

School Paraprofessional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
CSDE Room 307-B, State Office Building
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford Connecticut
2:00-4:00 p.m.
July 12, 2016

Advisory Council members and guests in attendance: Jennifer Benevento, AFT CT; Shellye Davis, HFP 2221; Sonya Kunkel, CREC; Alison Cianciolo CREC; Geraldine Jackman, IFTPE, Newtown Public Schools; Denise Seel, 2016 Paraeducator of the Year; Denise Messina, Somers Public Schools; Pam Potemri, UCEDD. ***CSDE Staff:*** Teresa Boyd Cowles; Sharon Fuller; Rhonda Kempton; Shannon Marimon

Advisory Council members not in attendance: Regina Birdsell, CAS; Cindy Knudsen, CEUI/MEUI; Stacey L. Cronk, C.E.S.; Annie MacDonald, UE; Bill Walkauskas/Lucila Philips, CSEE-SEIU; Michele O'Neill, CEA; Gary Maynard CFSA;

Welcome/Introductions

Council members introduced themselves and welcomed guests.

Status of UCONN University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) Draft Paraeducator Survey

As background information, UCEDD had created a new survey for paraeducators to be distributed this school year. UCEDD was looking for council members to provide feedback on the draft. Teresa had compiled feedback after discussing the original draft with Rhonda. Rhonda, Teresa, Anne Davidson and Mary Beth Bruder from UCEDD recently met on June 15th to discuss another set of revisions. At that meeting Mary Beth shared that Pam Potemri has been hired as UCEDD's new training director. Pam discussed how she has reviewed the latest draft and opened up a discussion on the timing of the survey and when it would be best to distribute the survey. Suggestions included convocation, PD days, or ½ day PD days, holidays like Columbus Day or sometime at the end of September. A July meeting is scheduled to prepare the finalized draft for review by the Interim Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Isabelina Rodriguez, before administration through the Directors of Pupil Services/Special Education contact list.

Updates on the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program

There were 42 nominees for the Anne Marie Paraeducator of the Year award. 12 nominees were identified as semi-finalists and received interviews on July 7, 8 and the 12 by the interview committee which consisted of Denise Seel (Hartford Public Schools), Kim Wachtelhausen (CSDE), Rhonda Kempton (CSDE). Geraldine Jackman (Newtown Public Schools) and Sharon Fuller (CSDE) also participated in interviews. The interview committee provided ratings for each candidate and ranked their top scoring nominees. Three of the top scoring nominees were presented to the council along with an abbreviated application. The council voted on the top three finalists and put forth a recommendation for the winner which will be announced after the recommendation and materials for the three finalists is shared with the leadership in the Talent Office.

As a reminder the “Celebrating Excellence in Education” event will take place on September 22, 2016, at the A.I. Prince Technical High School in Hartford. Denise Seel, along with the 2017 Paraeducator of the Year will be recognized at this event along with other outstanding awardees who represent educational organizations through the state. There was no update provided on the separate October ceremony for recognizing the 2017 Paraeducator for the Year and the district nominees.

Connecticut Paraeducators’ Conference and other Professional Learning Opportunities

Donna Morelli from the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) began organizing a conference/symposium for paraeducators, the event will now be organized by Alison Cianciolo of CREC since Donna had taken an administrator position outside of CREC. A date has been set for November 16, 2016, at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Dr. Sarah Barzee, Chief Talent Officer, has agreed to be a keynote. Alison and Sonya Kunkel shared an update on the structure of the conference and solicited ideas for a conference name and breakout sessions. Council members suggested a registration fee waiver for each district that put forward a nominee for Paraeducator of the Year (42 nominees) as well some sort of distinction as “Honored Guests” for the day. Also shared from CREC was information on the COMPASS training modules and the Charter Oak course for the Paraeducator Certificate. Additional ideas and suggestions for the conference should be sent to [Alison Cianciolo](#).

Advisory Council Membership Updates 2016-17

Shannon Marimon introduced Sharon Fuller as the new CSDE contact person for Paraeducators in the Talent Office. Teresa will be transitioning to the Sheff/Regional School Choice Office. Other updates to the council include the new contact person for CREC as noted above and the retirement of Regina Birdsell of CAS who will be replaced by Roxanne Augelli. All other council members in attendance agreed to continue participation on the council for 2016-17. If there are any other changes to the membership please contact [Sharon Fuller](#).

Recommendations of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council’s Annual Report as required by Public Act No. 13-10.

To review, the role of the council is to advise the Commissioner of Education about the needs for the training of paraprofessionals and report on recommendations. The council began discussion on recommendations for 2016-17. A draft of the recommendations will be created based on the discussion and shared with the council for comments prior to the final submission to the commissioner and the board for review.

Closing/Adjournment

Next Meeting: September 20, 2016 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.