




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:** Sarah J. Barzee, Ph.D., Chief Talent Officer 

**DATE:** January 15, 2016

**SUBJECT:** 2017 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 nominate one paraeducator for this award.

Each district paraeducator of the year is individually recognized and receives a certificate at the recognition ceremony. This year's ceremony will take place on Thursday, October 13, 2016.

The 2017 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year application can be found at [ctpara.eastconn.org](http://ctpara.eastconn.org) after February 5, 2016. In order to be eligible, your local paraeducator of the year must complete the entire application and be serving as a paraeducator who assists teachers in the delivery of instruction and related services to students.

The School Paraprofessional Advisory Council is seeking models of the district selection process. As an option, please include with your application, as a separate document, one (1) copy of a description of your district selection process.

If you have any questions, please contact Teresa Boyd Cowles at 860-713-6842 or via e-mail at [teresa.boyd@ct.gov](mailto:teresa.boyd@ct.gov).

We look forward to receiving the complete application for your district's nominee for the 2017 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year award by May 13, 2016.

SJB:tcs

cc: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner  
Ms. Ellen Cohn, Deputy Commissioner  
Ms. Anne McKernan, Chief, Bureau of Leadership Development  
Dr. Teresa Boyd Cowles, Education Consultant, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program

## 2017 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

<b>February 5, 2016</b>	Nomination packets available to all Superintendents
<b>May 13, 2016</b>	Deadline to submit district nominee for the Connecticut Paraeducator of the year
<b>August 1, 2016</b>	Connecticut's 2017 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year identified by state selection committee
<b>October 13, 2016</b>	Recognition ceremony for Paraeducator of the Year and all nominees

### Nomination Procedures

**The following requirements must be met in nominating a candidate for the 2017 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program:**

Prior to Friday, May 13, 2016, districts may select a nominee who will represent their district as a candidate for the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year. The method and materials used to select the candidate may vary according to the district. The process must be fair and inclusive. District [examples](#) of the review process for selecting paraeducators are available at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=321752>.

- Electronically submit the completed district nomination packet to the online portal (ctpara.eastconn.org).
- **Nominees must provide three (3) letters of recommendation to the online portal, one of which must be from the nominee's principal or supervisor, and one from a teacher or related services staff member the nominee 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 nominee has worked, a student or other administrator. **Recommendation letters must provide specific examples of the nominee's contributions to his/her school and district and should relate to the applicant's work as a paraeducator.**
- **No more than three (3) recommendation letters (limited to one (1) page each) will be accepted.**

Please submit the electronic nomination to the Connecticut Paraeducator of the Year site [ctpara.eastconn.org](http://ctpara.eastconn.org). If you have additional questions, please contact Dr. Teresa Boyd Cowles, Program Manager, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program, by phone at 860-713-6842 or via e-mail at [teresa.boyd@ct.gov](mailto:teresa.boyd@ct.gov).

Nominations must be submitted to the online portal on or before Friday, May 13, 2016, to be considered by the selection committee. **Applications submitted after this date will not be considered.** Representatives from the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council and the Talent Office will review the nomination packets to assist the Department 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.

District nominees who are selected as finalists or as the Paraeducator of the Year will be notified by the CSDE by August 1, 2016.

### **Awards Recognition**

The Paraeducator of the Year will be announced during a recognition ceremony on October 13, 2016. The Paraeducator of the Year will become a member of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council and represent paraeducators in forums and conferences that highlight the effective utilization and evaluation of paraeducators across the state. Awardees will also represent Connecticut at the annual National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP) Conference.

### **Eligibility**

**Each district may nominate only one paraeducator. Only the district superintendent or school principal may submit the nomination.**

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 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 paraeducators 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 from the 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](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/guidelines_paraprofessionals.pdf)