicator 11 of the State Performance Plan, evaluation timelines. Districts will submit this data from July 1 through August 15, as has occurred in the past. Timely and accurate submission of this data will also impact a district's determination under indicator 20, timely and accurate data. Please see the Topic Brief on the Bureau website entitled *Evaluation Timelines Guidance* for further information. Instructions and guidance will be sent to directors of special education as the data submission timeline approaches.

Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) Data System Update

Please know that an e-mail was recently sent to the data managers in school districts to inform them that the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) data collection system for the submission of BRIGANCE IED-II® data on preschool children with disabilities was opened on Wednesday, January 16, 2008.

As a reminder to all school districts, in the spring of 2006, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) requested, as part of its State Performance Plan (SPP), that Connecticut's school districts begin collecting data on preschool children with disabilities who began receiving special education services as of May 1, 2006. For the 2006-07 school year, districts submitted their data via the web-based ECO data collection system. The web-based system was closed mid-November 2007, so

be providing student information to guide test development and district training regarding eligibility.

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Laptops Available for Students

Please see Attachment one for information pertaining to a collaborative effort geared toward using laptops that are available on loan to students.

Author to Present on Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners

The Connecticut State Department of Education, in conjunction with Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) and EASTCONN, is bringing Jane Hill, a lead consultant for McREL and co-author of the book "Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners," to Connecticut for a full-day conference on April 22, 2008. Participants will apply research-based strategies from the book, find out how to

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that the data could be extracted and cleaned for a report due to the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). As of January 16, 2008, the web-based ECO data collection system opened and will remain open so that school districts may enter any data that districts may have been unable to enter prior to the closing of the system in mid-November 2007, and enter any new child data collected as children enter and exit preschool special education.

Just a few reminders relative to the specific reporting requirements of ECO data:

- The ECO web-based data submission system can be accessed by logging onto the Connecticut State Department of Education's secure website at https://www.csde.state.ct.us/ and by clicking on the link Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) data collection. The district's login ID number and password for both sites are the same as those that were used during the 2006-07 round of ECO data collection.

- Each school district responsible for the education of preschool-age children with disabilities is required to collect and report to the state both pre-test (entry) and post-test (exit) data obtained from administering the BRIGANCE® IED-II for every child that began receiving preschool special education services as of May 1, 2006, and at any point thereafter. Please be reminded that the assessment tool selected by the state is the BRIGANCE® IED-II, the criterion-referenced assessment instrument, not the standardized assessment instrument that the BRIGANCE has available. Additionally, only state selected sub-tests of the BRIGANCE must be administered, not the entire assessment instrument.

- In February 2008, Connecticut submitted an Annual Performance Report (APR) on the state's progress relative to the State Performance Plan (SPP) to the United States' Department of Education's (DOE) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). In the SPP/APR, Connecticut reported on the progress of young children with disabilities for whom the state has both pre-test (entry) and post-test (exit) data up through June 30, 2007.

- School districts may enter any new pre-test (entry) data for children who are new to preschool special education in the school district and/or post-test (exit) data for children who have exited preschool special education in the school district. The web-based data collection system also allows districts to indicate the circumstances that preclude a district's ability to report post-test data on individual children. The two circumstances provided for in the data base include: (a) the fact that a child suddenly moved which precluded a district's ability to obtain post-test data; and (b) the fact that a child received less than 6 months of service; hence, the district is not obligated to provide post-test information.

- A school district may view two different reports containing all of the data submitted to the ECO data system which can still be edited by the school district. Click on the "Reports and Downloads" link on the main ECO page. Report #1 "District Students with Complete Pre-and Post-Records" contains all of the data on children who have already exited preschool special education in the school district and who have post-test (exit) data, collected after the 2006-07 federal reporting year ending June 30, 2007. Report #2 "Students with No Post-Records" lists the children for whom pre-test (entry) data has been reported, but whose post-test (exit) data have not yet been reported.

- School districts may download a paper-based data record tool by clicking on the "Reports and Downloads" link on the main ECO page and then clicking on "Download ECO Data Entry Form." This document may be printed out to assist in the recording and inputting of the information into the web-based ECO data application. This document is to be used for data entry purposes only. This form should not be used in place of the BRIGANCE-IED-II$^{©}$ Assessment Manual or the Developmental Record Book.

- Any entry data submitted by a school district since these data were first collected in October 2006 will be contained in the web-based application. If a district reported both pre-test (entry) and post-test (exit) data on a child and the data were collected on or before June 30, 2007, that data has already been used for the state's federal reporting purposes and districts will not be able to edit the information. School districts may view these data by clicking on the "Reports and Downloads link on the main ECO page, and then clicking on report #3 "Complete Student Records used in February 2008 Federal Report."

- Now that the ECO web-based data collection application is open, it will remain open. School districts will be able to enter data for entering and exiting preschool children with disabilities throughout the year. In November 2008, the Department may close the system for a brief period of time to extract the data to include in the State's future submissions of the SPP and APR. The CSDE will focus efforts on keeping school districts updated via e-mail if the web-based data collection system needs to be closed to address any technical issues or challenges. Please aim to have all of the child specific data collected up through June 30, 2008, submitted into the system by November 1, 2008. On November 1, 2008, the CSDE will begin analyzing the ECO data and contacting districts if the data appears inaccurate. By November 15, 2008, the CSDE anticipates having clean, accurate and reliable data from all school districts.

- The CSDE expects that each district will submit ECO data on preschool-age children with disabilities assessed up through June 30, 2008, by the November 1, 2008, due date. Whether a district has submitted timely and accurate, ECO data may be included as part of the evaluation of each district's timely and accurate indicator for LEA level determinations.

The CSDE extends a sincere thank you to every school district for their patience as the Department has worked to update and refine this data collection system.

Lastly, please know that Heather Levitt Doucette is no longer the primary contact person for the ECO data collection. **John Watson is the new contact person responsible for any data related questions.** John can be reached at john.watson@ct.gov with any questions specifically relating to the submission of data. Districts can also contact Maria Synodi at maria.synodi@ct.gov with any questions relating to the programmatic aspects of the Early Childhood Outcomes reporting requirement.

Autism Spectrum Disorders
Over the past several weeks, the Bureau has been gathering information from various stakeholders regarding the availability of and the nature of programs and services within districts, communities and other agencies affiliated with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The Bureau has met with teachers, advocates, special education

providers, parents, and RESC personnel to assist in ascertaining the resources, supports, technical assistance and training needs around the state. Dr. Kelleher is interested in hearing more from school personnel with regard to questions, comments, areas of concern or to share more about their work with ASD. Please contact her prior to April 1 at jacqueline.kelleher@ct.gov or (860) 713-6918.

New Birth to Three Autism Specialty Programs
(To view this information, please see Attachment three)

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals
Connecticut is hosting the **National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP)** conference this spring, April 17-19, 2008, at the Hartford Hilton. The theme of the conference is **PATHS--**Paraprofessionals, Administrators, Teachers, Higher Education and other Stakeholders-- to reflect the united effort needed to create effective education teams. Knowing the importance of paraprofessionals as members of the education team, we encourage administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals to attend this conference and see what is happening both locally and nationally with paraprofessionals. Please review the attached brochure for further details. (Attachment four)

Questions should be directed to Perri Murdica at perri.murdica@ct.gov or (860) 713-6942. Please visit the following website for updated information as it becomes available: http://www.nrcpara.org/.

The Connecticut Tech Act Project in partnership with Southern Connecticut State University's Center for Adaptive Technology has opened a new program:

Computer Assistive Technology Loan Program.

Our goal is to help Connecticut High Schools and Elementary School systems have access to loans of laptop computers with adaptive software for students with disabilities. Loans can run as long as 6 weeks and laptops can be used for the purpose of:

- ✓ evaluations

- ✓ to replace a student's computer while the computer is on order or away for repair

- ✓ to allow a student to try a specific software program to ensure it is the right program for him or her, before the school purchases it

Laptops Specs:
- ✓ **Microsoft Office suite**
- ✓ **Windows XP**
- ✓ **Tablet PC or Mac laptop available**

Adaptive software includes:
- ✓ **Kurzweil 3000**
- ✓ **Co: Writer Solo**
- ✓ **Word Q**
- ✓ **Speak Q**
- ✓ **Dragon Naturally Speaking**
- ✓ **Other adaptive software may available by request.**

For more information on the **Computer Assistive Technology Loan Program** or to apply to receive a loan please contact the CT Tech Act Program at 860-424-4881 or contact the Center for Adaptive Technology at 203-392-5799.

Visit us at www.CTtechact.com or cat.southernct.edu

Connecticut Tech Act Project

CAT
CENTER FOR
ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Feb. 2008

This workshop is intended for administrators, ELL staff, regular and special education teachers, principals, department heads, paraprofessionals, and related services staff.

■ Apply the research-based strategies from *Classroom Instruction That Works* to teaching English Language Learners (ELLs).

■ Find out how to use the five stages of language acquisition with ELL students to boost achievement levels.

■ Engage your English Language Learner students in the mainstream classroom.
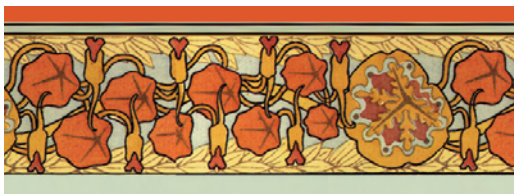
Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners

April 22, 2008
8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
St. Thomas Seminary
Bloomfield, CT

Presented by:
Jane D. Hill,
Lead Consultant, McREL
and Coauthor of *Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners*

Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners views the nine categories of research-based instructional strategies first identified in *Classroom Instruction That Works* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) through a filter of five stages of language acquisition. The result is applications that allow mainstream K-12 teachers to successfully engage ELLs.

We will review the strategies, present the five stages of language acquisition, and show you how to adapt five strategies, Setting Objectives, Providing Feedback, Cues and Questions, Nonlinguistic Representations, and Summarizing, for ELL students.

As a result of participating in this workshop, attendees will:

- Understand how strategies to enhance student achievement have been identified.

- Learn about the importance of stages of second language acquisition and their instructional implications.

- Learn strategies for engaging English Language Learners in mainstream classrooms.

About the presenter

Jane D. Hill, a lead consultant for Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), has worked in the areas of second language acquisition and special education for 28 years and now consults and trains nationally and internationally with teachers and administrators. Prior to joining McREL, Jane worked as a Speech/ Language Specialist focusing on bilingual special education, directed a two-way language school, and served as a district office Director for Second Language Acquisition and Special Education. Jane has written for Language Magazine, Journal of Staff Development, and co-authored Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners (ASCD, 2006). ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) will be publishing a Participant and Facilitator Manual for a two-day workshop on Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners developed by Jane and McREL colleagues in July 2008. Her most recent endeavor involves collaborating with State Departments of Education to offer a long-term professional development program for instructional leadership teams interested in leading ELL reform efforts.

This workshop is sponsored by EASTCONN, CREC, and the CT State Department of Education

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Fee: $125.00   **CEUs:** 0.5
(fee includes breakfast and lunch)
Register by: 4/8/08
Course #: 07 253 130

Register online at www.eastconn.org. Click on "Workshops." (tab at top of page). View catalog. You will need to input the last 4 digits of your Social Security Number and a valid Purchase Order (P.O.) number from your school.

Note: If you will be paying by a personal check and not using a P. O., you will receive an invoice via e-mail to send in with your check.

If you have questions regarding registration, or have difficulty using the online form, call 860-455-0707 and ask for Conference Services or e-mail conferenceoffice@eastconn.org.

Directions to St. Thomas Seminary will be provided. Easy access; just off I-91 and I-291. Plenty of free parking.

New Birth to Three Autism Specialty Programs

As of January 1st, 2008, the Connecticut Birth to Three System has added four comprehensive early intervention programs that will only serve children, ages birth to 3, who are on the autism spectrum. As of April 1, 2008, two more early intervention programs serving only children on the autism spectrum will be added. Each Birth to Three autism program has agreed to provide direct services to eligible children and families living in a prescribed set of towns. A state map that shows which Birth to Three autism program is serving which towns is posted on the Birth to Three website at www.birth23.org under "What's New" which is located at the top of the web page.

One new change in the Connecticut Birth to Three System is that all Birth to Three programs will now be administering the M-CHAT as part of their initial evaluation process with all children 16 months of age or older. If there are red flags that indicate that further assessment is needed, one option will be that the child can be referred to one of the new autism-specific programs. Those programs will be using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) to determine whether a child meets the educational classification of autism found in the IDEA. At transition, that information will be available to the child's school district (with parent consent) but it will be up to the child's school district to make its own eligibility determination, including assignment of a disability category.

The Connecticut Birth to Three has been very careful to inform each autism-specific program that they must be extra careful and diligent when it comes to transitioning children from their program to the child's school district. The Connecticut Birth to Three System and the Birth to Three autism programs absolutely do not want to create a situation in which a family becomes attached to one of these programs and subsequently requests that their school district contract with a specific program. It is predictable that this scenario may occur. The Birth to Three System encourages any school district that finds itself in this situation to contact the Birth to Three System through their toll-free number at 1-866-888-4188 to discuss the situation. It is also possible that some school districts may actually *want* to contract with one of these programs to provide a child's IEP services at the preschool grade. Those contract negotiations would need to occur at the local level between each school district and the Birth to Three autism program.

The contact information for the four programs that have begun the provision of early intervention services as of 1/1/08 includes:

1. Easter Seals of Waterbury, First Partners Autism Program
   Maris Faulkner
   (203) 754-5141
   mfaulkner@eswct.com

2. Education Connection, TLC Autism Program
   Janae Peluso
   860-567-0863 X170
   Peluso@educationconnection.org

3. Greenwich Autism Program, Little Learners
   Dr. Susan Izeman
   203-629-1880
   Izeman@arcgreenwich.org

4. TheraCare, Academy for Young Minds Autism Program
   Deborah Mastronardi
   888-355-3255
   deborahmastronardi@theracare.com

The contact information for the two programs which will begin providing services as of 4/1/08 includes:

- Bilinguals, Inc
  Mayelin Ravelo
  (212)684-0099 X169
  mravelo@bilingualsinc.com

- REM Creative Social Development Program
  Donna Cimini
  860-571-8602
  Donna.cimini@thementornetwork.com

Lastly, please know that in addition to these newly funded specialty programs, as of January 1, 2008, the Connecticut Birth to Three System has updated its guideline document, "Autism Spectrum Disorders: Service Guide #1". The guideline document can be found on the Connecticut Birth to Three website at: http://www.birth23.org/Publications/default.asp. The document, "Autism Spectrum Disorders: Service Guide #1" is also available through the web site in Spanish and Portuguese.

Keynote Speakers

The conference boasts nationally recognized speakers and leaders in the field of paraprofessional issues, namely Dr. Kent Gerlach and Dr. Teri Wallace. Dr. Gerlach is the author of Let's Team Up! A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals *and co-editor of* Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings, *and* Paraeducators in Schools: Strengthening the Educational Team, *in which Dr. Wallace co-edited. Dr. Wallace also authored* Knowledge and Skills for Teachers Supervising the Work of Paraprofessionals *and* State Level Initiatives Related to Training and Supervision of Paraeducators.

Friday's panel on "Career Choices" will include paraprofessionals who love their job as well as paraprofessionals who have gone on to earn their teaching certification. College and university faculty responsible for designing career ladder programs for paraprofessionals will also discuss the challenges in building training programs that honor both perspectives.

Jason Dorsey delivers the insight of a bestselling author, excitement of an internationally acclaimed speaker, and practicality of an award-winning entrepreneur. Jason Ryan Dorsey profoundly inspires paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, parents, staff, counselors, and school board members. He does this by sharing his incredible personal story of educators saving his life.

Thursday—Dr. Kent Gerlach & Dr. Teri Wallace
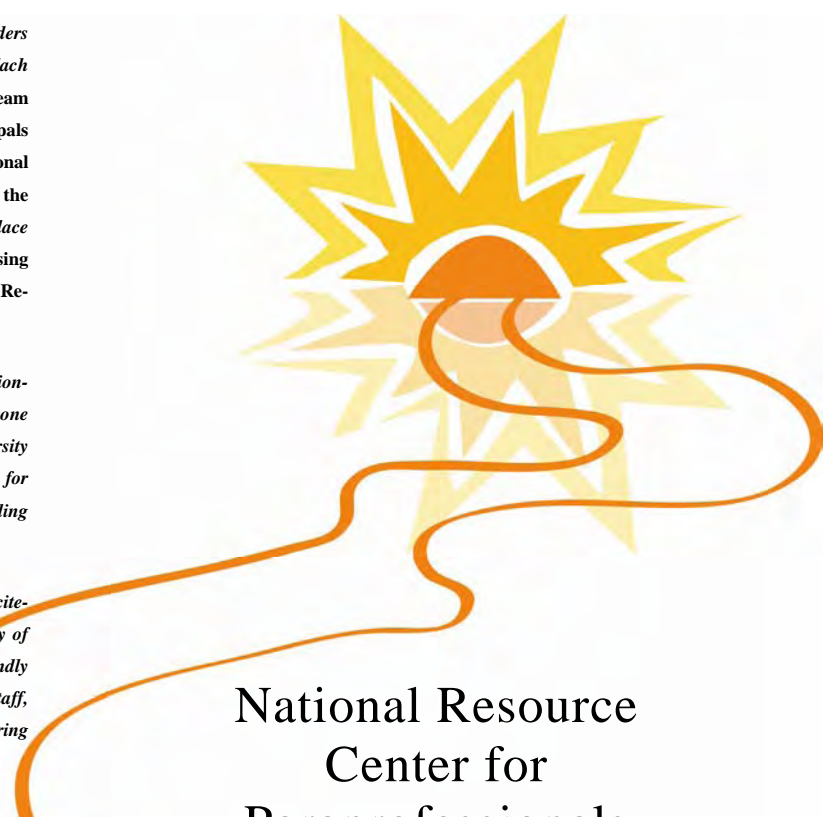
"Supervision and Evaluation"

Friday—Panel

"Career Choices: Paraprofessionals and Teachers"

Saturday—Jason Dorsey

"Inspiring Hard to Reach Students: Making Personal Responsibility Contagious"

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals
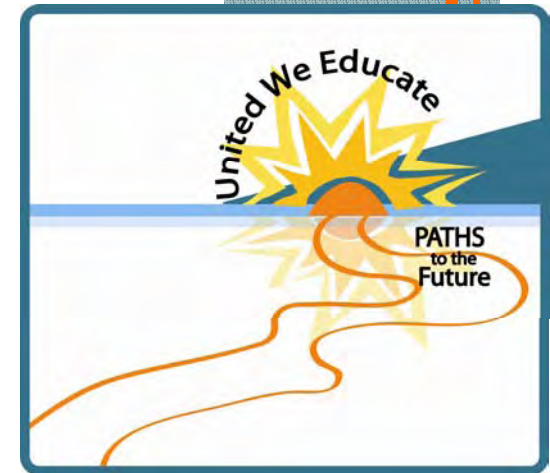
Registration Rates for Entire Conference

Paraprofessionals…………………..$50
($75 after March 1)
Teachers and Administrators…….$150
($175 after March 1)
Paraprofessional-Teacher Team...$150
Special One-Day Pass……………$100

Register online at:

www.nrcpara.org

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals

presents

United We Educate
PATHS to the Future

April 17-19, 2008

Hartford Hilton

Hartford, CT

∗   *Come meet and network with paraprofessionals from other states*

∗   *Visit the exciting city of Hartford*

∗   *Learn what are considered best practices for paraprofessionals*

Theme:

United We Educate: PATHS to the Future

The theme of this year's national conference for and about paraprofessionals is United We Educate: PATHS to the Future. It is vital for our kids that paraprofessionals are united with administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders. In order to provide paraprofessionals with the knowledge needed to be an effective member of the team, a number of workshops will be offered (see below).

The following is a partial list of workshops. Please check the NRCP website for updates.

* *Assessing the Work Satisfaction of Special Education Paraprofessionals*
* *Managing Antisocial Behavior*
* *Do You Want Your Students to Be More Actively Involved in Their Learning?*
* *Paraprofessionals As Certified Teachers: Training Paraprofessionals to Teach in Urban Districts*
* *Paraeducators and Their Important Role in Response to Intervention*
* *Understanding MRSA: Our Schools, Our Communities*
* *Supporting Progress Reporting for Special Needs Students*
* *Paraprofessionals as Members of the Behavior Team*
* *Preparing Beginning Teachers to Supervise Paraeducators*
* *Filling in the Cracks-- Evaluating a Training Program for Paraeducators*
* *Paraprofessionals: The Crayon Carrying Martha Stewarts of the School*
* *Paraeducator Portfolios: Getting Your Ducks in a Row*
* *Multicultural Paraprofessional Retention: A Culture of Respect*
* *Math Madness*
* *IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTIONS: Five Lessons Every Educator Needs to Know from Brain Research*
* *Communicating With Parents: Understanding the Process, Improving Your Skills*
* *Singing in a Collaborative Education Choir: Making Every Voice Count*
* *Training School-Based Speech-Language Pathology Assistants*
* *Funding Paraeducator Training at the Community Level*
* *Early Recruitment of Mathematics and Special Education Teachers*

* *Para PQ-Paraeducators Pursuing Quality*
* *Working Together: Tools You Can't Live Without*
* *Paraeducators as Future Teachers: Benefits and Challenges*
* *The Holland-Self Directed Search: An Interest Inventory*
* *Writing Brought Us Together: Paraeducators as Team Members Supporting the Writing Process*
* *A Framework for Promoting Academic Literacy*
* *Creative Rules and Tools for Discovering the Successful Student in Every Child*
* *Clarifying the Roles of Paraeducators and Their Supervisors: Its all about Ethics and Professional Guidelines*
* *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Adolescence: Strategies for Addressing Teenage Behavior*
* *Classroom Assessment Made Easy: How to Identify, Record, and Monitor Student Progress and Still Teach*
* *Promoting Teamwork Between Parents and School*
* *Living Wage: You're Worth It!*
* *Work Shouldn't Hurt: The Strain and Sprain of Special Education Work*
* *Building State and Local Support for the Effective Use of Paraeducators*
* *Team Building with Special Education Paraeducators: Elevating Instructional Aides*