Paraeducator-to-Teacher Pathways: Creating Opportunities Through Collaborations Between Universities and LEAs in Utah

Bob Morgan
Becky Morgan
Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation
Utah State University

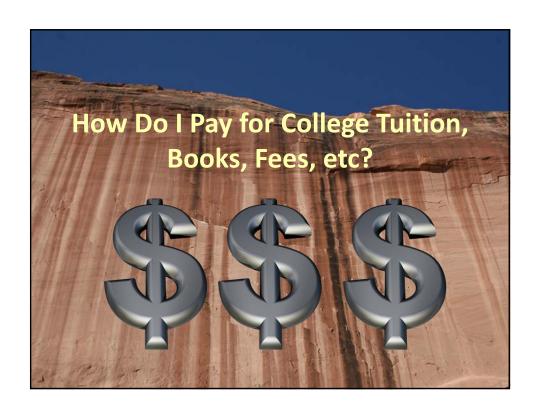
Jerry Purles Granite School District

Peggy Milligan
Utah State Office of Education

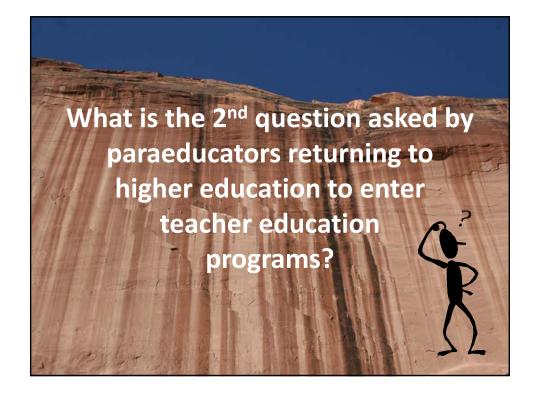
Personnel Improvement Center

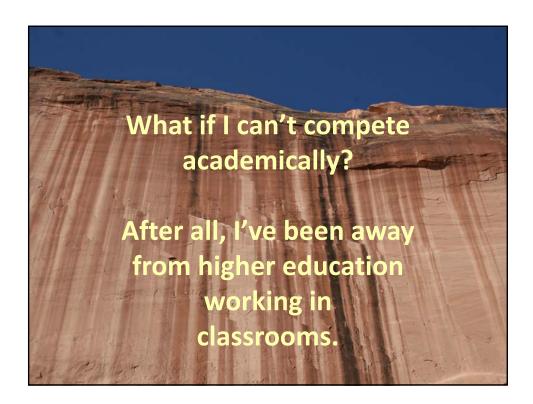
- National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities (a.k.a. PIC) works with SEAs, LEAs, and IHEs to create partnerships leading to increasing the supply of qualified and capable personnel (PIC Issue Brief, 2009)
- Participating school districts and IHEs have focused on creating viable paraeducator-to-teacher career pathways
- In the last 3 years, we have learned much about "what works/what doesn't work", but we have much more to learn





Financial Opportunities Pathways Table Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Utah State University http://sped.usu.edu FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY
TH Bell Incentive Loan
Subsidized Perkins Loan e code below (A, B, etc) or more information Subsidized Stafford Loan Subsidized Stafford Loa TEACH Grant SPED Scholarships Simmons Family Foundation Diversity Scholarships Veteran Scholarships A = This scholarship applies to you if you are graduating from a Utah high school. For more information, go to http://www.schools.utah.gov/cert/scholarships/Scholars.htm B = Available through financial aid. You must first complete the FAFSA form to see if you are eligible. \$17, 500 of this loan and the subsidized Stafford loan can be forgiven for teaching 5 years in a SPED classroom. For more information, go to http://www.usu.edu/finaid/applying/. Information about forgiveness can be found at http://www.jpkf.org/Interest_Areas/Education.html (Must be in a matriculated program. First Bachelor's degree, 2nd Bachelor's degree or master's degree C = Available through financial aid. You must first complete the FAFSA form to see if you are eligible. \$17, 500 of this loan and the subsidized Perkins Loan can be forgiven for teaching 5 years in a SPED classroom. For more information, go to http://www.usu.edu/finaid/applying/. Information about forgiveness can be found at http://www.jpkf.org/Interest_Areas/Education.html Must be in a matriculated program. First Bachelor's degree, 2nd Bachelor's degree or master's degree D = Available for students who have a 3.25 GPA, are US Citizens and who have applied for financial aid. For more information, go to http://cehs.usu.edu/htm/teacher-education/TEACH. E = SPED Scholarships are for students who have been admitted to the SPED licensure programs. The application date each year is February 1.continued....



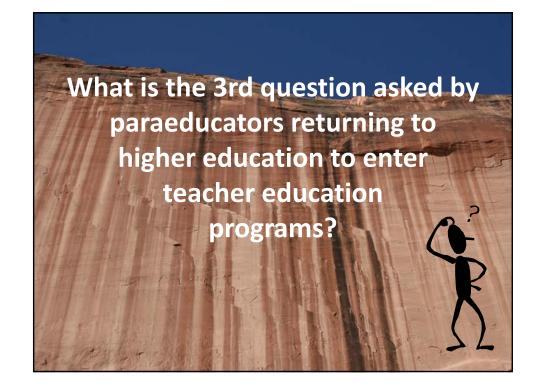


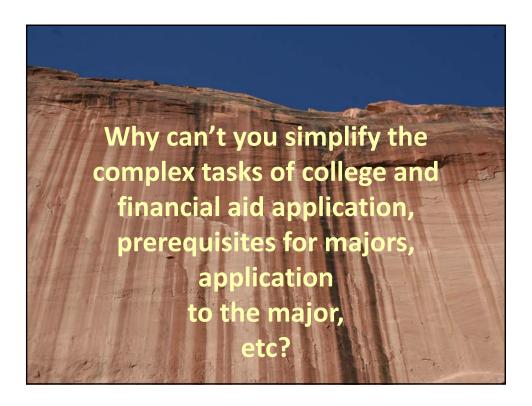
Experience vs. No experience?

- We examined the performance of 293 preservice teachers in courses and practica as a function of type and duration of applied experience.
- The sample consisted of on-campus preservice students who had graduated from early childhood, severe, mild/moderate, or composite majors from 2000 through 2008. We did not analyze by age of the preservice teacher.
- Mean years of experience = 3.9 yrs (SD = 3.0 yrs)

Experience vs. No experience?

- There was <u>no</u> statistically significant difference between individuals with applied experience and those with no experience in ACADEMIC COURSES (paraeducator N=55, mean GPA = 3.44; no experience N=30; mean GPA=3.47; other experience N=208, mean GPA=3.47)
- However, there was a statistically significant difference in PRACTICUM GPA favoring those with experience (paraeducator GPA = 3.60, no experience GPA = 3.45).









□ 1. Apply to Utah State University

Apply as an pre-special education major http://www.usu.edu/admissions/

□ 2. Meet with a Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation

(SPER) Advisor
The Special Education Advisor is Darcie Peterson
Emma Eccles Jones College of Education – Room 371
Office Phone: (435) 797-3252 email: darcie.peterson/

The Distance Mild/Moderate Program Advisor is Becky Morgan Office Phone (435) 797-7575 email: becky.morgan@usu.edu

□ 3. Apply for Financial Aid http://www.usu.edu/finaid/
Discuss various financial aid opportunities with the Special Education Advisor darcie.peterson/@usu.edu or becky.morgan/@usu.edu (The Distance Mild/Moderate Program Advisor)

□ 4. Attend Orientations
SOAF: Required for incoming freshmen http://www.usu.edu/soar/
Connections: Not required. However, talk with Darcie Peterson to see if this course would be beneficial to you. http://www.usu.edu/connections/

□ 5. Complete your Special Education Program prerequisites Go to https://linearing.com/special/bundergrad Click on your preferred area of emphasis (e.g., Early childhood, MM, Severe). See "SPER Admissions Checklist". Also, see SPER Test and Experience Requirements.

 $\hfill\Box$ 6. Apply to the Special Education program. Go to

<u>http://sper.usu.edu/undergrad</u> Apply by October 1st. Start early and check with Darcie or Becky if questions arise



5 Steps to Obtaining a Degree in Special Education at the University of Utah

1. Apply to the University of Utah

 -Apply as a pre-special education major (undergraduate) or for a graduate degree www.sa.utah.edu/admiss/

2. Meet with a Department of Special Education (SPED) Advisor

-The Special Education Advisor is Patty Davis

1) 581-8121 patty.davis@utah.edu

-You can also meet with Program Coordinators in various areas of interest such as Mild/Moderate, Severe, etc. (see Dept. website at www.ed.utah.edu)

3. Apply for Financial Aid

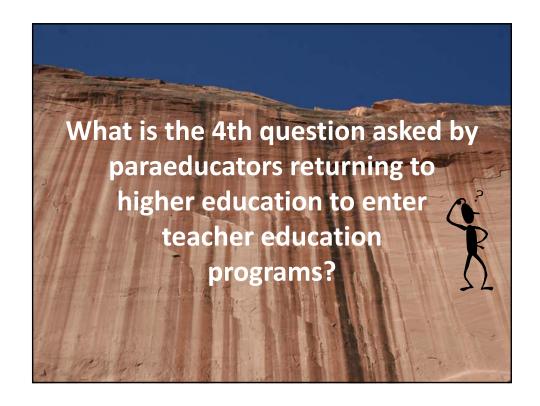
General University information College of Education information www.sa.utah.edu/finance/ http://www.ed.utah.edu/scholarships.html

1. Complete Your Special Education Program Prerequisites

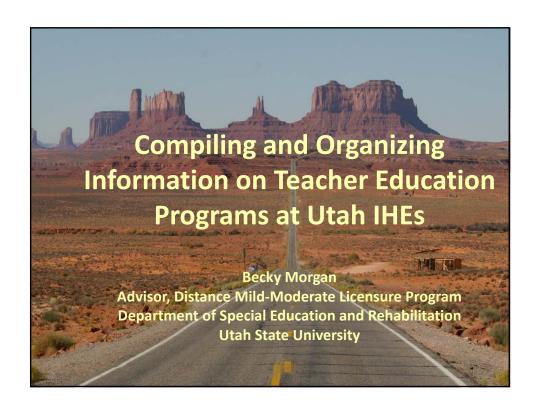
Go to http://www.ed.utah.edu/sped/SPEDfuture_student.html and follow the appropriate link to your preferred area for licensure (early childhood special education, mild/moderate disabilities, severe disabilities, sensory impairments). These links will provide information on the prerequisite and pre-major courses for your desired program area.

5. Apply to the Department of Special Education

Go to http://www.ed.utah.edu/sped/prospective/admission/admission.html for <a href="https://linearchitestra



Why can't I access information on ALL teacher education programs in Utah so that I can compare them in regards to requirements, emphasis areas, characteristics of classes, and other factors that may influence my decision?

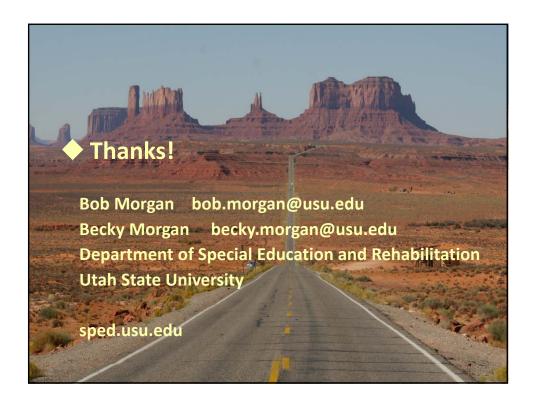


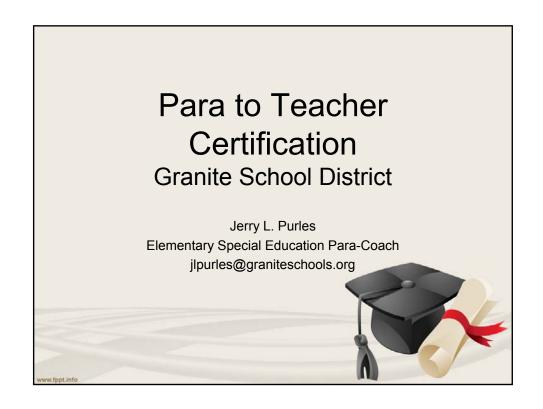
- We found we were turning away interested paraeducators because they did not meet our specific requirements or were not in our geographic areas
- We were concerned that some "turn aways" would not investigate alternative teacher education programs on their own
- Advisors often felt "if only I had information on other teacher education programs..."

- Rather than force square pegs into round holes, we partnered with other IHEs and LEAs to compile and gather information on ALL teacher education programs in the state
- U of U, Weber State, and USU collaborated to share information on programs and make presentations at district "paraeducator appreciation events" and conferences









Handy Facts

Granite School District is located in Salt Lake City, Utah, operating:

- 62 elementary schools
- 16 junior high schools
- 9 high schools
- · 4 special schools

Additional GSD Information:

- Second largest school district in Utah
- Boundary includes 257 sq. miles
- > 7,500 full & part-time employees
- > 67,730 students (2011)



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Special Education

2010 - 2011 School Year

Resource classrooms: 4,394 students

Self-contained classrooms: 1,368 students

Number of para-professionals: 800

Number of new teachers: 35



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Para to Teacher Certification

<u>Fact finding</u>: survey the paraeducator population to determine:

- 1. Interest level in becoming a special education teacher.
- Current status and level of interest.



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Paraeducator Survey

- April, 2009 (700 paraeducators surveyed, 370 responded): conducted to determine those who were interested in a teacher certification; 166 expressed interest.
- March/April 2010 (166 paraeducators, 52 responded): conducted to determine the current status, level of interest, and needs of this focused population segment.



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Paraeducator Survey

· Are you currently enrolled in any college courses?

Yes 19.2%No 80.8%

What is your level of education?

Some college classes
Associate degree
Bachelor's degree
Master's degree
0.0%



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Paraeducator Survey

• Plans for applying to a Teacher Certification program:

Not applying
Salt Lake Community College
University of Utah
Utah State University
36.5%
21.2%
32.7%

When do you plan on applying?

➤ 2010-2011 school year
 ➤ 2011-2012 school year
 ➤ No plans
 28.8%
 26.9%
 44.2%



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Paraeducator Survey

 Where do you feel you need more support and/or information in the application process?

Computer literacy/application process
Financial aid
Entrance test requirements
Meet with counselor/evaluate transcripts
All of the above
None of the above
21.2%

Paraeducator Survey

In which area of Special Education Certification are you interested in pursuing?

– Mild/moderate– Severe– Undecided55.8%21.2%34.6%



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Para Appreciation and Career Opportunity Night

- January 21, 2010, 5:00-8:00pm
- Created special invitation for each para, hand-delivered
- Celebration with food, prizes, personal recognition, and program
- University of Utah and Utah State University presented information on their special education programs
- 135 paraeducators attended



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Para Appreciation and Career Opportunity Night

- March 29, 2012 from 4:30 7:00 pm
- Sent out "Save the Date" Flyer by e-mail
- · Created special printed invitations, hand delivered
- Sent out Nomination Forms for "Outstanding Para"
- Para PLC Committee selected 10 individuals for recognition
- Printed program
- IHE's present: U of U, Utah State, Westminster, SLCC
- · Four classes for 30 minute periods
- Food, prizes, and personal recognition
- Approximately 90 Para's attended



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District Paraeducator Support

- ➤ Two district specialists provided individual support to paraeducators regarding the teacher certification process.
- ➤ Encouraged the universities to design and implement a simplified process for delivering application and financial resource information to these prospective students.



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University Counseling Event

- Provided in 2010 and 2011 for individual counseling and showed transcripts as a separate event.
- In 2012, it was part of the class time where any individual could meet with any of the IHE's. We added SLCC & Westminster.
- Next year, adding University of Phoenix



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University Acceptance

10 paraeducators
have been accepted
at the two universities
for the 2011 school
year for special
education teacher
certification!

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2011 Para to Teacher Data

 11 new teachers were hired this year in the Elementary Special Education Department. Previously, two of the new teachers were "Paraeducators in Granite School District" – one with mild/moderate and one with severe endorsements.

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"GROW OUR OWN"

In the Granite School District, thanks to the Para to Teacher Certification program, our third-year goal is being met to "grow" teachers from within our own population!

