



Derby Public Schools Press Announcement

For immediate release
May 29, 2018

Contact: Dina Gotowala
203-736-5027



The Derby Public Schools has selected Melissa Stevens as the 2019 District Paraeducator of the Year.

The Connecticut State Department of Education 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.

Jennifer Olson, Irving School Principal stated, “Melissa is an outstanding Paraeducator who has worked in the District’s Behavior Learning Center the past two years. Her enthusiasm for teaching shows daily in her interactions with students and other staff in the building. No matter how challenging the day is Melissa is always positive and encouraging to the students to do their best. Not only is Melissa a wonderful role model for our students, the relationships she has developed with staff members here at Irving School are supportive and caring. In the classroom, she is always willing to jump in and help where needed including toilet training students, working one-to-one, completing DTI sessions or volunteering to cover a class when needed. Her kindness, compassion and patience has allowed students to make major gains socially, academically and behaviorally. Melissa is very deserving of this outstanding recognition.”

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Matthew Conway, said, "Ms. Stevens's presence is vital to the success of our Behavioral Learning Center. Ms. Stevens possess that unique nurturing, supportive and calm approach necessary to maximize learning for our students."

Jim Gildea, Board of Education Chair said, "The Derby School system is lucky to have Melissa on our team. She plays a critical role in our behavioral learning center and always gives of her time generously and is able to build close relationships with at risk and high need students."

We would also like to recognize our Building Level Paraeducators of the Year – April Pruzinsky from Bradley School, Renee Gooden from Derby Middle School and Steve Wilson from Derby High School.