



DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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Colchester School District's Karen Mylly named Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year

(HARTFORD, CT) — State Department of Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell today announced that Karen Mylly, a paraeducator at Jack Jackter Intermediate School in Colchester, has been named Connecticut's 2018 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year.

The Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Program, named in honor of a paraeducator who was killed in Newtown, recognizes the important role paraeducators play in supporting student achievement. The program honors one paraeducator who has demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in his or her role, thereby earning the respect and admiration of students, teachers, administrators, coworkers, and parents. Paraeducators assist certified teachers in the classroom and play an integral role in developing students' academic, social, and emotional skills.

Commissioner Wentzell and State Department of Education Chief Talent Officer Sarah Barzee visited Jack Jackter Intermediate School on Monday to make the announcement in front of the entire school.

"We are proud to recognize Karen Mylly as the paraeducator of the year, and thank her for everything she does to support Connecticut students," said Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman. "When students learn in safe, welcoming classrooms, when their educators respect and care about them, they become stronger, more confident citizens. In turn, they are inspired to learn and to respect and care about others. Mrs. Mylly is a great example of this cycle in action."

"The importance of having strong paraeducator support in our classrooms across the state is vital to student success. Their contributions to creating safe learning environments cannot be minimized," Commissioner Wentzell said. "During the 2016-17 school year, Jack Jackter Intermediate School introduced an innovative special education program and Karen Mylly has played a vital role within its behavior team. There is no doubt that Karen's dedication to her students, her school, and her community have had a profound impact on the lives of the students she serves, and it is my honor to congratulate her today on receiving this award."

"On behalf of our Board of Education and our entire school community, we congratulate Karen Mylly on achieving this significant and well-deserved honor," said Colchester's Interim Superintendent, Karen Loisel Goodwin. "She works tirelessly to make a difference for the students she serves through her

expertise, high expectations, advocacy, and collaboration with staff, professionalism, and her genuine love of her work and her students."

The rigorous selection process for Paraeducator of the Year, which includes candidate applications and interviews, was conducted by representatives of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council, which is composed of former state Paraeducators of the Year, and representatives from educational organizations and collective bargaining.

Connecticut's Paraeducator of the Year is selected from approximately 14,000 public school paraeducators in the state and represents the profession in forums and advisory committees influencing education policy and public awareness of the successes that take place daily in schools, as well as the challenges they face.

Mrs. Mylly began her career as a special education paraeducator with Colchester Public Schools in 2013 after volunteering in her own children's classrooms for several years. She quickly found herself drawn to students with unique learning styles and behavioral challenges, and she would often volunteer more time to help these students achieve their academic goals. She believes that when children feel safe, comfortable and respected, they are more likely to engage in instruction and participate fully in classroom activities.

Mrs. Mylly currently works in a special education program at Jack Jackter Intermediate School in Colchester, designed for students with behavioral challenges. She is certified in youth mental health first aid, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) nonviolent crisis intervention, and recently completed training as a registered behavior technician.

Mrs. Mylly believes that if "we can consistently model resilience, we can help our students see the endless possibilities around them. We give them hope. We help them grow." Ultimately, Mrs. Mylly believes in modeling the skills to help put kids back in charge of their life, their dreams and their learning.

Karen lives in Colchester with her husband, Chris, and their two daughters, Kaitlyn and Morgan. She will succeed 2017 Anne Marie Murphy Paraeducator of the Year Peggy Kelley, who is a paraeducator at Mohegan Elementary School in Uncasville. Mrs. Kelley will conclude her term as Paraeducator of the Year on December 31. Mrs. Mylly will be honored at a ceremony on November 15, 2017, at The Bushnell in Hartford.

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