

Darien Special Ed Chief Praised as She Steps Down from Job

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Deborah Farber, who stepped down as head of special education for Darien Public Schools, was praised by a school board member for her improvements to the program and communication with parents and others.

Board of Education member Sarah Zuro at the board's meeting on June 23 publicly thanked Farber for the quality of her work.

When Farber spoke at school meetings, Zuro said, "I was so impressed at how she always patiently stayed at the podium until the last parent question was asked and answered."

Here is Zuro's prepared statement:

Immediately after Dr. [Lynne] Pierson [interim superintendent of schools] arrived in the late Fall of 2013, she assembled a team and plan for addressing Darien's special education challenges with an eye toward compliance and conflict resolution, and, where necessary, initiating the proactive development of numerous improved programs.

This plan was enormously complex but essential to the healing of our school district. Central to this work was the appointment of Ms. Debbie Farber.

The Board [of Education] quickly realized that Ms. Farber was an extremely experienced professional who successfully wore many hats throughout her time with us — most recently as the interim assistant superintendent of special education and student services.

Always willing to roll up her sleeves, Ms. Farber became known for her practical solutions and calm, steady demeanor — qualities she no doubt internalized during her over-40-year career in special education in the state of Connecticut. Ms. Farber will be fondly remembered for many things — her experience with adaptive technology and the way she achieved the successful aligned six-day service delivery schedule in our elementary schools, to name a few.

Her experienced perspective helped quite a few students as well as their parents, teachers and administrators. However, what I will remember Ms. Farber for most is the way she worked tirelessly to improve communication with parents and community members, as well as with the board.

Throughout her time here, she regularly visited all seven of our schools — speaking formally at SEPAC meetings, to PTOs and even casually to parents in the school parking lot. Whenever I attended these meetings, I was so impressed at how she always patiently stayed at the podium until the last parent question was asked and answered. Even in difficult moments, her care and dedication to children was always evident. Our community benefited tremendously from her openness, sincerity and candor.

Though her time here was relatively short, her achievements were great. On behalf of the students, parents and community members of Darien, as well as my board colleagues, I want to thank Ms. Farber for her dedicated service and wish her much happiness, success and good health in all her future endeavors.