



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools
Executive Directors of Regional Educational Service Centers
Directors of Public Charter Schools

FROM: Stefan Pryor
Commissioner of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stefan Pryor", written over the printed name.

DATE: February 29, 2012

SUBJECT: Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Program

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council has established the Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Program to recognize the important role of the paraprofessional in supporting student achievement. The program honors one paraprofessional 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, coworkers and parents. Superintendents and School Directors are invited to nominate one paraprofessional for this award.

Information regarding the program and application process is attached. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Iris White, Education Consultant, at iris.white@ct.gov or 860-713-6794.

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Attachments

2013 Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year

The Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Program recognizes outstanding paraprofessional contributions to their schools and communities. The program honors one paraprofessional 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, coworkers and parents.

Timeline for Selection of Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year

Winter 2012	Nomination packets mailed to Superintendents
June 8, 2012	Nomination packets must be postmarked by this date
September 2012	2013 Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year and three finalists identified by state selection committee
November 14, 2012	Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year is announced at Statewide Paraprofessionals as Partners Conference

Nomination Procedures

The following requirements must be met in nominating a candidate for the 2013 Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Program:

- Prior to June 1, 2012, districts may select a candidate who will represent their district as the Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year. The method and materials used to select the candidate may vary according to the district. The public must view the process as fair and inclusive.
- Submit the completed nomination packet.
- **Provide three (3) letters of recommendation, one of which must be from the nominee's principal or supervisor, and one from a teacher or related services staff member they have worked with in the last 3 years.** The third letter may come from a paraprofessional colleague, parent, another teacher/related services staff member with whom they have worked, a student, or other administrators. **Recommendation letters must provide specific examples of the nominee's contributions to his/her school and district and should relate to applicant's work as a paraprofessional.**
- **No more than three (3) recommendation letters (limited to one page each) will be accepted.**

Forward the nomination packet including the nomination form, letters of recommendation and application form by mail to the address provided below.

Send the nomination packet to:

Iris White, Education Consultant
Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Program
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 227
Hartford, CT 06106

Packets must be postmarked on or before, Friday, June 8, 2012, to be considered by the selection committee. **Applications submitted or postmarked after this date will not be considered.**

Representatives from the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council will review the nomination packets to assist the Department in identifying the finalists. Selection committee members include:

- Representatives from the CSDE
- Representatives from educator professional and service organizations
- Paraprofessionals
- Teachers
- Parents
- Administrators

District nominees, along with their Superintendent, will be notified by the CSDE if chosen as a finalist or as the Paraprofessional of the Year.

Awards Recognition

The Paraprofessional of the Year will be announced during the Annual Statewide Paraprofessionals of the Year Conference. The Paraprofessional of the Year will become a member of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council. Awardees will represent Connecticut at the annual National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP) Conference.

Eligibility

Each district may nominate only one paraprofessional. Only the district Superintendent or school Principal may submit the nomination.

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

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

Nominations 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 nominee will be evaluated based on six criteria areas from the NRCP Model which Connecticut selected and modified as a framework for articulating key competencies for Connecticut paraprofessionals. The model defines six primary areas of responsibilities for paraprofessionals:

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.

Applicants are also encouraged to submit additional materials that support their commitment to improving student achievement, such as evidence of participation in professional development.

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

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/cali/Connecticut_Guidelines_for_Training_and_Support_of_Paraprofessionals.pdf

THE CONNECTICUT PARAPROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

APPLICATION FORM 2013

School District Name: _____

I. General Information/Signatures

Nominee Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Telephone: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Total Years of Experience as an Instructional Paraprofessional: _____

Years in Present Position: _____

Please note: All information and resources contained in this application are subject to release under Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act. I hereby give my permission for materials contained in this application to be shared with persons interested in promoting the Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Program. I also acknowledge that if selected as State Paraprofessional of the Year, I will be released from classroom responsibility when appropriate to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Nomination Form
(Please print legibly)

SCHOOL/BUILDING PRINCIPAL

Name: _____ Title: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

City State ZIP Code Telephone Fax

I acknowledge that the nominee submits this application with my approval and if the nominee is selected as the 2013 Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year, he/she will be released from classroom responsibilities to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor(s).

Signature of Principal _____ **Date** _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Name: _____ Title: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year is selected based on the following criteria: personal statement, outstanding work performance and professional collaboration. Please provide responses to the following questions and prompts. **Your responses should be typed and double spaced. Handwritten submissions will not be accepted.**

1. **What were the factors that influenced you to become a paraprofessional?**
2. **Describe what you consider to be your greatest contributions and accomplishments as a paraprofessional?**
3. **Describe how the quality of your work exceeds expectations. Please provide specific examples of how your contributions have improved student achievement.**
4. **As Connecticut's Paraprofessional of the Year 2013, you would serve as a spokesperson and representative of the profession. What would be your message? What would you communicate to your profession and the general public in Connecticut?**

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

- **Recommendation letters must provide specific examples of the nominee's contributions to his/her school and district and should relate to applicant's work as a paraprofessional. Provide three (3) letters of recommendation, one of which must be from the nominee's principal or supervisor. Recommendation letters may also be submitted from teachers, parents, students, colleagues and administrators. **No more than three (3) recommendation letters (limited to one page each) will be accepted.****