



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## “Effective Use of Paraeducators”

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Education

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## Overview

- Paraeducators play an important role in supporting student achievement. But what exactly is their role and what components are necessary for their appropriate utilization? This session covers the differing roles of teachers and paraeducators and how administrators can support teacher-paraeducator collaboration. It also includes an overview of current state and federal legislation and regulations regarding paraeducators.



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## Paraprofessional Study

- The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee authorized a study of paraprofessionals in April 2006. The study focused on whether Connecticut should establish minimum standards for public school paraprofessionals who perform instructional tasks for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12). Findings and recommendations were made in several areas affecting paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities.
- The full report can be downloaded at:  
[www.cga.ct.gov/2006/pridata/Studies/SchoolParaprofessionals\\_Final\\_Report.htm](http://www.cga.ct.gov/2006/pridata/Studies/SchoolParaprofessionals_Final_Report.htm).



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## Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee Recommendations

- The State Department of Education should encourage all local public school districts to provide training to teachers, particularly new teachers at the beginning of each school year, on the role and effective use of instructional paraprofessionals. The department should also encourage school districts to develop intradistrict methods and strategies whereby paraprofessionals, teachers, and administrators periodically discuss issues or concerns involving the use of paraprofessionals in providing effective student instruction.



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## Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

- Sec. 10-155j. **Development of paraprofessionals**
- The Department of Education, through the State Education Resource Center and within available appropriations for such purposes, shall promote and encourage professional development activities for school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. Such activities may include, but shall not be limited to, providing local and regional boards of education with training modules and curricula for professional development for paraprofessionals and assisting boards of education in the effective use of paraprofessionals and the development of strategies to improve communication between teachers and paraprofessionals in the provision of effective student instruction.



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## ESSA

- S. 1177—63
- “(IV) professional development and other activities for teachers, **paraprofessionals**, and other school personnel to improve instruction and use of data from academic assessments, and to recruit and retain effective teachers, particularly in high need subjects;

## Training Opportunities

- Information about professional learning opportunities for paraeducators may be found at the UCEDD website at [http://www.uconnucedd.org/pdfs/PARA\\_training\\_flyer\\_2-2014.pdf](http://www.uconnucedd.org/pdfs/PARA_training_flyer_2-2014.pdf) and the SERC website at <http://www.ctserc.org/index.php/paraprofessionals-as-partners>.
- The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) offers The COMPASS, a comprehensive, job-embedded development curriculum aligned with national and state paraeducator standards, with five basic and 16 advanced modules. Some session topics include: Roles and Responsibilities, Connecting Instruction to Common Core Standards, and School Climate: Creating Environments that are Safe for All. Educational organizations can hire CREC to present within districts or CREC can certify staff members to teach The COMPASS, enabling capacity building within your organization. Professionals can become certified to train paraeducators in more than twenty COMPASS modules such as School Climate, Instructional Strategies, Managing Behaviors, and Common Core Standards. Please visit the link at <http://www.crec.org/find.php?s=t77>.
- Information is also available at the CSDE website at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=321752>.

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## Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

- Sec. 10-155k. **School Paraprofessional Advisory Council**
- Representatives of statutorily required organizations.
- Must meet quarterly.
- The council, shall advise, at least quarterly, the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, of the needs for the training of such paraprofessionals.
- Must submit an annual report to the General Assembly and to the Education Committee.



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## Connecticut Paraprofessional Legislation

- Sec. 2008. Not later than December 1, 2008, the department shall report and make recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education concerning professional development for paraprofessionals and the status and future of school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities.



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## Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee Study 2014

- Authorized by the Legislative PRI Committee in May 2014.
- Study focused on instructional paraprofessional staffing policies and practices in Connecticut K-12 public schools. It examined the range of responsibilities paraprofessionals are hired to perform and exam how the number and use of paraprofessionals has changed recently.
- Public Hearing held on Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Final Report and Recommendations presented to the PRI Committee on December 17, 2014
- <http://www.cga.ct.gov/PRI/2014 PARA.asp>.



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## No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- Signed into law, January 2002
- Mandated requirements for Title I Paraprofessionals



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## Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

ESEA 2002

**Paraprofessionals** in a Title 1 program may:

- Provide **one-on-one tutoring**,
- Assist with **classroom management**,
- Conduct **parental involvement activities**,
- Act as a **translator**, or
- Assist in a **computer laboratory, library or media center**.

Paraprofessionals could **NOT** provide any instructional service to a student unless they worked under the **direct supervision** of qualified teacher.

## NCLB

- Paraprofessionals providing instructional support must work **under the direct supervision of a teacher**. A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) if the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher. As a result, a program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.



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## Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Part B, Section 612 State Eligibility  
Allows paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately **trained and supervised** in accordance with state law, regulation and policy in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.



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## Similarities & Differences

### *IDEA 2004*

- No shared definition of paraprofessional/ paraeducator with NCLB
- Elimination of CSPD
- Refers to the 'supervision of paraeducators' but not defined.

### *NCLB*

- NCLB was a Gatekeeper....no more no less.
- Essentially just qualifying standards for hiring paraeducators
- No provision for continuing education & career development
- Did not encourage the development of state or local systems & personnel practices
- Used the term "direct" supervision but again not defined.

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## Time Sensitive question about orderly transition to ESSA:

Clarification is needed regarding whether NCLB qualification requirements for Title I paraprofessionals are required under ESSA.

- In the **FAQs transitioning to ESSA guidance document** recently released, according to questions **A-4b** and **C-7**, beginning in the 2016-17 school year, **states are not required to comply with the NCLB requirements regarding the qualifications of Title I paraprofessionals**
- In **ESSA**, however, under Sec. 1111. State Plans, **states must ensure that they have qualifications for paraprofessionals "that were in place on the day before the date of enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act."** Are these the NCLB Title I paraprofessional qualification requirements?



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**C-7a. What requirements apply to the hiring of paraprofessionals/paraeducators to work in a Title I, Part A program in the 2016-2017 school year?**

Section 1111(g)(2)(M) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, requires each State to have “professional standards for paraprofessionals working in a program supported with funds under [Title I, Part A], including qualifications that were in place on the day before the date of enactment of the [ESSA].” As such, each State must ensure that its LEAs and schools continue to comply with the paraprofessional requirements in place on December 9, 2015, including those requirements under section 1119(c) and (d) of the ESEA, as amended by NCLB, and any State-specific requirements that were in place on that date. *Specifically, each State and its LEAs must continue to ensure that each paraprofessional who is hired by the LEA and works in a program supported by Title I, Part A funds has a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and has completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education, obtained an associate’s or higher degree, or 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. (Added June 29, 2016)*

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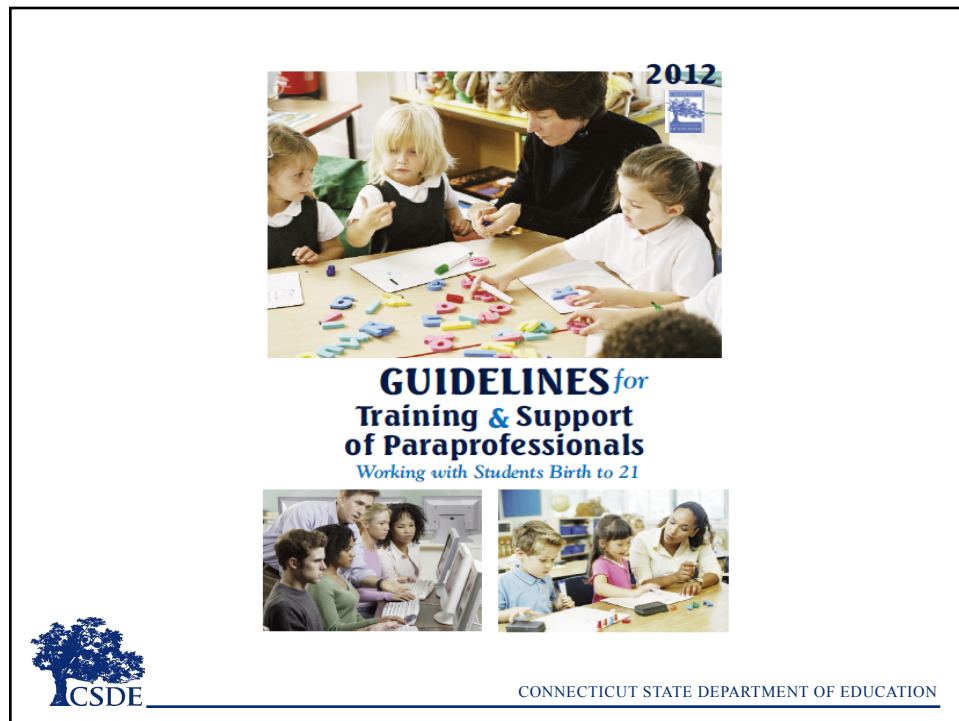
DESPITE HAVING A MASTER'S AND 18 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, MRS. SNIPPETT TRIES TO CONVINCE MR. MOODY THAT THE STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES IN HER CLASS WOULD BE BETTER SERVED BY AN ASSISTANT WITH NO EXPERIENCE.

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## Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals

- The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has endorsed and published this guideline document to inform and guide district personnel in the many important factors to consider in the use of paraprofessionals, specifically their training and effective use. It also clarifies the role of the paraprofessional as it is related to instruction.
- [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/cali/guidelines\\_paraprofessionals.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/curriculum/cali/guidelines_paraprofessionals.pdf)



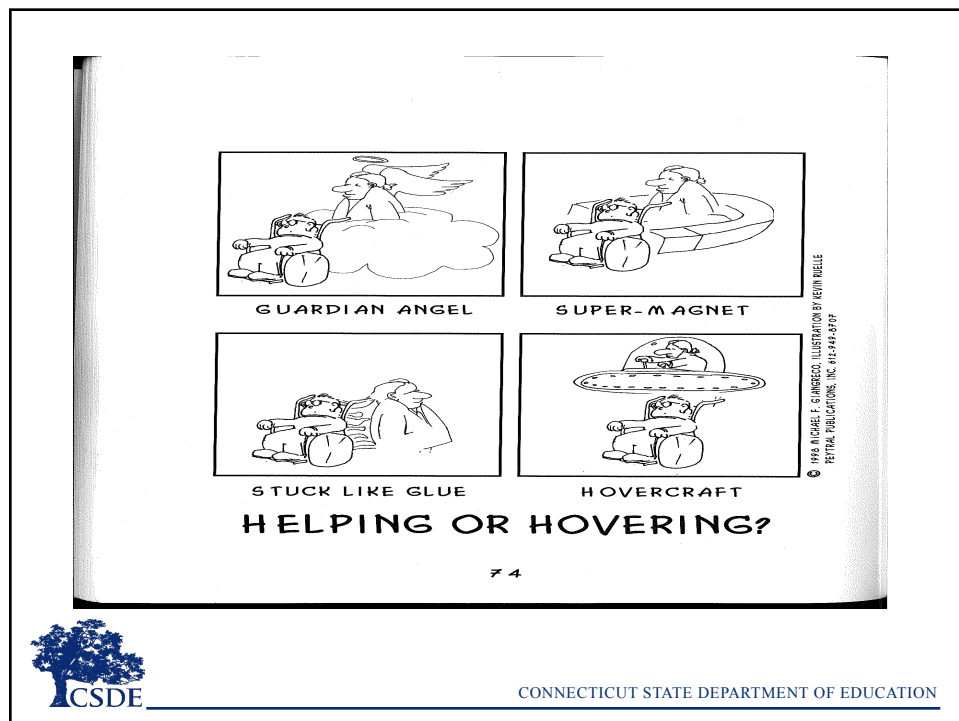
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## Connecticut Guidelines for the Training and Support of Paraprofessionals

- Published and endorsed by the CT State Department of Education
- Revised March 2012 Updated 2015
- Revised document adds:
  - Questions supervisors should ask themselves when evaluating paraprofessionals
  - Interview questions for teacher candidates
  - Documents: SERC LRE Newsletter and Paraprofessional Briefs on: working with English Language Learners, Students With ADD/ADHD, and Challenging Behaviors



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## The CT State Department of Education defines a paraeducator as:

- An employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the 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.
- CT Guidelines for the Training and Support of Paraprofessionals page 3.



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## National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP) Model Framework

- Connecticut adopted a modified version of the NRCP model framework to articulate key competencies for Connecticut paraprofessionals

National Resource Center for Paraeducators Model (1999)

[www.nrcpara.org](http://www.nrcpara.org)

Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Supervision of Paraprofessionals, pp. 16-23.



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### 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 or ethical conduct.
- for each of these responsibilities (the model describes the scope).



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### According to these guidelines, paraeducators have the instructional responsibility to do the following

1. Assist professionals with building and maintaining effective instructional teams.
2. Assist professionals with maintaining learner-centered supportive environments.
3. Support professionals with planning and organizing learning experiences.
4. Assist professionals with engaging students in learning.
5. Assist professionals in instruction.
6. Assist professionals with assessing learner needs, progress and achievement.



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## IEPs

In the case of paraprofessionals whose support includes students with disabilities, it is necessary for them to have an understanding of the IEP information that is pertinent to their role as an implementer.

-Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals, pg. 45.



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## Participation in Individualized Family Service Plan Meetings or Planning and Placement Team Meetings

- Pursuant to Public Act 15-5, Section 277, effective July 1, 2015, parents and guardians have the right to have the school paraprofessional assigned to their child, if any, be present at and participate in all portions of any PPT meeting at which their child's educational program is being developed, reviewed or revised.
- Upon the formal identification of a child as a child requiring special education and at each PPT meeting for such child, the responsible board of education shall inform parents and guardians of their right to have advisors and the school paraprofessional assigned to their child be present at and participate in all portions of the PPT meeting at which an educational program for their child is developed, reviewed or revised.



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### Paraprofessionals at PPT meetings

**“Paraprofessional”** includes personnel with job titles such as (*but not limited to*) Paraprofessional, One to One, Instructional Aide or Assistant, Job Coach or Personal Care Provider. The term refers to a position where an individual provides support to and/or works directly with a child and for which a license or certification is not required.

**“Assigned to”** means that the child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes support for the child that may be described as one to one, adult support, paraprofessional as needed, or other similar description. It would also include a classroom paraprofessional who has been assigned to a child’s classroom due to the presence of the child in the classroom. The assignment of the paraprofessional, no matter the label, must be in the child’s IEP and may be found on pages 2, 8 and/or 11 of the IEP.



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### Paraprofessionals at PPT meetings, cont.

- The **“paraprofessional assigned to a child”** may work in a general education classroom, co-taught classroom, self-contained classroom or community setting. If the IEP includes such support for an extended school year or extended school day program, then the individual in that position is also a “paraprofessional assigned to a child.” If a child has multiple paraprofessionals, then each of those paraprofessionals would be considered a paraprofessional assigned to the child.
- For children with more than one paraprofessional, in most cases the parents or guardians would have one paraprofessional present at the PPT meeting.
- It is expected that parents will provide reasonable notice to the District if they wish to have their child’s paraprofessional attend a PPT meeting. In most cases, 5 school days would constitute reasonable notice.



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### Paraprofessionals at PPT meetings, cont.

The Bureau of Special Education has updated the IEP and PPT Meeting Notice (ED 623), *Parents' Guide to Special Education in Connecticut*, *Policies and Procedures Manual* and *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals* to reflect these changes.



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### Agreement reached between the SDE and the American Federation of Teachers

An agreement reached between the SDE and the American Federation of Teachers provides that paraprofessionals may be listed as "Service Implementer" on the grid on page 11 of the IEP if they provide specially designed instruction or a related service to a child under the supervision of a certified or licensed service provider. Both the paraprofessional and the certified staff person must be included in the "Service Implementer" field. The title of the certified or licensed staff member who is overseeing the provision of these services must be included in the "Staff Responsible" field and the amount of time each implementer will work directly with the child should be specified under "Description of Instructional Service Delivery."

A paraprofessional who provides support to a classroom of students should be recorded on page 8 of the IEP under "Frequency and Duration of Supports Required for School Personnel to Implement this IEP."



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## Roles of Teachers in the Instructional Process

Teachers are responsible for the following:

- Developing lesson plans to meet curriculum requirements and education objectives for all learners.
- Adapting lessons, instructional methods, and curricula to meet the learning needs of individual students
- Developing behavior management and disciplinary plans
- Creating learner-centered, inclusive environments that respect the cultures, religions, lifestyles, and human rights of children, youth, parents, and staff
- Involving parents in all aspects of their child's education
- Analyzing, with the assistance of other licensed (credentialed) professional personnel, results of standardized tests for assessing learner needs
- Developing functional (informal) assessment tools to document and evaluate learner progress and instructional needs.

Adapted from Strengthening and Support Teacher and Para educator Teams: Guidelines for Paraeducator Roles, Supervision, and Preparation by A.L. Pickett, 1999, New York: National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education, Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate Center, City University of New York.



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## Teachers provide instructional support

- Provide regular feedback regarding paraprofessional's work performance,
- Support paraprofessionals in providing instruction to students, and
- Provide support and direction to paraprofessionals who work in independent capacities.



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## Teacher/Supervisory Checklist

- The teacher supervisory checklist is an informal assessment of the knowledge and skills competencies of the teacher as supervisor within a school or program. Prior to utilizing the TSC, the user should be very familiar with Connecticut's Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessional; all of the standards come from the Guidelines.



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## Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching: Foundational Skills

### Domain 6.

Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership

6.5

- ❖ Guiding and coaching *paraprofessionals* and collaborating with colleagues, administrators, and special services staff to monitor the impact of instructional or behavioral support and interventions

[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/educatorstandards/board\\_approved\\_cct\\_2-3-2010.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/educatorstandards/board_approved_cct_2-3-2010.pdf)



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### What Systems Can Teachers Use to Communicate with a Paraeducator?

- Establish a firm 15-minute meeting time for each day.
- Set aside a longer (45-minute to 60-minute) meeting time for each week.
- Determine a monthly meeting to discuss progress of individual students.
- Meet when students do not need supports (such as during lunch, recess, or special-areas classes).
- Establish a communication notebook to be used by the teacher and paraprofessional.



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### Keep in mind..

- When making plans or setting goals, the team needs to be aware of any laws, district policies, or negotiated agreements which affects students or employees.
- Discuss examples of laws, policies or negotiated agreement language that affects your work with paraprofessionals. Be prepared to share two possible solutions.



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## Points to consider for administrators

- What are the district policies you need to communicate to Paraeducators?
- What does the Paraeducator job description currently state and how might this be improved?
- Are roles and responsibilities clear?
- How does the district currently evaluate Paraeducators?
- How are teachers provided with tools/resources to guide Paraeducators?
- How are you communicating responsibilities of teachers with regards to Paraeducators?



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## District Contact Person for Paraeducators

- The CSDE maintains a contact list that is updated in January of each year. The district contact person who is responsible for disseminating information regarding paraeducators including professional learning opportunities, State Paraeducator of the Year program, and any relevant topics regarding paraeducators will be the district's Director of Special Education and Pupil Services. CSDE is encouraging these resources to be utilized by building administrators.



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## Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award

- The CSDE and the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council established the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program to recognize the important role of the paraeducator in supporting student achievement.
- *Denise Seel, [the 2016 Paraeducator of the Year](#). Public Schools*
- **SAVE THE DATE:** The Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year recognition ceremony will be held at the A. I. Prince Technical High School in, CT on October 13, 2016



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### *Connecticut's Paraeducator of the Year Program*

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#### **Paraeducator Information and Resources** (found on the SDE website)

#### **Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year**

- [Historical Background](#)
- [Steps to Providing a Nominee](#)
- [Paraeducator of the Year Award Informational Letter for District Nominations](#)
- [2017 Paraeducator of the Year Application](#)
- [District Selection Process Samples](#)

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=321752>

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## Paraeducator Development and Leadership Symposium

**When:**  
November 16, 2016  
8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Where:**  
State Legislature Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

To register go to [www.crec.org/tabs/events](http://www.crec.org/tabs/events)

### Keynote Speakers:

Sarah Barzee, Ph.D.  
Chief Talent Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education  
*Topic: Unlocking Our Potential through Expanded Horizons and Visions*



Denise Seel  
2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year  
Hartford Public Schools  
*Topic: Inspirational Stories from My Career*



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## University of Connecticut's A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)

### 2016-2017 Paraeducator Survey

- In 2013, the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities conducted a Professional Development Needs Assessment for Paraeducators. Responses were received from 2,438 paraeducators working in public schools in Connecticut. Twenty percent of the paraeducators reported not receiving any training in the previous 12 months. The majority of paraeducators that responded, indicated that they desired training on behavior management. Training for Paraeducators on behavior management should include de-escalation strategies. As a member of the school team, the paraeducator may have a role in classroom behavior management for particular students. These paraeducators should have access to behavior intervention plans and have an understanding of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) information that is pertinent to their role as an implementer. In an effort to address the increasing responsibilities of the paraeducator workforce on the inclusion of students with moderate to severe learning and behavioral challenges, the CT UCEDD will be surveying the training needs of paraeducators to plan training workshops. Please be on the lookout for this survey to be distributed to paraeducators in your district in the near future.

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## Additional Resources

- Bureau of Special Education:  
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320730>
- CREC Paraprofessional Page: [www.crec.org/paraprofessional](http://www.crec.org/paraprofessional)
- SDE Paraeducator Information and Resources Page:  
[www.ct.gov/sde/Paraeducators](http://www.ct.gov/sde/Paraeducators).
- SERC Paraprofessional Page:  
[http://ctserc.org/s/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=90:paraprofessionals&Itemid=110&layout=default](http://ctserc.org/s/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=90:paraprofessionals&Itemid=110&layout=default).
- National Resource Center for Paraeducators: [www.nrcpara.org](http://www.nrcpara.org).



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## Thank you for your attention!

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