

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Review



To provide an academic and skill-based education to students through flexible course delivery methods to meet the needs of both Alaska's rural and urban based students.

Submitted by Larry Hausmann
February 2009

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Overview

Every school in rural Alaska employs paraprofessionals to work with the most needy students in the school. In 2002, there were 2,480 paraprofessionals in the state. The majorities of paraprofessionals working in rural schools are from their communities and understand the language and cultural differences. Findings from a survey on six school districts in Kuskokwim Delta indicate of 363 paraprofessionals, only 63 fulfilled the requirement of the NCLB Act. These findings are mirrored by other rural school districts.

The EDPA program was developed in consultation with school district personnel from the College of Rural Alaska service area, paraprofessionals, and state representatives from the Department of Education and Early Development under guidance of the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education faculty and Clara Johnson, Director, Interior-Aleutians Campus; Karen Ladegard, Coordinator, McGrath Center, Interior-Aleutians Campus and kas aruskevich, Program Manager, Interior-Aleutians Campus.

It responds to the unique educational needs of all children, the cultural diversity in Alaska, the standards developed for Alaskan school-aged children, and the core competencies that have been drafted for paraprofessional educators by the State of Alaska. Recognizing that paraprofessional educators have unique responsibilities within the public school and to assure compliance with the state competencies, 11 courses were developed for the program. These courses incorporate academic skills, instructional methods, ethics, and record keeping.

Section 7302 of the Alaska Native Educational Equity, Support and Assistance Act entitled “Findings” clearly states the need for improved educational outcomes for Alaska Natives: “Alaska Native children enter and exit school with serious educational handicaps. The educational achievement of Alaska Native children is far below national norms. Native performance on standardized tests is low, Native student drop out rates are high, and Natives are significantly underrepresented among holders of baccalaureate degrees in the State of Alaska.”

The above statements refer to the results of poor educational preparation among Alaska Natives. The reasons for these unfortunate outcomes are not mentioned, however. One critical reason behind these sad statistics is that it is often difficult for rural schools to retain teachers. Arriving from urban Alaska or (more frequently) from the lower 48 states, new teachers are attracted by the adventure of life in rural Alaska. Day-to-day realities, however, severely challenge the romantic vision. Among the difficulties of life in rural Alaska are comparatively low salaries, poor housing, isolation, severe weather, extremes of day length, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and cultural differences in teachers' adoptive communities.

Clearly, a trend toward short stays for teachers' results in continual upheaval for students and leads to inconsistencies and gaps in learning that start in kindergarten and continue through high school. Especially in rural Alaska, a strong and committed paraprofessional is a critical asset in situations when vacancies cannot be filled before the departure of the incumbent or in the case of illness, family or medical emergencies for a teacher. Small schools rely on their paraprofessionals to be the de facto "teacher" in the classroom when the teacher cannot be.

Para-professional roles include instructional assistants, teachers' aides, library aides, preschool caregivers, media aides, and other similar titles. This population of paraprofessionals very often has recognized attributes including:

- they are mature candidates who already have classroom experience;
- they are more likely to live in the communities where they work and to share the language and/or culture of the students they serve;
- they often have significant experiences working in public schools and with challenging students;
- a majority of participants in paraprofessional-to-teacher programs are individuals of color.

Moreover, when the teacher is present, paraprofessionals deepen the learning experience of students through tutoring, mentorship and individual attention. Indeed, the increasing reliance on the paraprofessional in the classroom has been observed since the late 90's: But Federal legislation in 2002, called the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), mandated that Classroom

Aides (henceforth referred to as Paraprofessional Educators) complete two years of college in order to qualify for the job in a Title I school.

Responding to this legislation, the Interior-Aleutians Campus supported by the College of Rural and Community Development proposed the Educator: Paraprofessional Program (EDPA) consisting of a 30-credit certificate program, which articulates into a 60-credit AAS degree program. The AAS Degree Program meets the federal education mandate for Paraprofessional educators.

Development for EDPA program was originally funded by USDOE grant. To address the years of experience held by many paraprofessional educators today, the EDPA program offers opportunities of credit for prior learning, of local instruction by university approved certified teachers, and of credit for school in-services. While individuals enrolling in this program may be working in schools, current school employment is not a requirement for entry into the program. Working together, over twenty-six instructors, current teachers in rural school districts, have been academically approved to teach courses to paraprofessionals for the degree Educator: Paraprofessional Program. Most are adjunct instructors and we seem to have an adequate supply that live in Rural Alaska and have experience with Distance Education.

The AAS Degree Program meets the federal education mandate for paraprofessional educators. The program prepares students with skill-based education that is directly applicable to the classroom. The addition of 30 credits to the EDPA certificate for the AAS degree provides students with further academic course work and content area exploration. Students are required to take up to twelve credits from a choice of seven different concentration areas: Native Language; Elementary Education; Special Education; Counseling/Social Work; Early Childhood Education; Microcomputer Support Specialist; and Rural Development.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program

Goals and Objectives

Educator: Paraprofessional Program: EDPA was developed to provide paraprofessionals with education and training that develops their skills to help students meet or exceed proficiency standards and reduce the dropout rate among middle and high school students (identified as Performance Measures for the Alaska Native Education Program.) The EDPA program helps paraprofessionals increase their knowledge and skills in the delivery of the critical content areas of mathematics, reading, writing, technology, culture, differentiated instruction, and classroom management. EDPA students also undertake coursework in child development and psychology. An evaluation of the EDPA program conducted in 2004 demonstrated that paraprofessionals themselves gain self-confidence, independence, self-reliance and enjoy a more egalitarian relationship with their teacher partner through these certificate and AAS programs.

EDPA also helps small rural school meet the “No Child Left Behind Act” regulations for highly qualified paraprofessionals in Alaska’s classrooms and early childhood programs by educating local residents. These individuals provide long-term stability to schools by residency and length of tenure as well as knowledge of the local culture. Both programs provide opportunities for the long-term local paraprofessional workforce to attain their educational teaching goals while remaining in their community. The EDPA AAS degree also provides students with an opportunity to pursue an “emphasis area” in elementary education, early childhood education, Alaska Native Languages or other topics.

A. PROGRAM GOALS

Objectives and Outcomes-Based Evaluation:

Objectives

1. To prepare a cadre of paraprofessional educators that meet the new federal No Child Left Behind mandate and thereby retain Alaska residents in the school workplace.
2. To contribute to an educated Alaskan workforce 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.

3. To provide a career ladder opportunity for Alaskans to enter teaching and other related fields.
- b) Evaluation

The Educator: Paraprofessional Program will be evaluated in the future by:

- School districts on the effectiveness of graduate job performance as Paraprofessional Educators.
- Comparisons made between the performance of program graduates and former classroom aides.
- Analyzing statistics on Title I program effectiveness in meeting targeted goals.
- On-going tracking of graduates in order to assess their ability to gain employment in schools and their job retention rates.
- Maintaining statistics on the percentage of EDPA graduates seeking.

Relationship of Courses to Program Objectives:

The EDPA courses directly serve the program objectives by:

- a. All EDPA required courses target skills identified by school district teachers and curriculum personnel as being essential to the Para-Professional Educator.
- b. All of the Alaska State Core Competencies for Para-Professionals are met through the EDPA coursework.
- c. The AAS Degree EDPA Program more than meets the federal guideline requirements for paraprofessionals as outlined in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation.
- d. Recognizing that paraprofessional educators have unique responsibilities within the public school, it has been necessary to develop 12 courses that will address their unique role. These courses incorporate school protocols, academic skills, instructional methods and record keeping required of the Paraprofessional Educator.

If the goal of the EDPA program is to train the Best Teacher's Aides and not necessarily future teachers, then we need to emphasize the idea that the EDPA program will not only satisfy the requirements of the NCLB Act, but it will improve the education of the students in the schools including increased Standardized Test scores.

The HELP Test, administered by the Department of Education, will only satisfy the “Highly Qualified” section of the NCLB Act for paraprofessionals. It will not develop a better educational system for our PreK – 12 students. Only an appropriate educational and training program will accomplish both. This is the purpose of the EDPA Program.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Course Description

EDPA 110 Intro to Paraprofessional Education **2 credits**
Provides initial instruction to the paraprofessional educators on the roles and responsibilities of the job. Students will participate in district mandatory training sessions, learn about legal issues and confidentiality in the school and learn to make effective classroom observations.

EDPA 120 Classroom Management **2 credits**
A comprehensive course to observe and document a variety of strategies for effective classroom organization, management and communication. Students will discuss and reflect upon the relationship between classroom management and student learning. Students will learn strategies for establishing a positive classroom environment.

EDPA 130 Differentiating Instruction **2 credits**
This course will focus on the different modalities of learning and teaching strategies necessary for meeting individual learners’ needs.

EDPA 140 Developing Children as Writers **1 credit**
Instructs paraprofessional educators on how to assist teachers in assessing student writing skills and developing children as writers. Paraprofessional educators will become skilled in linking writing to the culture and environment of the child.

EDPA 150 Developing Children as Readers **1 credit**
This course will instruct para-professional educators on how to assess student reading and assist teachers in developing children as readers.

EDPA 160 Primary Math Methods **1 credit**

This course will help paraprofessional educators develop the skills necessary for assisting teachers in using best practices in teaching math in the primary classroom. Paraprofessional educators will become skilled in linking mathematics to the culture and environment of the child.

OR

EDPA 170 Upper Elementary Math Methods **1 credit**

This course will help paraprofessional educators develop the skills necessary for assisting teachers in using best practices in teaching math in the upper elementary classroom. Paraprofessional educators will become skilled in linking mathematics to the culture and environment of the child.

EDPA 190 Integrating Local Knowledge into the Curriculum **1 credit**

The goal of this course is to help students learn the prehistory, history, and culture of their communities and of their regions and gain strategies for integrating this knowledge into the school curriculum.

EDPA 199 Practicum **1 credit**

Individualized work experience within the classroom under the supervision of a certified classroom teacher. Required course for the Certificate.

EDPA 210 Technology in the Classroom **1 credit**

Technology in the Classroom is a comprehensive one-credit course of introduction to various ways that technology can be utilized in the classroom. Students will be exposed to practical computer use such as exploring software, electronic grade books, lesson plans, graphics, digital photography, internet use and internet safety.

EDPA 250 Current Topics for Educators **1 credit**

This course will focus on in-service training offered through school districts to update and train paraprofessionals and teachers on the use of district curriculum, policies, procedures, etc.

EDPA 299 Practicum **1 credit**

Individualized work experience within the classroom under the supervision of a certified classroom teacher. Required course for the Associates of Applied Science Degree.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Degree Requirements

EDPA Certificate Requirements:

- 1. Complete the university certificate requirements.**
- 2. Complete the certificate requirement areas of communication, computation, and human relations.**

A. *Human Relations* 3 credits

PSY/ECE/ED 245 Child Development 3 credits or one additional approved human relations course at the 100 level or above.

B. *Communication* 3 credits

COMM 131 or COMM 141, CIOS 160, DEVS 104, DEVS105, ENGL 111, or one course from the Related Instruction area of Written Communication.

C. *Computation* 3 credits

Complete 3 credits from one of the following computation courses: TTCH 131, CIOS 116, ABUS 155, DEVM 105 or any course at the 100 level or above in mathematical sciences (Math, Computer Science, Statistics)

- 3. Complete the following certificate core requirements**

11 credits

A. CIOS 100 Intro to Personal Computers 1 credit

B. EDPA 210 Technology in the Classroom
1 credit

C. EDPA 190 Integrating Local Knowledge into the Curriculum 1 credit

D. PSY 101 Intro to Psych 3 credits

E. ED 110 Becoming a Teacher in the 21st Century 1 credit

F. ECE/PSY 245 Child Development 3 credits

G. EDPA 199 Practicum 1 credit

- 4. Complete the following program requirements**

10 credits

A. EDPA 110 Intro to Para-professional Education 2 credits

B. EDPA 120 Classroom Management 2 credits

C. EDPA 130 Differentiating Instruction 2 credits

D. EDPA 140 Developing Children as Writers 1 credit

E. EDPA 150 Developing Children as Readers 1 credit

F. EDPA 160 Primary Math Methods 1 credit

Or

EDPA 170 Upper Elementary Math Methods 1 credit

G. EDPA 250 Current Topics for Educators 1 credit

Or

EDPA 299 Practicum 1 credit

- 5. Minimum credits required 30 credits**

EDPA Associates of Applied Science degree Requirements:

1. Complete the general university A.A.S. degree requirements
2. 15 semester credits must be earned at UAF
3. Complete the EDPA Certificate Requirements

Communication 9 credits

- ENGL 111X :
- COMM 131X or COMM 141X
- And one of the following: CIOS 260, ENGL 211X, ENGL 212, ENGL 213

Computation 3 credits

Any course at the 100 level or above in mathematical sciences.

TTCH 131, CIOS 116, ABUS 155, HSV/ECE 117, HLTH 116 or DEVM 105.

Human Relations 3 credits

One of the following: ANTH 100X/SOC 100X, ABUS 154, HS 120, RHS 115 or ANL 287.

Major specialty 33 credits

Includes: All 21-credits from Certificate #3 and 4 and 12 credits from the concentration areas below.

Concentration Area-Students may choose to combine no more than 2 concentration areas from the following list with course work to be evenly divided between the two concentration areas for a total of 12 credits:

Alaska Native Language

Elementary Education

Special Education

Counseling/Social Work (HSV)

Early Childhood Education

Information Technology Specialist

Rural Development

Or Advisor approved discipline-based concentration area-

12 credits

Electives to total 60 credits

Sample Course of Study

Full Time Course of Study for the Educator: Para-professional Certificate Program

Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
ABUS 170 Cert.or 271 A.A.S.	3 credits	ECE/PSY 245	3 credits
CIOS 100	1 credit	ABUS 155orECE 117	3 credits
PSY 101	3 credits	ED 110	1 credit
ANTH 100X/ABUS 154	3 credits	EDPA 120	2 credits
EDPA 110	2 credits	EDPA 130	2credits
EDPA 150	1 credit	EDPA 140	1 credit
EDPA 190	1 credit	EDPA 160/170	1 credit
EDPA 199	1 credit	EDPA 210	1 credit
		EDPA 250 or 299	1 credit
Fall Total	<u>15 credits</u>	Spring Total	<u>15 credits</u>

Total Credits= 30 credits-Completion of EDPA Certificate Program

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Evaluation

Assessment Plan to Evaluate Student Learning and Satisfaction

A questionnaire is sent to employers and graduates (who completed the Educator: Paraprofessional program within 5 years) during the fall of 2006 and each subsequent 3 years. 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.

The EDPA program evaluation has involved four mailed questionnaires and two different telephone interviews. The following details these efforts:

- 1) All EDPA instructors were sent a questionnaire to evaluate the courses which they have taught. This evaluation involved questions relating to:
 - Course Content
 - Appropriateness of instructional materials
 - Course Delivery: setting, format, duration, etc.

- 2) All individuals who have enrolled in one or more EDPA classes were sent a questionnaire with questions relating to the following:
 - Course Content
 - Course relevance to their jobs
 - Ability of course to improve job performance
 - Impact of courses on their lives beyond their jobs, i.e. leadership positions held, ability to help children/grandchildren with homework, etc.

- 3) Follow up calls were made to students, going over a similar questionnaire with them as the one described in #2.

- 4) Telephone interview with principals and teachers who are working with EDPA students. This interview attempts to discern the impact of courses on:
 - job performance, including: professionalism, ability to work effectively with targeted students,
 - ability of paraprofessionals to ‘fit in’ to the professional school community and work as a team member.

Courses are being revised based upon feedback from students, EDPA instructors and classroom teachers and principals working with EDPA students.

EDPA Questionnaire:

Dear _____,

Thank you for being a part of the EDPA (or Educator Para-Professional) program.

Since you have taken classes through the EDPA program, I would like to ask you

some questions. I hope you will find the time to answer some questions?

The purpose of this questionnaire is:

-To identify which university classes are most helpful to you in your role as paraprofessional educator (or classroom aide) and

-To improve our program to better meet your needs as a school and a community leader.

Please be complete in your answers so that we can best determine the effectiveness of this program.

1. Are you currently employed by a school in Alaska? If so, what is your job title and what age students are you working with?

Job Title _____

Grade(s) _____

What are the names of your supervisory teacher(s)?

2. About how many university classes have you taken throughout your life?

3. How old are you today? _____ (Optional)

4. In what year did you take your first university class? _____

5. What is your long term (over the next 2 years) professional goal (i.e. to complete EDPA 2 year degree, to become a classroom teacher, etc.)

6. What is your main reason for taking EDPA classes?

7. Of the EDPA classes which you have taken, which ones have most directly helped you in your job as classroom aide?

8. Specifically, how have these classes affected your ability to help your students?

9. How have university classes affected your confidence as a member of your school staff? Please be specific.

10. How have university classes affected your attitude toward your job as a paraprofessional educator? Please be specific.

11. Overall, how would you rate your success in university classes?

1 is not very successful; 2 is moderately successful; 3 is very successful

1

2

3

12. Do you sit on any boards or hold any positions of leadership in your Community? If yes, please name them.

IF NO, GO ON TO #14.

13...If yes to #11, when did you first hold a leadership position in your community?

14...How have university classes affected your role as a community leader? Please be specific.

15...If you had to pick the one university class or school in-service that has had the greatest affect on raising your self confidence in your role of paraprofessional educator, what would it be? What about this class raised your self confidence?

16...If you had to pick one university class or school in-service which has had the greatest impact on your ability to help your students, which would it be?

What about this class impacted your ability to help your students?

17...What skills would you like to improve through future university classes?

18...How much have EDPA classes helped you in the following areas? Please rate them as follows: 1 means they haven't helped you at all, 2 means that they have helped you somewhat and 3 means that they have helped you very much.

a. How much have university classes helped you to speak up at school meetings?(i.e. faculty meetings)

1

2

3

b. How much has university classes helped you to speak up at community meetings?

1

2

3

c. How much have university classes helped you to improve your students' performance?

1

2

3

Which delivery mode has worked best for you? Audio conference, face-to-face classes, video conferencing classes, other (please specify).

19. Is there any other way in which university classes have impacted your life? i.e. in your home with your own children, in your relationships with parents, etc.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Changes

MAJOR/MINOR PROGRAM/DEGREE REQUIREMENT CHANGE 6-06

Department EDUCATOR: PARA—PROFESSIONAL College/School Interior-Aluetians
Campus _____
Prepared by Larry Hausmann Phone 656-2129 _____

Name of Program: EDPA Educator: Para-Professional Program
Certificate

A. CHANGE IN DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: (Brief statement of program/degree changes and objectives)

From the Certificate Program: **Remove “Edpa 299” course from the “Major Requirements: 2. Complete the following:”**

C. **PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS** (AS IT WILL APPEAR WITH THESE CHANGES:
(underline new wording ~~strike-through~~ old wording and use catalog format)

Certificate Program ----- Complete the [general university requirements](#).

1. Complete the [certificate requirements](#).
2. Complete the following core requirements:
CIOS 100--Intro to Personal Computers--1 credit
ED 110--Becoming a Teacher in the 21st Century--1 credit
PSY 101--Intro to Psychology--3 credits
EDPA 190--Integrating Local Knowledge into the Curriculum--1 credit
EDPA 199--Practicum--1 credit
EDPA 210--Technology in the Classroom--1 credit
ECE/PSY 245--Child Development--3 credits
3. Complete the following program requirements:
EDPA 110--Intro to Para-Professional Education--2 credits
EDPA 120--Classroom Management--2 credits
EDPA 130--Differentiating Instruction--2 credits
EDPA 140--Developing Children as Writers--1 credit
EDPA 150--Developing Children as Readers--1 credit
EDPA 160--Primary Math Methods (1)
or EDPA 170--Upper Elementary Math Methods (1)--1 credit
EDPA 250--Current Topics for Educators (1)
or ~~EDPA 299--Practicum II (1)--1 credit~~
4. Minimum credits required—30

D. *JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE:* In order to include the SLOA Plan with more Direct Assessment in the EDPA Program, we need to amend the EDPA degree requirements for the Certificate and the A.A.S. degree so that the Certificate has only one practicum, 199 and the A.A.S. degree has only one practicum, 299.

**MAJOR/MINOR
PROGRAM/DEGREE REQUIREMENT
CHANGE
6-06**

Department EDUCATOR: PARA—PROFESSIONAL College/School
Interior-Aluetians Campus

Prepared by Larry Hausmann Phone 656-2129

Name of Program: EDPA Educator: Para-Professional Program
A.A.S degree

A. CHANGE IN DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: (Brief statement of program/degree changes and objectives)

A.A.S. degree Program: Remove “Edpa 199” course from the “Major Requirements: 1. Complete the following:”
Replacing it with “Edpa 299”

A.A.S. degree Program: Remove “OR Edpa 299” course from the “Major Requirements: 1. Complete the following:”

Add Ece 105 (1) _____ to the Elementary Education Area of concentration under 2. Complete 12 credits from 1 concentration area....

Add Ece 105 (1) _____ to the Special Education Area of concentration under 2. Complete 12 credits from 1 concentration area....

ED Elective--3 credits This was left off of the Elementary Education Area of concentration under 2. Complete 12 credits from 1 concentration area.... In the 2006-2007 UAF Catalog but it was not left off the EDPA Degree Requirement Worksheet. I believe that this is an accidental omission from the UAF Catalog. So it may not need to be added. The total Elementary Education Electives should be a total of 6 credits.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Outcomes Assessment

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

Date: March, 2003
Certificate or Degree Program: EDPA Certificate

Mission: The mission of the EDPA Certificate Program is to provide an academic and skill-based education to students through flexible course delivery methods to meet the needs of both Alaska's rural and urban based students.

Goal: To strengthen para-professional academic skills and to provide training in effective classroom practices while addressing the requirements for para-professional educators established by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002

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>1a. 80% of the graduates will go on for additional education, training, experience or employment.</p> <p>1b. 80% of the graduates will express overall satisfaction with the Educator: Para-Professional course of study.</p>	<p>1a. Administration and analysis of the results of the Yearly Survey of Graduates will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</p> <p>1b. Administration and analysis of the results of the Yearly Survey of Graduates will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</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>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. 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. The Program Manager will conduct annual reviews of the NCLB Act and any changes and will incorporate identified changes into the EDPA program.</p> <p>2b. Administration and analysis of the results of the Outcome Assessment Questionnaire will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</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>	<p>3. A questionnaire will be sent to employers and graduates (who completed the Educator: Para-Professional Certificate within 2 years) during the fall of 2006 and each subsequent 3 years.</p>	<p>3. Administration and analysis of the results of the Outcome Assessment Questionnaire will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</p>
---	---	---

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

Date: March, 2003

Certificate or Degree Program: Educator: Para-Professional AAS Degree

Mission: The mission of the EDPA Certificate Program is to provide an academic and skill-based education to students through flexible course delivery methods to meet the needs of both Alaska's rural and urban-based students.

Goal: To strengthen para-professional academic skills and to provide training in effective classroom practices while addressing the requirements for para-professional educators established by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002

INTENDED OUTCOMES/ OBJECTIVES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES (what, when, who)
<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. Administration and analysis of the results of the Yearly Survey of Graduates will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</p> <p>1b. Administration and analysis of the results of the Yearly Survey of Graduates will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</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. 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. The Program Manager will conduct annual reviews of the NCLB Act and any changes and will incorporate identified changes into the EDPA program.</p> <p>2b. Administration and analysis of the results of the Outcome Assessment Questionnaire will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</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. Administration and analysis of the results of the Outcome Assessment Questionnaire will be conducted by the Program Manager or designee who will disseminate results to the EDPA faculty.</p>

To: Susan Henrichs
From: Larry Hausmann
Re: EDPA: Para-Professional Annual Outcomes Assessment Report

Attached please find a Student Learning Outcomes Assessment plan for the Certificate and AAS in EDPA.

ANNUAL OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT

(Most can be 1-page or less. No report is required in years of Program Review.)

1. Please include a copy of current SLOA plans for each of your programs.

Attached please find the Outcomes/Objectives for the Certificate of Completion and the Applied Associate of Science degree.

2. List the outcomes assessment data collected this year, and the approximate number of items collected.

None. Data will begin being collected during the fall 2006 and each subsequent 3 years, as stated in the Assessment Criteria.

3. List assessment items or data you plan to collect next year.

Beginning with fall 2006, we plan to collect and analyze a Yearly Survey of Graduates and a Questionnaire which will be sent to employers and graduates.

4. Did a faculty group or committee review any assessment data this year?

No. No data collected.

5. Were any changes in curriculum made this year?

No.

6. Budget implications: Has assessment demonstrated the need for additional funding in (a) Operating budget (b) Equipment budget (c) Other areas.

No. However, if the EDPA program continues to expand, additional funds may be needed in the future.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program PAIR Data

UAF FY09 Program Review
 College of Rural and Community Development
 Student Credit Hours without audited hours

Subject	Campus	Level	2002	2002	2003	2003	2003	2004	2004	2004	2005	2005	2005	2006	2006	2006	2007	2007	2007	2008
			Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring
Educator: Para-professional	Bristol Bay	LD			9	122	28			22		27	36			9		9		
	Chukchi	LD				20			8	4										
	Interior-Aleutians	LD			8	109	67		43	45		31	41		27	74		20	33	
	Kuskokwim	LD				16				18										
	Northwest	LD				32	15			9										
	<i>Total</i>					8	9	299	110		51	98		58	77		27	83		29

UAF FY09 Program Review
 College of Rural and Community Development
 Headcount of Majors

Major	Campus	Degree	Type	2003	2004	2004	2004	2005	2005	2005	2006	2006	2006	2007	2007	2007	2008	2008
				Fall	Spring	Fiscal Year	Fall	Spring	Fiscal Year	Fall	Spring	Fiscal Year	Fall	Spring	Fiscal Year			
Educator: Para-Professional	Bristol Bay	AAS	Sgl	1	2	2												
	Chukchi	AAS	Sgl				2		2									
		Cert	Dbl				1		1									6
	Interior-Aleutians	AAS	Sgl	1		1	10	11	13	10	5	11	7	5	11	6	3	2
			Dbl	1	1	1	1		1			1	1	1	2	1	1	
		AAS/Cert	Sgl					1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3		1	1
			Cert	Sgl				4	6	8	5	3	7	4	1	6		1
			Dbl							1	1	2		1	1		1	1
	Northwest	AAS	Sgl							1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	<i>Educator: Para-Professional Total</i>			3	3	4	18	18	18	22	18	10	20	15	11	21	9	8

UAF FY09 Program Review
College of Rural and Community Development
Degrees Awarded

Major	Campus	Degree	2005	2006	2007	2008
Educator: Para-Professional	Interior-Aleutians	AAS		1		1
		Cert	3		2	
	<i>Para-Professional total</i>		3	1	2	1

Educator: Paraprofessional Program

Locally Gathered Data

School District	CRCD Campus	# of Students who have taken EDPA courses since Spring 06	# of Students who have declared EDPA Major	# of AK Native Students	# of Students currently taking EDPA courses	# of Students Graduating Spring or Fall 2007
Lower Yukon SD	Kuskokwim	16	0	16	2	0
Yukon Flats SD	IAC	10	1	9	8	0 (1 grad in F06 Cert)
Kuspuk SD	Kuskokwim	2 (there were more but many quit job)	1	1	1	0 (1 grad in F06 Cert)
AK Gateway SD	IAC	3	1	1?	2	0 (1 grad in S06 AAS)
Iditarod Area SD	IAC	3	2	2	1	1 w AAS F07
NW Arctic SD	Chukchi	4	3	?	0	0
Bering Str	Northwest Arctic	2	2	?	0	0
SW Region SD	Bristol Bay	2	1	2	0	0
Fairbanks NSBSD	NONE	5	4	1?	2	1 w AAS S07 1 w AAS F07
Lower Kuskokwim SD	Kuskokwim	1	0	1	0	0
TOTALS		48	15	33	16	

There are a few things to note about the above statistics:

Three students not listed in the last column above are currently taking courses but have finished all EDPA major courses and are working on CORE or Concentration area courses. Two others have finished EDPA courses and have not registered for CORE or Concentration courses this Semester. Seven additional students not listed above, who are EDPA majors, are not taking EDPA courses nor are they taking any courses related at all to the Core or Concentration Area, but are taking non-related courses (all of these are in other CRCD Campuses/School Districts who could be advising EDPA students into focusing on other degree program courses.

Many school districts have collaborated with CRCD community campuses to offer these classes (Special Topics-In-Service Courses) by utilizing their master teachers as adjunct university instructors. As an additional show of support to paraprofessionals, several school districts have funded and offered paraprofessionals release time to participate in university courses.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Self-Assessment

Educator: Paraprofessional Program - Strengths

- Adjunct Instructors teaching these courses are professionals working in the field dedicated to the success of the program.
- Course scheduling provides evening and weekend courses to better fit the lives of working students.
- The program has recently tested and activated the student self-advicing CAPP program through UA Online, which will allow students to take more responsibility for tracking their progress through the program and build their own academic plan.
- The program has been reviewing its three-year cycle of offerings to better accommodate student needs.
- Because the EDPA courses are Method courses, Paraprofessionals can immediately utilize their new skills in their schools classroom.
- The majority of EDPA courses are delivered by Distance Delivery Methods in their community.
- Principals and Homeroom teachers can become involved in the education and training of their Paraprofessionals.

- The EDPA program does satisfy the requirements of the NCLB Act for “Highly Qualified” paraprofessionals.
- The EDPA program is the only approved Paraprofessional Certificate and A.A.S. degree program in the State.
- Current Paraprofessionals students do a better job than none trained Teacher Aides.
- Teacher aides, that receive Paraprofessional training, feel more professional and proud of their school and students.
- The AAS Educator: Paraprofessional Program will provide the student the opportunity to develop the skills and training required for immediate employment in a variety of educational settings.
- The AAS Program is designed to prepare students to work in K-12 classrooms assisting the classroom teacher.
- The EDPA curriculum emphasizes training in the areas of school protocols, classroom methods, management, and assessment.
- The AAS Degree will serve as a basis for additional education programs, if desired. In particular, students wishing to go on for the BAE degree may have completed 44 credits toward that degree program.
- Small schools rely on their paraprofessionals to be the de facto “teacher” in the classroom when the teacher cannot be.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Costs

The EDPA program has little direct overhead costs. It has no faculty or staff outside of the part time Department Head and facilitator. The Department Head also functions as the Division Chair and the Coordinator for the Yukon-Koyukuk Center, limiting his time to concentrate on the EDPA program. Adjunct Instructors are paid from EDPA course tuition and subsidized by the Interior-Aleutians Campus. Most courses are taught by Distance Education methods and any locally taught courses utilize school district facilities at no cost.

The EDPA program was originally grant funded. It helped fund a cohort of paraprofessionals from participating school districts. After the grant ran out, the school districts did not continue with the Teacher’s Aide Program.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Challenges

The challenges to the EDPA program are many:

- The full time EDPA Department Head who had developed and been highly involved with the program took a job with a school district.
- The present Department Head had to rebuild the Instructor and student base from a part-time position.
- He is also responsible as a Coordinator for the Yukon-Koyukuk Center, serving 11 villages.
- He is also the Division Chair Person for Rural Education Division.
- A professional EDPA Student Advisor that assisted the EDPA program has retired and was replaced by a part-time facilitator.
- That loss created a void in experienced leadership of the EDPA program and with the contacts of REAA's.
- The high teacher/principal turnover restricts the continuity of the Paraprofessionals education.
- The tracking of graduates has not become institutionalized.
- With the turnover of the EDPA Department Head and staff associated with the program, the continuity has been uneven.
- The economic turn down of the country has affected the interest in rural students attending distance education courses.
- Superintendents and school districts are busy recruiting and retaining "Highly Qualified" certified staff from outside of the community and have little time or funds to devote to their Paraprofessional staff.
- Paraprofessionals are paid a low wage; with most school districts not rewarding advanced education. Many Aides are part-time and therefore do not receive a benefit package.
- The NCLB does not have the power that it did at first to encourage school districts and teacher aides to take the EDPA: Paraprofessional courses.
- Several motivated Paraprofessionals were laid off due to not meeting the "Highly Qualified" aspect of the NCLB.
- Most EDPA students average four credits each semester and at that rate it can take four years to receive a Certificate and many students lose interest, take breaks in their education, drop out or are no longer employed as a paraprofessional.

- Many Paraprofessionals have taken and passed the State sponsored HELP test. This will substitute for the EDPA courses as “Highly Qualified” but does nothing to improve the teaching skills of the aide. The Passing scores for Math, Reading and Written Expression are 54%, 41% and 55% respectively. Therefore, many districts are not interested in funding EDPA courses for their Paraprofessionals if the State has rated them “Highly Qualified.”
- Due to the low numbers of EDPA majors, only a few courses are offered each semester. Therefore, it can be difficult for a full-time student to graduate in the minimum time for each degree.
- Due to low enrollment in EDPA courses, course can be cancelled. This can cause a student to require an “Independent Study” in order to graduate on time.
- Due to the fact that the NCLB Act requires two years of college (basically 48 credits, not a two-year degree), the Certificate of 30 credits does not satisfy the “Highly Qualified” Status for a Paraprofessional.
- Consistent technical problems with FAX, phones and the Internet can slow and hinder communications to the EDPA students in small communities around the state.
- The Department Head and the Adjunct Faculty have virtually never met any of their students due to the vast distances between communities and the lack of travel funds.
- For some of the EDPA students, English is their second language.
- Many communities have limited and intermittent Internet service.
- Many EDPA students do not have Internet in their homes.
- Financial constraints: Low salaries and the high cost of college tuition make the prospect of returning to school very daunting for many paraprofessionals:
- Family considerations: Eighty percent of paraprofessionals are married and 48% have school-age children (NEA, 1997). This often makes going back to school even more challenging;
- Time commitments: very few paraprofessionals are not able to leave work and pursue a degree or credential full-time, nor are they able to take several years to complete a part-time program.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Student Recruitment

In fall of 2006 we gave a presentation to the participants of the Tanana Chiefs Conference Education Summit in Fairbanks. While there we gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Director of Federal Programs with the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, but there was not much interest in pursuing the program by this district. I attended the in service training offered by the Yukon Flats School District in Fairbanks in October 2007 and gave several presentations to Principals, teachers, and paraprofessionals that were meant to introduce the EDPA Program and some of its content. In January 2007, this same district asked us to offer EDPA F190 to their paraprofessionals at another in service held in Fairbanks. We later contacted these same paraprofessionals and were able to register many of them into other spring EDPA classes. As another recruiting effort aimed at school districts we attended the NCLB Conference in Anchorage, Alaska last January 2007 sponsored by the Alaska State Department of Education and Early Development. We made contact with over 20 Superintendents or their administrative staff at the conference. We faxed an EDPA promotional flyer to over 171 schools in Rural AK as well as ANC, FAI, & JNU and sent separate letters to over 26 potential or current students. We also had direct email contact with over 13 homeschool parents in the IDEA program (none of these parents registered for classes).

We believe that for many of the rural districts, a significant number of them would like to see their paraprofessionals (teacher aides, library aides, bilingual instructors, special education aides, etc.) obtain this training, but lack the funding to financially support this training. The paraprofessionals are almost always part-time local residents who lack funds to take courses. Some districts will reimburse paraprofessionals after successfully completing one or two courses. But paraprofessionals who are seasonal employees of school districts often lack the funds to pay for courses especially in the fall after a long summer without employment. Also, districts are concentrating their efforts on assisting their teachers to meet NCLB progress requirements. Some paraprofessionals have been able to meet NCLB "highly qualified" requirements by taking a state exam in Reading, Writing, & Math. Our approach with staff and districts has been that the EDPA program should help the paraprofessionals be more effective in the classroom and thereby is a good long-term investment in raising the achievement of their public school students they serve and that effort should

be made by districts to offer professional development to paraprofessionals as an NCLB strategy because in many cases paraprofessionals are stable in the schools and return year after year in contrast to high turn-over rates among teachers. But we still don't think we have gotten the "word out" to school districts with the exception of a few. It seems to take personal contact over the phone with both schools and their district offices.

Due to the fact that the I-AC's EDPA: Educator Paraprofessional Certificate and A.A.S. degree program is the only one on the state, it is our hope that the University will continue to support the EDPA program, realizing that the progress in attracting school districts will be slow due to their already strapped circumstances, especially in rural AK. A highly trained, motivated paraprofessional can make a significant difference in a student's education.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program Recommendations

- The EDPA needs grant funding in order to fund a few years of cohorts to revitalize the program. It is imperative that we partner with rural school districts to maintain and increase our EDPA student base. The application, by the I-AC, for an ANE (Alaska Native Education) federal grant to bolster the partnership with REAA's and bolster the EDPA enrollment, was not funded.
- The EDPA Student Advisor needs more contact time to recruit students, principals and school districts for the program.
- The EDPA Department Head needs more time for EDPA business as he is also the Division Chair and the Yukon-Koyukuk Center Coordinator for eleven Interior Villages.
- We need to develop MOU's with school districts to encourage their paraprofessionals to enroll in the EDPA Program.
- We need to lobby for the increase in Paraprofessional wages. Paraprofessionals are a very important part of all schools and deserve a living wage with benefits. This may include salary increases for Paraprofessional certificates and degrees.
- We need to lobby for the Tribes, School Districts and other entities to provide funding for EDPA students. A highly trained paraprofessional is

directly related to increases in student achievement and standardized test scores.

- We need to lobby the State legislature for increased Internet connectivity in all communities. We are not able to take advantage of Elluminate Live and other technologies due to poor Internet service in many small communities. The “E-Rate” can limit adult usage of school district computers and Internet for College courses.
- The EDPA program needs advertising in order to get the word out that we are the only Paraprofessional Certificate and AAS degree in Alaska and we are available as a state-wide program. This includes recruiting individual students and school districts.
- The EDPA program needs to encourage school districts to sponsor EDPA Special Topics and In-Service courses for their paraprofessionals.

Educator: Paraprofessional Program National Prospectus

The NCLB act has not changed concerning “Highly Qualified” Paraprofessionals. They are still required to have two years of college (any 48 college credits) if they are employed in a Title I school. The only major exception to this has been the AK Dept of Education’s support of the Higher Education Learning Profile or “HELP TEST.” Paraprofessionals can become Highly Qualified by passing a Math test with a score of 54 %, Reading comprehension 41% and Written Expression 55%.

This HELP Test, that includes a strand for tutoring the aides, can be accomplished in a few short weeks. Compare this with enrolling in the EDPA program’ AAS degree that on a part-time basis, can take years and thousands of dollars to complete, the choice for most districts is easy. This has caused many districts to loss interest in the EDPA program.

Passing the HELP TEST only proves that an aide can read, write and do math. It only satisfies the NCLB Act and does nothing to improve the skills of the Paraprofessionals and will not improve the scores of the students and help the school pass AYP.

A highly motivated, qualified and well-trained Paraprofessional can be invaluable in Alaska’s classrooms.

