

**School Paraprofessional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 14, 2014**  
**CSDE Office**

**Attendance:** Regina Birdsell, CAS; Bill Walkauskas, CSEA; Annie MacDonald, UE; Rhonda Kempton, CSDE; Georgina Cabrera, Wallingford Public Schools; Stacey Cronk, CES; Anthony Brisson and Heather Dawes, SERC; Donna Morelli, CREC; Marcia Cattanach, AFT Connecticut; Cindy Knudsen, Region 4; Danielle McMullen, MEUI; Iris White, CSDE.

**SERC Update:** Great feedback from the attendees of the November conference. Based on feedback from paras, Iris will draft a para brief for Boards of Education to understand the roles and value of the para work force. Regina volunteered to work on a brief for Administrators. Jack Jackter School in Colchester, which is participating in SPDG, has been designed performance measures to analyze the contribution of 1:1 paras. The hope is that we will have data to show how paras contribute positively to student outcomes.

Autism brief-SERC is waiting for permission to use statistics and research.

1/25 Para Learning Seminar currently has 11 people registered. SERC would like a minimum of 17 to run. They've extended the deadline to this Friday.

**Para of the Year Ceremony:** SERC will not be holding a fall conference in 2014 (due to the National Conference in 2015), so CSDE has scheduled a separate recognition ceremony for **Thursday, November 6, 2014**. Consensus among the Council members is to hold the ceremony from 5:00 p.m.-7:00 with light fare, appetizers.

**NRCP Conference:** Marilyn Likins, director of NRCP, called in to introduce her and provided background and the timeline (attached) for organizing the conference. The School Para Advisory Council will serve as the Local Arrangements Committee.

- a. Location:** Last time CT hosted this conference, it was held at the Hilton Hartford since it is a unionized hotel. Iris will check to see if there are other hotels (such as the Marriott) that are also unionized since we will need and want union sponsorship [Marriot is not unionized so we will have to go back to the Hilton].
- b. Dates:** Much discussion ensued regarding the best time to hold the conference. Suggestions were: during April spring break, at the end of the school year; in March. Other ideas were to have a short survey with 2-3 data options and let district contacts and/or paras weigh in. Another suggestion was to try and schedule the conference in March when districts are typically scrambling for presenters during district professional development day. We can suggest to districts that they plan/count our conference as the para Pd day. Rhonda and Iris will discuss and then follow up with the Council and

Marilyn. According to the timeline, the council will also need to choose a conference theme and logo within the next month or so.

**UCEDD survey:** Chris Sullivan and Mary Beth Bruder shared their initial results from the needs assessment. UCEDD plans to develop a formal report, which we can then share with our constituents. Based on the fact that many paras did not know about the survey, UCEDD has reopened the link: [https://uconn.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_0JkUbE5NAscDHD](https://uconn.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0JkUbE5NAscDHD)  
Please share with your networks.

**CREC Update:** CREC held its second training for trainers on the COMPASS module last week.

**CSDE Updates:** Roles and Responsibilities of Council members: As a way to begin the development of a mission/vision statement and to try and solve the problem of information not trickling down to paras, Iris and Anthony worked on a draft roles and responsibilities. It was difficult to proceed with the responsibilities, namely that it would be time consuming for the members and might require permission from their supervisors. The Council brainstormed other ways to improve communication to paras: 1. Using different organizations, districts, unions email databases to create one database in which to send information directly to paras rather than relying on the district contacts. 2. Develop a “one stop shop” webpage with links to all organizations that sponsor para pd. We could advertise this page to paras so they know the resource is available. CREC is currently developing a resource page for trainers, but at the same time can develop a second tier webpage for paraeducators. Iris will follow up with Donna on next steps.

Achievement Gap Task Force: Jennifer Berigan, Lobbyist for AFT Connecticut, approached the Achievement Gap Task Force about including paraeducator professional development in their report to Legislature and to also communicate with the Council on any recommendations or action items. [Additional information is attached].

Higher Education: Rhonda, Anthony Peg and Janet from CREC, Sharon Fuller from the Talent Office met with Sarah Barzee the CSDE Chief Talent Office to discuss ways of working with higher education to incorporate content about working effectively with paraeducators. With Sarah’s guidance, the group developed a number of strategies (attached).