

Coventry tech educator given statewide honor

Gail Farrell named Career and Technical Educator of the Year

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COVENTRY — Gail Farrell was greeted by applause Thursday night, as she made her way to the front of the council chambers to be recognized for her recent achievement being named Career and Technical Educator of the Year by SkillsUSA Rhode Island.

"I'm honored to be nominated as Career and Technical Educator of the Year," Farrell, an instructor in the health careers program at Coventry Regional Career and Technical Center, told school committee members during their meeting last week. "My feet have really not touched the

ground since that was announced."

With its mission of ensuring a skilled workforce, SkillsUSA RI is the largest career and technical student organization in Rhode Island, made up of more than 6,500 members from schools, universities and technical centers statewide.

Farrell said Thursday she's happy to see career and technical programs are receiving more attention than ever before, particularly since the recent proliferation of initiatives like career pathways.

"Career and technical is really exciting at this point," she said. "We're being recognized for what we do. It's been a long time, and it's ex-

citing."

Farrell learned in early March that she'd been chosen as Career and Technical Educator of the Year. And she isn't the only member of the Coventry High School community to be recognized this year by SkillsUSA RI.

During the 43rd annual SkillsUSA RI awards banquet, held last Wednesday at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, Coventry students took home five gold medals, three silver medals and three bronze medals.

"Their success is our success," Farrell said, before also praising the hard work of her colleagues at the high school.



Photo by Kendra Gravelle

Gail Farrell, recently named Career and Technical Educator of the Year by SkillsUSA Rhode Island, gives a presentation at a meeting of the Coventry School Committee last week.

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Assistant Superintendent Laurie Andries took a moment during Thursday's meeting to thank Farrell for all she does for the Coventry school community.

"I'd just like to thank Gail for the 16 years that she's dedicated to Coventry and its students," Andries said. "Clearly, you're an outstanding educator and finally are being recognized."

Although absent from Thursday's meeting, Superintendent Craig Levis wrote in a weekly

update last month that he was "not surprised how many Coventry Public Schools educators are recognized as the best of the best at the state and national levels."

"Our educators are our greatest resource," he continued.

And while they didn't say much about it during Thursday's meeting, the sentiment that Farrell is "awesome" seemed to be shared by members of the school committee.

"We just celebrate you," School Committee Chair Katherine Patenaude said, "and we're just so happy that everybody else knows how great you are, too."

"You're our star," she added.