



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: Morgan N. Barth, Division Director, Turnaround Office *MJ- BTZ*

DATE: January 5, 2015

SUBJECT: 2016 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 1, 2015.

The 2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year application is attached. Your local paraeducator of the year will only be considered as a candidate for the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year if he/she completes the entire application and is serving as a paraeducator who assists teachers in the delivery of instruction and related services to students. Please include with your application, as a separate document, one (1) copy of a description of your district selection process. The School Paraprofessional Advisory Council is seeking models of the district selection process.

If you have any questions, please contact Iris White at 860-713-6794 or via e-mail at iris.white@ct.gov. We look forward to receiving your nominee's 2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year application by June 6, 2015.

MB:iw

cc: Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic Officer

Iris White, Education Consultant, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program

Attachment

Box 2219 • Hartford, Connecticut 06145
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2016 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

January 2015	Nomination packets mailed to all Superintendents
June 5, 2015	Nomination packets must be received and postmarked
September 2015	2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year identified by state selection committee
October 1, 2015	Recognition ceremony for Paraeducator of the Year and all nominees

Nomination Procedures

The following requirements must be met in nominating a candidate for the 2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program:

- Prior to Friday, June 5, 2015, districts may select a candidate who will represent their district as the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator 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 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 mail the nomination packet, including the nomination form, letters of recommendation and application form to the address provided below:

Iris White, Education Consultant
Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue Room 344
Hartford, CT 06106

Packets must be postmarked on or before Friday, June 5, 2015, 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 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.

Awards Recognition

The Paraeducator of the Year will be announced during a recognition ceremony on October 1, 2015. 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 areas 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.

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 Paraeducators, pages 29-37, at the address below:

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

THE ANNE MARIE MURPHY PARAEDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

APPLICATION FORM 2016

School District Name: _____

I. General Information/Signatures

Nominee Name: _____

Home Address: _____

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

Cell Phone: _____

Home E-mail Address: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

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

School E-mail Address: _____

Total Years of Experience as an Instructional Paraeducator: _____

Years in Present Position: _____

Please provide a brief description of your current job responsibilities: _____

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 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program. I also acknowledge that if selected as 2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year, I will be released from classroom responsibility, when appropriate, to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor(s).

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

I. General Information/Signatures (continued)

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 2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator 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: _____

City State Zip Code Telephone Number

E-mail _____

I acknowledge that the nominee submits this application with my approval and that if the nominee is selected as the 2016 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year, he/she will be released from classroom responsibilities to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor(s).

Signature of Superintendent _____ Date _____

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator 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 paraeducator?
2. Describe what you consider to be your greatest contributions and accomplishments as a paraeducator.
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 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year 2016, 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 paraeducator. Provide three (3) letters of recommendation, one (1) 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 (1) page each) will be accepted.**