

March 2014 Update for District Contacts for Paraeducator Issues

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), established the District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues to disseminate information of importance to paraeducators and their supervisors. The focus of this newsletter is to provide resources for more effective teacher and paraeducator collaboration.

Reminder: Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Nomination Forms Due June 6th!

Last year, the CSDE and the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council re-named the Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Award to the Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award in honor of Anne Marie Murphy, a special education paraeducator who was killed in Newtown. The first Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year is, Georgina Cabrera, a Bilingual Paraeducator at Moses Y. Beach Elementary School in Wallingford.

Additional information regarding the Award, can be found on the CSDE Paraeducator Information and Resources page: www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali. The nomination form, letters of recommendation and application form must be post-marked by Friday, June 6, 2014 and sent to:

Iris White
Education Consultant
Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Award
CSDE
165 Capitol Ave. Room 340
Hartford, CT 06106

The Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year will be announced during a ceremony on November 6, 2014, 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell.

The Paraeducator of the Year will become a member of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council and will represent Connecticut at the annual National Resource Center for Paraeducators Conference.

District Spotlight: New London Public Schools

As part of our efforts to nurture the talent in our district, New London Public Schools will explore pathways to develop paraprofessionals and support staff to become certified teachers. This year, we have partnered with the Alternate Route to Certification program (ARC) to provide *scholarships* for New London Public Schools' paraprofessionals/educational assistants to become certified teachers in the New London Public Schools.

This partnership supports the efforts of the Talent Management Office to create a pipeline from educational assistants to certified teachers as part of a larger effort to improve teacher and leader quality, diversity and retention in the district. Our paraprofessionals/educational assistants are an asset to the district, and have the ability to make an even bigger impact on the lives of our students as certified teachers.

This is one of many partnerships that the district will pursue to support the district's Strategic Operating Plan to increase teacher leader quality, diversity and retention. Paraprofessionals who successfully complete the program of instruction, as well as additional Connecticut State Department of Education requirements, will be eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion and an endorsement in a variety of certification areas, including K-12 World Languages (Arabic, French, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Spanish) and Secondary Grades (7-12) English, Mathematics and Science (Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, General Science and Physics).

For more information about New London's exciting new program, please contact, Cheresse Chery, Chief Talent/HR Officer, New London Public Schools, cheryc@newlondon.org or 860-447-6002 or Michael Fletcher, Talent Recruitment Specialist, 860-701-5801.

Online Resource: AFT Share My Lesson

Share My Lesson is a place where anyone who works with students inside or outside of schools can come together to share their very best resources. Developed by educators, this free platform gives access to high-quality resources and provides an online community where educators and parents can collaborate with, encourage and inspire each other. To get started, take a look at the ever growing collection of free resources designed for paraeducators and school support personnel on such topics as:

- Managing Student Behavior
- Understanding and Stopping Bullying
- Students with Special Needs
- Counselling and Student Support

<http://www.sharemylesson.com/>

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March 2014 Update for District Contacts for Paraeducator Issues

The School Paraprofessional Advisory Council is responsible for submitting an annual report to the Connecticut General Assembly and the Commissioner of Education in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the Connecticut General Statutes, on the recommendations given to the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee, to the joint standing committee of the Connecticut General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education. A major focus of the Council's work has been to recognize the important role of the paraeducator in supporting positive outcomes for students. As a result of this focus, during the 2012-13 school year, the Council developed, with the approval and support of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) a Connecticut Paraprofessional of the Year Award. Last year, this award was renamed on behalf of Anne Marie Murphy, a paraeducator who was killed in Newtown. Recognizing Governor Malloy's and Commissioner Pryor's commitment to improved teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness, and the closure of Connecticut's achievement gap, the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council submits the following recommendations.

Recommendation: As the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC) convenes to develop Connecticut's Definition of "Learner-Ready, Day One", it should consider including specific references to teacher's knowledge and skill in guiding and coaching staff who work in their classrooms.

Recommendation: The CSDE established the District Contacts for Paraeducator Issues to disseminate information of importance to paraeducators and their supervisors. This information includes legislative updates, recognition programs, professional development opportunities, and resources for improved teacher and paraeducator collaboration. Each district contact receives a monthly newsletter which they are asked to then forward to education staff in their district. The Council continues to be aware of paraeducators who have not heard of the district contacts program and/or have not received the monthly newsletter. The CSDE should collaborate with different organizations, districts, and unions to create one statewide database in which to email updated information regarding professional development opportunities directly to paraeducators. In addition, the CSDE should collaborate with CREC to develop a webpage with links to all professional development providers for paraeducators, such as, SERC and the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education (UCEDD). This would provide paras with a "one stop shop" for accessing current information.

For a list of Council members and to view past meeting notes, please log onto: www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali.

University of Connecticut UCONN UCEDD: Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Training, and Research

Professional Development for Special Education Paraeducators

Professional Development Model



UCEDD can help you develop and customize a training package to meet your district's needs; Training costs are determined by length and number of participants.

To learn more, please contact:

Nick Gelbar, PhD gelbar@uchc.edu or 860-679-1508

Please visit our program website at www.UCONNUCEDD.org