

School Paraprofessional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

SDE Room 357, State Office Building

165 Capitol Avenue

Hartford Connecticut

4:00-6:00 p.m.

March 15, 2016

Advisory Council members and guests in attendance: Jennifer Benevento, AFT CT; Mary Russell, Hartford #2221; Michele O'Neill, CEA; Sean Kavanaugh, SERC; Donna Morelli, CREC; Patrick Sampson, Council 4-AFSCME; Geraldine Jackman, IFTPE, Newtown Public Schools; Denise Seel, 2016 Paraeducator of the Year; Anne Marie Davidson, UCONN-UCEDD; Denise Messina, Somers Public Schools. ***SDE Staff:*** Teresa Boyd Cowles; Rhonda Kempton. ***Advisory Council members not in attendance:*** Regina Birdsell, CAS; Gary Maynard CFSA; Annie MacDonald, UE; Cindy Knudsen, CEUI/MEUI; Stacey L. Cronk, C.E.S.; Bill Walkauskas/Lucila Philips, CSEE-SEIU;

I. Welcome/Introductions

Members and guests introduced themselves.

II. Information Sessions for Reviewers (PPT)

Prior to the council meeting, an information session was held at 3:00 p.m. for those interested in becoming a reviewer for the Paraeducator of the Year Program. Reviewers will review between five to 10 applications either on a single day or during a two-week window from June 1 - 20, if they can be reviewed electronically. Anyone wanting to be a reviewer or recommending a reviewer should contact Teresa Boyd Cowles.

III. Review of the [2012 Paraeducator Guidelines Document](#)

The Guidelines document needs technical and content updates. Rhonda Kempton has updated the page that contains information about parents' rights to request a paraeducator at the Planning and Placement Team Meeting (PPT) meeting to align with [Public Act 15-5, Section 277, amending CGS Section 10-76d\(a\)\(8\)\(C\) and \(D\)](#) (effective July 1, 2015).

Continuing from a request at the last meeting, council members have been asked to continue to assist the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) in prioritizing the revisions needed in the Guidelines document. Donna Messina discussed the addition or revision of a code of ethics within the document. Code of ethics for paraeducators could be brought forth as a recommendation to the Commissioner from the council. Donna will distribute a code of ethics sample to members of the council. The council can make a recommendation on whether a code of ethics should be a district or state initiative. Council members agreed that they will review Donna's recommended code of ethics document and make a recommendation at a later date.

Sean Kavanaugh will reach out to members of the national paraprofessional group as well as Anthony Brisson at National Education Association (NEA) to gather more information about a code of ethics from a national perspective. A council member may also view examples from [Minnesota](#) and [Washington](#) states for future discussions.

IV. Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award

Reviewer information session was convened prior to the Council meeting. Council members will reach out to others to recruit reviewers. Teacher of the Year reviewers are also needed. The timeline for reading, scoring, and the remainder of the process can be found on the [SDE paraeducators information and resources website](#).

V. UCONN University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) Draft Paraeducator Survey

Anne Marie Davidson, on behalf of Mary Elizabeth Bruder, from the Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities ([UCEDD](#)) at the University of Connecticut Health Center, shared the background of a survey used to gather feedback from paraeducators. The last survey was distributed in 2013. The data was used in the [2014 School Paraprofessional Staffing Report](#) conducted by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee.

UCEDD has created a new survey (in draft) to be distributed this school year. UCEDD and CSDE are looking for the council to provide feedback on the current survey. Feedback should be sent to Ann Marie Davidson at adavidson@uchc.edu. Feedback is needed by the end of March 2016. The target timeline is to pilot the survey in the first two weeks of April with the full survey given to special education directors for distribution to paraeducators by May 2016. The survey will be looking to target paraeducators who serve students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities, but it can be completed by any paraprofessional. The draft document is 12 pages and UCEDD anticipates it will take 30 minutes to complete.

The Bureau of Special Education maintains a contact list of all Directors of Special Education. A memo appointing the Directors of Special Education as the contact person for disseminating information on paraprofessionals has been drafted by Rhonda. This list could be used to distribute the UCEDD survey. Council members representing unions and the Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education (ConnCASE) are other channels of distribution discussed by the council.

VI. Status of Connecticut Paraeducators' Conference and other Professional Development Updates

Donna Morelli shared that the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) is looking to create a symposium similar to past paraeducator conferences concentrating on helping Paraprofessionals move up the career ladder (paras, tutors, etc.). The target date is fall of 2016. Donna is looking for council members to help develop topic ideas. The [draft of CREC's proposal](#) will be shared with the council (see page 4-5). Send suggestions and ideas to Donna at dmorelli@crec.org.

CREC is offering two events in May 2016 that may be of interest to paraeducators and administrators;

[Inclusive Practices for Serving Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
[Help Students with Specific Learning Disability \(SLD\)/Dyslexia Helping Students](#)

A training will be offered on [Using a Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) Approach to Individualize Instruction](#) at SERC—the State Education Resource Center of Connecticut. The event will take place on Thursday, May 19, 2016, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight

Time (EDT) in Middletown, Connecticut. The symposium will have a paraprofessional breakout session.

Sean Kavanaugh and Donna Morelli will be attending The 33rd National Conference on the Training and Employment of Paraeducators, sponsored by the National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP), which will take place April 1 - 3, 2016, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Chicago - Oak Brook, Illinois.

VII. Other Items and updates

CREC has created an [online safe school climate course](#) for paraeducators and noncertified staff. The course includes work around paraeducators role in the PPT process to align with the new legislation. Please contact Donna Morelli for further details.

Rhonda mentioned a possibility of providing an updated guidance document to replace the outdated information from a [2009 document about IEP's privacy and confidentiality](#). She would appreciate if the council would review the "Clarifying the Confidentiality Myth" section and provide feedback on any essential updates or a replacement for the information. The Department is working on clarification under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the requirements for Title I paraprofessionals. Rhonda has been communicating with Marlene Padernacht, who is the SDE's State Title I Director, to clarify the revised requirements under ESSA.

As a reminder, 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 is being asked to begin to record, track and share recommendations that can be submitted for inclusion in the annual report for September 2016. The work of finalizing these recommendations will begin at the next meeting.

VIII. Closing/Adjournment

Next Meeting: May 17, 2016



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BROKERING SERVICES
Donna Morelli
Education Specialist, Special Services Support Team

**DRAFT Proposal for
Career Pathways and Professional Learning Symposium:
Opportunities and Training for Paraeducators and Non-Certified Staff**

- **Audience:** Non-certified educational staff; supervisors; administrators; other staff as interested
- **Location:** TBD, but would like central location, perhaps at UConn (WH branch), Charter Oak or CCSU to help defray costs. (LOB?)
- **Time:** 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. (7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. for registration, light breakfast, vendors and networking)

Presentations: Five concurrently running sessions (three times during the day)

- **Topic Strands:**
- **Pathways to Certification:** College Course work, on-line course work, etc., RBT
- **Behavior:** De-escalation, PBIS, RBT
- **Technology:** Personal Use; Assistive Tech
- **Vendor Tables:** Source for Teachers; Re-Think

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• **Schedule for the day:**

- 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Register and network
- 8:30 a.m. – 8:40 a.m. Welcome
- 8:40 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Keynote One (Para of the Year)
- 9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Keynote Two (Panel?)
- 9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Break and vendor
- 10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Session One
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Session Two
- 1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Break
- 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Session Three