



May 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 renamed 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 Cabera, 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/paracali. The nomination form, letters of recommendation and application form must be postmarked by Friday, June 6, 2014, and sent to:

Iris White
Education Consultant
Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of
the Year Award
Connecticut State Dept. of Education
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.-7:00 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 National Resource Center for Paraeducators Conference.

Paraeducator Needs Assessment Results

Earlier this school year, the UCONN UCEDD (University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities) conducted an online statewide survey of paraeducators' training needs. This survey was based on the CEC (Council on Exceptional Children's Special Education Paraeducator Common Core Specialty Set (SEPCCSS) which contains ten professional development guidelines and specific knowledge and skills that paraeducators working with children with disabilities should possess. Participants were asked to rate their perceptions of their knowledge and skills within each of the SEPCCSS domains: Foundations; Development and Characteristics of Learners; Individual Learning Differences; Instructional Strategies; Learning Environments and Social Interactions; Language; Instructional Planning; Assessment; Professional and Ethical Practice; and Collaboration. In addition, participants were asked one open-ended question concerning the specific topics on which they desired additional training.

Responses were received from 2,438 paraeducators working in public schools in Connecticut. Some information about the sample of paraeducators responding to the survey and the students they support is shown below:

The majority of paraeducators who had been a paraeducator for greater than ten years (54%), did not have a Bachelor's degree (59%), and were not certified as teachers (91%).

The sample provided services to students across the PK-12 system, though more paraeducators appear to work in elementary school (1-4; 31%) versus middle (7-8; 13%) or high school (9-12; 14%).

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PARAEDUCATOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS CONTINUED

Paraeducators primarily provided services to students with Individual Education Plans receiving special education services (85%). However, fewer paraeducators had read the relevant pieces of their students' IEPs (71%) or had their roles and responsibilities as mandated by the IEP explained to them (67%).

Twenty percent of the paraeducators reported not receiving any training in the previous 12 months; of those who reported receiving training, there was considerable variation in the number of hours reported. Paraeducators also indicated a preference for small group/one-day workshops (51%) that were held during school hours (79%). Paraeducators also indicated their desire for training on the following topics: specific disabilities, behavior management, technology, general education, language and communication, medical needs of students, and the special education process.

For additional results from the Needs Assessment, please visit the UCEDD Web site at:
www.uconnucedd.org.

SCHOOL PARAPROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The School Paraprofessional Advisory Council had its last meeting of the school year on Tuesday, May 13. During this meeting, the Council adopted the following Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision Statement: Equity, Collaboration, COMMITMENT.

Mission Statement: Gather resources, examine data, investigate and study issues, provide guidance and professional learning opportunities, and maximize results using current relevant tools and strategies.

For additional information regarding the Council including membership list and past meeting notes, please visit the CSDE Paraeducator Information and Resources page at www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali.