



Kendra Leigh Miller- Daily Times

Cheryl Coogan is a veteran educator currently employed at Cranston's Central Office, but in less than two weeks she will take over Coventry's Special Education Dept.

# New Special Ed. Director in Coventry

## Cranston administrator will start in Coventry August 20; is excited

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COVENTRY – Cheryl Coogan, the Coventry School Department's new special education director, is passionate about providing the best to students and assisting parents with how to make that happen.

Coogan comes from the Cranston School Department and has been involved in education since 1988 when she began as a special education teacher at Glen Hills Elementary School in Cranston followed by various special education positions in the Cranston Public Schools. Currently, she serves as the executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services Central Office Administrator in the city.

In her current position, she oversees special education in Cranston and develops policy.

Her position in the Coventry School Department starts August 20, and she will have more interaction with both parents and students.

"I've been able to put a lot of initiatives in place which has been great, but I'm excited to get back to interacting with students again," she said.

She understands that the students she helps can't always vocalize what they need or how they feel so she believes it's important to be intuitive with reading body language and pick up on their reactions.

"Parents come from one perspective and I may come from another but we're all just working to improve the life of the person in between," Coogan said. "We all need to be on the same page and that never happens if everyone is arguing, which can happen."

Coogan said over the years, some wording for some policies may have changed but the one glaring change has been in technology and how special education teachers have used it to aid in education.

"The iPad, [and] new software on computers and audio books have changed the way children in special education learn," Coogan explained.

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“It just makes it so much easier to communicate in so many regards.”

Coogan’s plan for her position in Coventry is to observe and not reinvent the wheel.

“I want to take what is there and improve it,” said the director. “I want the students to be confident and grow and know when I walk

into a room that I’m not going to do anything to set them back and undo six months’ worth of work.”

She pointed out that there’s always a history to why things are the way they are and she wants to be open to the way things are currently being done. And she’s looking ahead.

“I want the kids to lead the way,” she said.