

School Paraprofessional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2009

CREC

In attendance: Donna Morelli, CREC; Craig Struble, SERC; Stefanie Carbone, SERC; Loyola Welsh, MEUI; Kate Moran, LEARN; Robin Grondahl, CPAC; Regina Birdsell, CAS; Anthony Maida, CES; Ellen Tyler, Region 18; Darlene Brodbeck, ACES; Tricia Silva, CREC; William Walkauskas, SEIU, Perri Murdica, CSDE; Leigh Gold, West Hartford; Marcia Cattanach, AFT Connecticut; Iris White, CSDE.

CSDE Update:

- Autism report was submitted to the Legislature in March.
- Recommendation: Request that one School Paraprofessional Advisory Council be a member of the Consortium.
- Training Programs: CREC Compass mentioned in the report, but train the trainer program not explained. Report also inaccurately listed entry level and advanced level of paraprofessionals as Connecticut's standard.
- Perri will touch base with Jackie for further updates.

CREC Update:

- CREC hosted another train the trainer sessions for people who had been trained in the basic modules this past September. This session trained them in CREC's three new advanced modules: English Language Learners, Assistive Technology, and Advanced Behavior. September 9, 2009 will be a repeated session for those that could not attend this session.
- CSDE and CREC have discussed exclusively training district personnel in the basic modules in order to develop district capacity. Funding continues to be an issue.
- CSDE and CREC have also discussed the development of three more advanced modules: reading, Math, and SRBI. The council believed it would be more appropriate for the module training to emphasize the role of paraprofessionals supporting teachers in instruction of reading and Math vs. focusing on CMT. The math module could include information on the recognition of facts vs. concepts, modification, access to grade level curriculum, and the hierarchy of skills.
- CSDE and SERC will need to get together to define the role of paraprofessional in SRBI before a module can be developed.

SERC Update:

- SERC is still planning their fall conference. Flyers have gone out. Some of the sessions will be facilitated by paraprofessionals.

- Four focus groups were conducted to get feedback on the Paraprofessional Study Groups. These were done in the past, but faded as SERC began pulling back.
- Roles and Responsibilities: We agree as representatives of organizations that you will share with the paraprofessional group and also the district you work in.

District Contacts on Paraprofessional Issues:

- Iris will develop an online survey to ask district contacts for information on the paraprofessionals they have in their districts. This information will include a database of their paraprofessionals (names, titles), how they disseminate professional development to their paraprofessionals (is it via email, “snail mail”, interoffice mail?), professional development they offer their paraprofessionals, etc. Iris will email to council for feedback before the survey is posted.
- The council suggested that the following information be shared with contacts: COMPASS Training, Train the Trainers, link to Guidelines.
- We need to broaden the newsletter scope, send to more and broaden topics in order to make it a shared tool. Teachers continue to not know how to work with paraprofessionals. The paraprofessional guidelines have many resources that could be highlighted. The suggestion was made to emphasize collaboration, by first “clearing up the confidentiality myth.” A small group of members will meet over the summer to revamp the newsletter.
- The council suggested that the CSDE look into developing a webinar or online modules to alleviate the problem of paraprofessionals and teachers not being release to attend professional development together.
- The following meeting dates have been scheduled for next year. Location(s) to be determined. September 22, 2009; November 10, 2009; January 26, 2010; May 18, 2010.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Morelli, CREC.