

To: Chester County Superintendents

From: Melody Wilt

RE: Update on ESL Program Specialist Certificate and Paraprofessional Initiative

I have received several inquiries recently and wanted to provide you with an update regarding these two important issues.

ESL PROGRAM SPECIALIST CERTIFICATE:

The Intermediate Unit System met with the Department of Certification to review program requirements for issuing this certificate. Since that initial meeting, all 29 IUs have jointly created 1) a proposal to become a Certificate Provider and 2) the coursework to support that certificate program. CCIU will be working with Dr. Cheri Micheau to implement the program in our county.

I will be submitting a proposal from the CCIU to PDE early November with an anticipated implementation date of January 2003. This timeline is dependent on the Department's processing our application. As soon as we have final approval, I will be contacting you with specific information regarding applying for the certificate, coursework, etc.

PARAPROFESSIONAL:

NCLB indicates paras should have 1) completed 2 years of study at an institution of higher education; 2) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; OR 3) met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate through a formal State or local academic assessment knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics.

We have been following this closely and I have been told the State Board is going to address paraprofessionals and "highly" qualified teachers at their November 13-14 meeting. The Intermediate Unit System has a scheduled meeting on November 15th to see how we can address the paraprofessional requirements that are presented by the State Board. Our intent would be to design a quality program that can be implemented with the greatest cost efficiency.

I will be providing additional information as it is finalized. If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (610-524-5054 or melodyw@cciu.org).

Cc: Dr. John Baillie