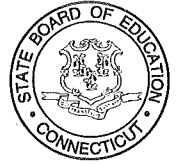




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Clerk of the Senate
Clerk of the House of Representatives

FROM: Stefan Pryor
Commissioner of Education

DATE: March 1, 2013

SUBJECT: Annual Report on Paraprofessionals

In accordance with Section 10-155k of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), enclosed is a copy of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council Annual Report. Also, please note that by copy of this letter, I am distributing this report in accordance with C.G.S. Section 11-4a.

If you have any questions or require additional copies, please contact Sarah Hemingway at 860-713-6493. Thank you.

SP:iw
cc: Education Committee
Legislative Library
Office of Legislative Research
State Library

Enclosure

School Paraprofessional Advisory Council Report

For the past four years, the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council ("Council"), as required by Section 10-155k of the Connecticut General Statutes, has met on a quarterly basis to advise the Commissioner of Education and the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the content and delivery of existing training for paraprofessionals.

The members of this Council are as follows:

Tenisha Baker, 2013 Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year, Sunset Ridge Academy, East Hartford Public Schools

Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS)

Anthony Brisson, State Education Resource Center (SERC)

Stefanie Carbone, Assistant Principal, Lake Garda Elementary School, Region 10

Marcia Cattanach, Paraprofessional, Hartford Public Schools, representing American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Connecticut

Stacey Cannon Cronk, Special Education Teacher, Cooperative Educational Services (CES)

Ann P. Dombroski, Assistant Executive Director, Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)

Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher, Assistant Professor of Special Education, Sacred Heart University

Rhonda Kempton, Consultant, Bureau of Special Education, Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)

Annie MacDonald, Paraprofessional, Wallingford Public Schools, representing Connecticut Independent Labor Union (CILU)

Donna Morelli, Education Specialist, Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)

Kevin Murphy, Director, Collective Bargaining, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 4

Niloufar Rezai, Interim Director, Child and Family Development Resource Center, Eastern Connecticut State University

Janet Scialdone, Program Coordinator, Technical Assistance and Brokering Services, CREC

Bill Walkauskas, Paraprofessional, ACES, representing Connecticut State Employees Association (CSEA)

Loyola Welsh, Education Director and Steward Coordinator, Connecticut Employees Union Independent/Municipal Employees Union Independent (CEUI/MEUI)

Iris White, Consultant, Bureau of Accountability and Improvement, CSDE

According to CSDE data from the 2010-11 school year, there are approximately 13,391 instructional paraprofessionals in the state of Connecticut. At present time, there are no statewide standards for the amount or type of professional development paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities, working in local school districts, must receive. There is also, presently, variability in training provided to teachers regarding the overall duties and responsibilities of instructional paraprofessionals. With the increasing demands of preparing all students to be college- and career-ready upon graduation and with districts' limited resources, well trained and supervised instructional paraprofessionals can be a valuable resource to help all students achieve high standards.

Recognizing Governor Malloy's and Commissioner Pryor's commitment to improved teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness, and the closure of Connecticut's achievement gap, the Council submits the following recommendations:

1. In Connecticut, a multitude of titles are used to describe paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities in Connecticut's public schools. In order to demonstrate the Department's emphasis on the role of the paraprofessional in improving instruction, and elevating the need for paraprofessionals to receive professional development, the CSDE should adopt the title "Paraeducator."
2. As the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee convenes to develop policy recommendations and propose regulatory revisions that will increase rigor in teacher and school leader preparation, it should consider providing opportunities for teacher candidates to observe effective collaborative practices between teachers and paraprofessionals and the appropriate utilization of paraprofessionals in the classroom. Such opportunities will better prepare candidates to understand the appropriate roles of teachers and paraprofessionals, thereby strengthening their ability to be collaborative partners with their colleagues. It will also support Domain 6 of the Common Core of Teaching: Professional Responsibility and Teacher Leadership, which mentions the teacher's role in guiding and coaching paraprofessionals.
3. Districts should be encouraged to provide training to teachers on their role in guiding and coaching the work of paraprofessionals, in accordance with the *Connecticut Framework for Teacher Evaluation and Support*, as outlined in the Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation and Development. The CSDE should inform districts of the various resources that are available to support teachers in this area, including the *Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals*, the *Teacher Supervisory Checklist* and the *Assessment Checklist for Paraprofessionals*.
4. The CSDE should develop a bank of best practices in supervising and evaluating paraprofessionals that districts can access in order to clarify the roles of paraprofessionals, and to ensure their appropriate training and supervision. These practices should include: teacher and paraprofessional collaboration, professional development for paraprofessionals, development of a paraprofessional handbook, and hiring and orientation of paraprofessionals.
5. Districts should be encouraged to involve their paraprofessional workforce in regular professional development activities each school year aimed at ensuring that these staff members:
 1. Remain current on all instructional practices related to their assignments.
 2. Continue to develop and enhance their instructional competencies in core areas (such as, working with students with autism, managing behavior, instructional strategies for students who are struggling, school climate, etc.).
 3. Understand their role in supporting CSDE initiatives, such as Common Core State Standards, Scientific Research-Based Interventions and early literacy.

The Council's intent behind this recommendation is to ensure that paraprofessionals would have the necessary tools to help students reach their academic potential.