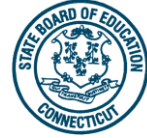




STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



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

**FROM:** Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** May 4, 2026

**SUBJECT:** 2027 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award

With the support of the State Board of Education, it is my honor to recognize and celebrate Connecticut's paraeducators. Paraeducators play a critical role in supporting students in the various aspects of the educational process, including their overall well-being.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is now accepting applications for the [2027 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award](#). This program recognizes the vital role paraeducators play in supporting students academically, socially, and emotionally. In honor of Anne Marie Murphy, a paraeducator who lost her life at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, this award acknowledges the service and commitment of all Connecticut paraeducators. It honors one paraeducator, who demonstrates exceptional skill, dedication and impact in their role, earning the respect and admiration of students, educators, families, and colleagues. Superintendents and pupil services directors are invited to identify one district paraeducator of the year to apply for this recognition.

The process begins with each school district nominating their own Paraeducator of the Year. To be eligible, nominees must currently serve as a paraeducator supporting instruction and related services and must continue in a paraeducator role during the 2026-27 school year.

Candidates must submit their application through the Connecticut Paraeducator of the Year portal at <https://bit.ly/2027CTPOY> to be considered for state honors. All submissions must be received by **Tuesday, June 30, 2026**.

The selected honoree will be recognized at the 2027 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Ceremony on Wednesday, December 2, 2026.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jessica Ocasio at 860-713-6717 or via e-mail at [jessica.g.ocasio@ct.gov](mailto:jessica.g.ocasio@ct.gov).

CRT:jgo

cc: Sinthia Sone-Moyano, Deputy Commissioner of Educational Supports & Wellness  
Dr. Shuana K. Tucker, Chief Talent Officer  
Dr. Jade Gopie, Bureau Chief, Talent Office  
Dr. Jessica Ocasio, Program Manager, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program

## Timeline for Selection of Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year

Date	Selection Process and Recognition
May 1, 2026	AMM Paraeducator of the Year Program Application is available.
June 30, 2026	Application submitted online by 11:59 p.m.
July 6–July 20, 2026	Selection Committee reviews applications
August 11-12, 2026	Semifinalist interviews conducted
September 8 and 9, 2026	Site visits take place at finalists’ schools.
October/November 2026	Commissioner announces the 2027 AMM Paraeducator of the Year during a press conference at the paraeducator’s school.
December 2, 2026	Recognition event at The Bushnell in Hartford, CT to honor each district Teacher of the Year, Semifinalists, Finalists, and the 2027 Connecticut Teacher of the Year.

### Application Procedures

The following requirements must be met for your district paraeducator of the year to apply for Connecticut’s 2027 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program.

The method and materials used to select the district paraeducator of the year may vary by district. The process must be fair and inclusive. Prior to Tuesday, June 30, 2026, the district-selected paraeducators of the year may apply for Connecticut’s 2027 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award. Applicants should submit the electronic application via the following survey link: [2027 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award \(https://bit.ly/2027CTPOY\)](https://bit.ly/2027CTPOY).

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 previous 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 their 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. All recommendations should be in PDF or WORD format and should be labelled with the district’s name and the author’s last name.
- Please provide a photo of you working with students that meets your school district's media release policy. Photos should be in JPEG format with at least 1,000 x 600 pixels and labelled with the district’s name and the paraeducator’s last name.

Selection committee members will review the application materials to assist in identifying the finalists. Selection committee members may include representatives from:

- CSDE Representatives
- CT Teacher of the Year Council Members
- Educator professional and service organizations
- Paraeducators
- Higher education faculty
- Educators
- Parents
- Administrators

### **Award Recognition**

The 2027 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year will be honored during the 2027 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Ceremony at The Bushnell in Hartford, CT, on December 2, 2026. The honoree will serve as a member of the School Paraeducator Advisory Council during the 2026-27 school year and may represent paraeducators in forums and conferences.

### **Eligibility**

In Connecticut a paraeducator is defined 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 support delivery of instruction and related services to students are eligible for this award. The 2027 honoree must be serving in the role of a paraeducator during the 2026-27 school year.

Each district may nominate only one paraeducator of the year annually for the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year award. The district superintendent or school principal must forward the application link to the district-selected candidate.

Selection of the district paraeducator must be conducted 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**

Applicants will be evaluated using six criteria adapted from the National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP) Model, which Connecticut uses as a framework for articulating key competencies for Connecticut paraeducators. The model defines six (6) 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.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Jessica Ocasio, Program Manager, Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year, by phone at 860-713-6717 or by e-mail: [jessica.g.ocasio@ct.gov](mailto:jessica.g.ocasio@ct.gov).