

**COVENTRY'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR:
SUSAN MURPHY (ASFMS MEDIA SPECIALIST)**



(From left: Michael Convery, Dr. Arthur Lisi, Susan Murphy, & Dr. Michael Almeida)

Susan is the consummate professional and tremendously dedicated educator. She consistently goes above to enhance the experiences for our students and faculty through her expansive knowledge of technology and learning materials. She has developed web pages second to none in order to provide students, faculty, and parents access to the most up to date electronic resources for research, pleasure, and interests. Of utmost importance is Susan is a life-long learner. In fact, she is like the Energizer Bunny in all that she does. She is constantly seeking professional development and as any life-long learner and teacher, she graciously pays her learning forward in workshops at the school, district and state levels. As you will see below, her work extends far beyond the library; she teaches and co-teaches in classrooms, is involved in district initiatives, is leading the school in adapting technology to support learning, and continually supports teachers efforts to research and locate resources to support classroom instruction.

As a media specialist, Susan is ever cognizant of her students literacy needs. She maintains and analyzes the data from students accessing books or digital media in order to make purchasing decisions. This is really important to students' literacy growth as Susan is always aware of what

her students-particularly those who struggle with engaging in reading. As a “fly on the wall” one can sit back and watch Susan converse with students in an effort to interview them to get at their most current interests. Several years ago, boys became interested in a British based series-that were very hard to come by. This did not deter Susan. In a few short months, the series was catalogued...and ready for loan. Most recently, Susan was awarded a Champlin Grant with which she purchased Nooks with diverse texts to interest all students, but particularly those who engage in reading only when electronic versions are available to them.

Susan inspires students to learn. As part of her evaluation, she crafted a Student Learning Objective to increase students’ awareness of research databases, and her SLO was backed with baseline data and information to demonstrate growth. Her classroom instruction is clear, directed and strong; students become engaged in a series of activities Susan has constructed to help students gain knowledge and experience in conducting their own Internet-based research.

Of utmost import is that Susan is more than a media specialist- she is the backbone of our school. Her influence moves beyond the school day as she reaches out to assist students after the final bell of the day either in providing after school help to students or by participating in after-school programs like FASA.

It is because of Susan’s hard work, expertise and generosity that she has the respect of students, parents, and colleagues. She approaches EVERYTHING from the perspective of how she can help her colleagues in their classrooms, how can she help students in their studies, and how can she help parents in supporting their child. This year, after the first of several parent presentations on Internet resources, a parent reached out in gratitude, *“I would just like to acknowledge your hard work this evening presenting ASKRI. I know what goes into preparing and implementing parent workshops. Unfortunately, I am not feeling that well so I couldn't attend as planned. My daughter was devastated that we couldn't go and my friend very graciously offered to get her there. I heard every fine detail from the free stuff, to the food, to your expertise etc. Thank you so very much for giving your time to your students and their families. We are appreciative of all you do.”* Similarly, staff can be heard constantly saying, *“Thank you, Mrs. Murphy!”* Most recently, an anonymous staff wrote in our *Falcon Flyer*, **“Sue Murphy did an incredible job presenting on databases available free through askri.org. The presentation in front of parents and students was informative and timely as we transition to using digital tools in the classroom,”** and still another *“Thank you Susan Murphy for planning such a great lesson for the Oasis students! It was so beneficial for them.”* When in doubt, parents, colleagues, students know who the go-to person is—Susan Murphy!

Susan is an active member of our PTSA. She attends every meeting and is an active voice in moving important initiatives forward and engaging the cooperation of parents and staff to support these initiatives (e.g., chrome books; blended technology). Susan single handedly led our PTSA membership drive acquiring 100% faculty membership and leading the efforts in enrolling many of our families and students. As a result of her efforts our PTSA was awarded

the prestigious Rhode Island PTA Membership Award for the Largest Percentage Increase over Last Year's Membership Figures.

Additionally, Susan takes the notion of community seriously. She is a firm believer in the "global community" and when offered summer learning opportunities to be an American ambassador to forge cultural and global bonds, she does. Her life-long learning and multi-cultural pursuits have taken her to China and Japan. Last summer, Susan was awarded a fellowship from the Five College Center for East Asian Studies. As an ambassador to Japan, Susan learned much about East Asian cultures and brought this knowledge back to Rhode Island sharing both at the state level and school level (see section 1). Susan believes in offering multi-cultural opportunities to her students and has been a driving force in ensuring that rich multi-cultural texts are offered in the media center and on the summer reading list in order to broaden and enrich the experiences of our students.

Susan utilizes resources in the library to support instruction throughout the school. She informs faculty of materials available and assists students without fail. She regularly updates media center website with on-line resources for staff, student and parent use. She is invaluable to the immediate and at large learning community of Coventry.

For many years, Susan has coordinated the state Technology Assessment for every 8th grade student. She is instrumental in organizing and assisting our efforts in STAR and PARCC assessments. More importantly, she has provided invaluable support in helping our transition to Common Core State Standards.

According to the Aldrich Jr. High School media specialist, Sandra Savella, Susan has been a great mentor her and other media specialists in the start. Furthermore, Susan is a leader in electronic resources and is willing to share her time and expertise with librarians. She is always contemplating the new technologies. She is innovative in supporting technologies in engaging in reading. Her e-reader program is a model for the state. She may be the only school media specialist in RI that has acquired electronic readers and allows students to loan them and take them home. Moreover, she is generous with her ideas and resources she creates. In fact, she shares resources with RILINK to post for statewide use. For example posted to the RILINK website homepage, *"Andre Hajian and Rosanne Trissler from LaSalle Academy and Susan Murphy from Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry have offered to share the permission slips they use for the loaning of eDevices. We thank them for their generosity."*

Actively participates in professional associations:

*School Librarians of Rhode Island
Rhode Island Library Association
Rhode Island Middle Level Educators
Rhode Island Society for Technology Educators*

Engages in professional development, as a participant and leader:

PTSA-Digital Learning Workshop

PTSA-Rhode Island Library Parent and Student Research Workshop

ELA, Social Studies Departments-Digital Learning & Research

RILINK-Professional Development and Travel for Teachers

Organize, Publicize, and Facilitate after school workshops on statewide resource data base (ASKRI)

Participated in the following programs:

RIDE Technology Conference: Information Powered by Technology (October 5, 2013)

Model Classroom Teacher

Discovery Education Trained and Trainer

Serves on the following committees:

Coventry Public Schools District Technology Committee

Teach Tech 21

District Strategic Planning Committee

Researched and facilitated the alignment of media curriculum and CCSS with media specialists

Recognition and Honors:

National Board Certified

ASFMS Teacher of the Year 2012