

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Review - December 2010

Larry Hausmann EDPA Program Manager

Outcomes Assessment Plan and Summary for the Certificate and the AAS degree

The Educator: Para-Professional Program (EDPA) was designed to help small rural schools meet the “No Child Left Behind Act” regulations for requiring highly qualified paraprofessionals (teacher aides) in Alaska’s classrooms and early childhood programs to become “highly qualified” by educating local residents to fill these positions. The NCLB act requires that paraprofessionals become “highly qualified” by completing two years of college (48 college credits) or pass a state approved Paraprofessional test. Responding to this legislation, the Interior-Aleutians Campus, supported by the College of Rural and Community Development, developed the Educator: Para-Professional Program (2004). The Certificate’s 30 credits go toward satisfying this mandate and the ASS degree, at 60 credits, completely satisfies this requirement. Most rural Parapros are local residents and need to obtain the necessary skills and training in their home village via distance learning.

The approved Paraprofessional test that the Alaska Department of Education supported for the first few years of the NCLB was the “Higher Education Learning Profile” or the “Help Test”. Paraprofessionals could meet the “highly qualified” requirements of the NCLB Act by scoring well enough in the areas of Math, Reading Comprehension, and Written Expression which are 54%, 41% and 55% respectively. Thus, students can “test out” of the EDPA curriculum. In the past year, the EED has switched tests to the PRAXIS test, Parapro Assessment. Most districts have chosen to utilize this “test out” method, as it is much less costly and time consuming than utilizing the college credit requirement including the EDDPA program. The biggest advantage of the EDPA program course work is the course educational skills can immediately be utilized in the classroom, whereas, the “STATE TEST” only gauges their ability to “Read, Write and do Math.” The EDPA curriculum teaches them “how to” teach Reading, Writing, Math and manage students and a classroom in a professional manner.

The EDPA program also develops the local Parapros with the skills necessary to assist the schools to pass AYP and help alleviate the pains and problems with high teacher turn over in most rural school districts. I am sure if given adequate funding and the time, school districts would much prefer the EDPA program over the “TEST” for their Parapros.

The most unique and significant service achievement of the EDPA program is that it is the only professional program in the State of Alaska that addresses the needs and problems associated with being a teacher aide. Most Parapros have little or no formal training working with children. Most teachers have little or no formal training in working with and effectively utilizing a Parapro. The EDPA program treats Alaska’s Parapros as professionals and provides an opportunity to become the best “Teacher’s Aide” they can be. A few certified teachers have also enrolled in our basic Reading and Writing courses.

EDPA Certificate and AAS degree graduate, Margie Walker, from Grayling, retired from Iditarod Area School District after working over 25 years as Paraprofessional at David-Louis Memorial and BIA Schools.

To quote Pete Pinney, CRCED Vice Chancellor for Community, Rural and Native Education from his response to the 2007 EDPA Program Review for 2009, “The EDPA program is the only approved Educational Paraprofessional Certificate and AAS degree program in the state. It fills a need to assist Rural and Urban present and potential Parapro students to become “Highly Qualified” as required by the NCLB act. All courses are unique to Paraprofessionals and not duplicated anywhere else in the state.”

The adjunct instructors teaching these courses are professionals working in the field and are dedicated to the success of the program. The course scheduling provides evening and weekend classes to accommodate the work schedules of many of the students. Because the EDPA courses are methods oriented, the students can immediately use their skills in their present positions in the school. The courses are presented via Distance Delivery which is essential for success of the program as it is currently structured. The program's system of self-assessment appears to be sufficient as evidenced by its use of telephone interviews and questionnaires sent to Graduates and Mentor Teachers/Employers.

Importantly the EDPA program satisfies requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act for "highly qualified" Paraprofessionals. This is the only approved Educational Paraprofessional Certificate and AAS degree program in the state. Lastly, the EDPA program has little direct overhead costs. It has no faculty or staff except for the part time Department Head and part time Student Advisor. The adjunct instructors are paid from EDPA course tuition and subsidized by the Interior-Aleutians Campus. Since the classes are taught by distance delivery methods, they utilize school district and tribal facilities at no cost.

All teaching Staff are practicing Educators. They range from Elementary Teachers in small rural villages to University Instructors to technology experts. Most are adjuncts and love what they do to assist the EDPA students and program.

Although this is a state-wide program, we are actively recruiting in Lower Yukon, Yukon Flats, Yukon-Koyukuk, Kuspuk, AK Gateway, Iditarod, NW Arctic, Bering Straits, SW Region, Fairbanks, Galena and the Lower Kuskokwim School Districts.

In the past 3 years, the EDPA program has received scholarship support for local paraprofessionals from PELL grants and the following native councils: Anvik Tribal, Holy Cross Tribal, Shageluk Tribal, Grayling Tribal, Hughes Tribal, Telida Tribal, Loudon Tribal, Nulato Tribal, Edzeno Nikolai Tribal, McGrath Native Village, Arctic Village, and Council of Athabascan Tribal Government's NACTEP.

We received EDPA funding and in-kind support from the following school districts and agencies: Iditarod Area School District, Yukon Flats School District, Lower Kuskokwim School District, Galena City School District, Yukon-Koyukuk School District, the City of Galena, Tanana Chiefs Conference, USF&W Service, and Southcentral Foundation.

In the four years of existence, we have had six certificates and four A.A.S. degrees confirmed. One has gone on toward a Bachelor's degree and three are considering going on with their A.A.S.

University of Alaska Fairbanks
Educator: Para-Professional (EDPA)
Certificate of Completion

Evaluation of the EDPA Certificate

December 2010

INTENDED OUTCOMES/ OBJECTIVES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES (what, when, who)
<p>The EDPA Certificate Program intends:</p> <p>1. To contribute to an educated Alaskan workforce by providing a solid academic foundation and relevant coursework to Alaskans who choose to work with children in schools as Para-professional educators.</p> <p>2. To prepare a cadre of Para-professional educators to best work with Alaska's children by providing a program that links learning with work-based skills and is directly applicable to the classroom.</p>	<p>1. Completion of university core academic courses in Communication, Computation and Human Relations with a grade of "C" or higher.</p> <p>2. Completion (with a "Pass" or a "C" or higher) of 12 EDPA courses specifically designed to develop para-professional understanding of school protocols and classroom skills in the areas of: classroom methods, classroom management and student assessment.</p> <p>Assessments shall be based upon criteria established for each EDPA course, including the performance of specific tasks that directly relate to work in the classroom assisting the classroom teacher.</p>	<p>1. Students are required to complete all core Academic courses with a "C" or better. They are to have taken a Placement Test for Communication and Computation courses. They are counseled by distance each semester as to the correct courses to be enrolled. This is accomplished by Candace Waruch, Student Advisor out of the McGrath Center and Larry Hausmann, Program Manager out of the Y-K Center in Galena.</p> <p>2. 100% of the Students have completed core EDPA courses with a grade of "C" or higher.</p> <p>This is being accomplished by the use of The new Educator: Para-Professional Degree Program Skills Checklist. (Attached) This is a direct Assessment that asks the Mentor to check the skills the students should have acquired from each of the EDPA courses.</p>

<p>3.To provide a career ladder opportunity for Para-professional educators.</p>	<p>3. Completion of the EDPA Certificate program will provide the first year of training toward the AAS Educator: Para-Professional Degree and one year of preparation toward satisfying the two-year No Child Left Behind federal mandate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Para-professional assessment will be ongoing, based upon performance in courses as well as performance as para-professionals (of those students already employed by districts). • There will be ongoing course evaluation. • Students will leave the certificate program with knowledge in educational pedagogy as well as skills which have been identified as 'best practices' in education. • Employers and/or practicum supervisors will express satisfaction in certificate graduates' ability to effectively work with children. • Graduates will be tracked in order to assess their ability to gain employment in schools and job retention rates. • Statistics will be kept on the percentage of EDPA Certificate graduates seeking an associate and a baccalaureate degree. 	<p>3. Embedded in the courses, particularly the Practicum EDPA 199, direct and indirect assessments are utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the courses, curriculum, and student understanding of the content. This is accomplished through self-evaluation (An Open exercise at the completion of the Practicum.) The Mentor Teacher/Principals Evaluations. (See attached Form) and the new Educator: Para-Professional Degree Program Skills Checklist. (Attached) Through these Direct Assessments we have found that all students have improved their skills working with students in the classroom. Most all mentor teachers and principals have rave reviews over the knowledge and classroom behaviors and student interactions that the paraprofessionals have gained through the EDPA program.</p> <p>The successful Practicum student also completes the EDPA Questionnaire. This is another self-evaluation of the students understanding of the courses curriculums and expectations.</p> <p>At the present, all of our recent EDPA Practicum Certificate students have been employed or are presently employed in a paraprofessional position. Two of the recent Certificate graduates have gone on to work on the AAS degree.</p>
--	--	---

University of Alaska Fairbanks
Educator: Para-Professional (EDPA)
Applied Associate of Science

Evaluation of the EDPA Applied Associate of Science

INTENDED
OUTCOMES/
OBJECTIVES

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Evaluation Results

<p>The EDPA A.A.S. Program intends:</p> <p>1. To contribute to an educated Alaskan workforce by providing a solid academic foundation and relevant coursework to Alaskans who choose to work with children in schools as Para-professional educators.</p>	<p>1a. 80% of the graduates will secure employment as Para-professional educators or in a closely related field or will go on for additional education, training, or experience.</p> <p>1b. 80% of the graduates will express overall satisfaction with the Educator: Para-Professional course of study.</p>	<p>1a. At the present, 100% of our recent EDPA Practicum AAS degree students have been employed or are presently employed in a parapros position.</p> <p>1b. Embedded in the courses, particularly the Practicum EDPA 299, direct and indirect assessments are utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the courses, curriculum, and student understanding of the content. This is accomplished through self-evaluation (An Open exercise at the completion of the Practicum.)</p> <p>100% of the EDPA AAS degree graduates have expressed great professional and personal satisfaction with the program and course work. The Mentor Teacher/Principals Evaluations. (See attached Form) and the new Educator: Para-Professional Degree Program Skills Checklist. (Attached) Through these Direct Assessments we have found that all students have improved their skills working with students in the classroom. Most all mentor teachers and principals have rave reviews over the knowledge and classroom behaviors and student interactions that the parapros have gained through the EDPA program.</p>
---	--	--

<p>2. To prepare a cadre of Alaskan Para-professional educators who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet the new federal No Child Left Behind Mandate for Para-professionals • are best prepared to work with Alaska's children through training that links learning with work-based skills and is directly applicable to the classroom. 	<p>2a. The requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and the associated State of Alaska requirements will be reviewed annually to ensure that program requirements and course content matches Federal and State mandates.</p> <p>2b. A questionnaire will be sent to employers and graduates (who completed the Educator: Para-Professional program within 5 years) during the fall of 2006 and each subsequent 3 years.</p> <p>The questionnaire will assist in identifying the importance of a graduate's essential skills in the EDPA discipline and in communication, critical thinking, computation, and human relations.</p>	<p>2a. While the NCLB Act has not basically changed, The EED State "Test Out" Exam has been changed this past year from the "HELP Test" to the ETS PRAXIS: Parapro Exam. The EDPA course work still matches Federal and State Mandates.</p> <p>2b. The Questionnaires were sent out to the two latest AAS graduates and their employers this past year. The principal---mentor Teachers and Graduates were very pleased with the Improvement of the skills of the Parapro in the classroom. The only suggestion was to allow more course credit time for Core courses.</p>
<p>3.To provide a career ladder opportunity for Para-professional educators.</p>	<p>3. A questionnaire will be sent to employers and graduates (who completed the Educator: Para-Professional program within 5 years) during the fall of 2006 and each subsequent 3 years.</p>	<p>3. The Questionnaires were sent out to the two latest AAS graduates and their employers this past year. The principal---mentor Teachers and Graduates were very pleased with the Improvement of the skills of the Parapro in the classroom. The only suggestion was to allow more course credit time for Core courses.</p>