



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents of Unified School Districts
Executive Directors, Regional Educational Service Centers
Directors of Public Charter Schools

FROM: Dr. Sarah J. Barzee, Chief Talent Officer

DATE: March 17, 2017

SUBJECT: Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council has established the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program to recognize the important role of the paraeducator in supporting student achievement. The award is named in honor of Anne Marie Murphy, a paraeducator who was killed in the Sandy Hook shooting. The program honors one paraeducator who has demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in the performance of his/her job, thereby earning that person the respect and admiration of other paraeducators, students, teachers, administrators, co-workers, and parents. Superintendents and school directors are invited to identify one local paraeducator of the year to apply for this award.

Each district-selected paraeducator of the year is individually recognized and receives a certificate at the recognition ceremony. This year's ceremony is scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 26, 2017.

The 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year application can be found using the following link: [2018 Paraeducator of the Year Application](#). All submissions must be received by June 2, 2017. In order to be eligible, the paraeducator of the year selected by your district must complete the entire application and be serving as a paraeducator who assists teachers in the delivery of instruction and related services to students.

If you have any questions, please contact Sharon M. S. Fuller at 860-713-6814 or via e-mail at sharon.fuller@ct.gov.

SJB:sfm

cc: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education
Ms. Ellen Cohn, Deputy Commissioner
Ms. Shannon M. Marimón, Division Director
Ms. Sharon M.S. Fuller, Program Manager, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program

2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year

The Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program recognizes outstanding paraeducator contributions to schools and communities. The program honors one paraeducator who has demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in the performance of his/her job, thereby earning them the respect and admiration of students, teachers, administrators, co-workers, and parents.

Timeline for Selection of Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year

- March 17, 2017** Application link becomes available to all superintendents
- June 2, 2017** Deadline for district paraeducators of the year to submit an application (using the application link provided) for Connecticut's Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program
- September 15, 2017** Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year is identified by state selection committee
- October 26, 2017** Recognition ceremony for Paraeducator of the Year and all applicants

Application Procedures

The following requirements must be met for your local paraeducator of the year to apply for Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program.

The method and materials used to select the local paraeducator of the year may vary by district. The process must be fair and inclusive. Prior to **Friday, June 2, 2017**, the district-selected paraeducators of the year may apply for Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year. Applicants should submit the electronic application via the following survey link: [2018 Paraeducator of the Year Application](#).

- **Applicants must provide three (3) letters of recommendation with their application, one of which must be from the paraeducator's principal or supervisor, and one from a teacher or related services staff member the paraeducator has worked with in the last three (3) years.** The third letter may come from a paraeducator colleague, parent, another teacher/related services staff member with whom the applicant has worked, a student, or other administrator. **Recommendation letters must provide specific examples of the paraeducator's contributions to his/her school and district and should relate to the candidate's work as a paraeducator.**
- **No more than three (3) recommendation letters (limited to one (1) page each) will be accepted.**
- If you have additional questions, please contact Sharon M. S. Fuller, Program Manager, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program, by phone at 860-713-6814 or via e-mail at sharon.fuller@ct.gov.

Representatives from the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council and the CSDE will review the application packets to assist in identifying the finalists. Selection committee members may include:

- representatives from the CSDE;
- representatives from educator professional and service organizations;
- paraeducators;
- higher education faculty;
- teachers;
- parents; and
- administrators.

The CSDE will notify applicants who are selected as finalists or as Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year by September 15, 2017.

Awards Recognition

Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year will be announced during a recognition ceremony on October 26, 2017. The Paraeducator of the Year will become a member of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council during the 2017-18 school year. He or she will also represent paraeducators in forums and conferences that highlight the effective utilization and evaluation of paraeducators across the state.

Eligibility

Connecticut defines the paraeducator as follows: a paraeducator is an employee who assists teachers and/or other certified professionals or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraeducator works under the direct supervision of the teacher and/or other certified or licensed professional(s). The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort between certified and licensed staff.

Only paraeducators who assist teachers in the delivery of instruction and related services to students are eligible for this award.

Each district may identify only one paraeducator of the year annually. Only the district superintendent or school principal should forward the application link to the district-selected paraeducator of the year.

Selections for district paraeducator of the year should be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws.

Selection Criteria

Each district applicant will be evaluated based on six criteria from the National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP) Model, which Connecticut selected and modified as a framework for articulating key competencies for Connecticut paraeducators. The model defines six primary areas of responsibilities for paraeducators:

1. Assisting teachers/providers with building and maintaining effective instructional teams.
2. Assisting teachers/providers with maintaining learner-centered supportive environments.
3. Supporting teachers/providers with planning and organizing learning experiences.
4. Assisting teachers/providers with engaging students in learning and assisting in instruction.
5. Assisting teachers/providers with assessing learner needs, progress, and achievement.
6. Meeting standards of professional and ethical conduct.

Additional information regarding this framework can be located in the Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraeducators, pages 29-37, at the address below:

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/guidelines_paraprofessionals.pdf.