

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

George A. Coleman, Interim Commissioner of Education

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For Immediate Release

State Department of Education selects two schools for Connecticut Vanguard Awards

(Hartford, CT)--The State Department of Education today announced the selection of two schools for the Connecticut Vanguard School Award. *Granby Memorial High School* (GMHS) and *Farm Hill Elementary School* in Middletown were selected on the basis of high student achievement in reading and mathematics or significant improvement in these subject areas. The schools showed evidence that they adopted specific, effective, school-improvement strategies; determined the steps needed to implement those strategies; made choices that enabled those strategies to succeed; and converted their findings into a system of practical, useful tools and services for school leadership teams.

“We want to congratulate these schools for their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education and for keeping student needs at the forefront,” said Interim Commissioner of Education George A. Coleman. “These schools are a testimonial to what hard work and determination are all about.”

There are two ways in which a school is considered a Vanguard School:

- *High Performing.* This is achieved when a school has at least 80 percent of its students at or above goal in all three areas on state assessments for two or more years.
- *Significantly Improving School.* This is accomplished when a school shows a consistent trend toward increasing the percentage of students at or above goal or proficiency in all three areas of state assessments for two or more consecutive years.

Granby Memorial High School is the first high school awarded the honor of being named a Connecticut Vanguard School. Serving approximately 650 students in Grades 9-12, GMHS is characterized by its academic excellence; a rich variety of athletic, artistic and co-curricular opportunities; school pride; and a commitment to high standards of personal and ethical behavior. GMHS is actively committed to the values and concepts of a professional learning community as its process for school reform and its long-term plan to increase student learning and achievement. As a *High Performing School*, more than 80 percent of the students at GMHS performed at or above state goal on all three areas of state assessments for two consecutive years.

Farm Hill Elementary School is a Pre-K through Grade 5 school serving approximately 325 students. The Farm Hill community works collaboratively to foster trust and commitment in an effort to sustain a safe and strong learning environment focused on improving student outcomes. The staff at Farm Hill is committed to using a variety of student learning indicators and grade-level team protocols to assist with determining individual student needs and implementing strategies for improving student performance. Student achievement scores at Farm Hill Elementary School have continued to increase over a four-year period.

Both schools will receive a \$15,000 award, funded through the state's Title I Program, to continue the excellent initiatives which they have begun. In addition, each Vanguard School will receive a \$5,000 award to provide time for staff members to partner with a school that has been identified as being "in need of improvement." These partnerships are designed to allow staff members from a successful school to share effective practices with colleagues of another school to assist them in improving student performance.

For more information, please contact Ann Gaulin, consultant with the Division of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, at 860-713-6769 or by e-mail at ann.gaulin@ct.gov.

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