



March 20, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Three Schools Selected to Represent Connecticut at Regional Conference on High School Innovation

The Schools Will Share Successful Strategies with Colleagues from Across New England

MEDIA CONTACT: Janet Garagliano, NESSC Liaison for Connecticut
203-430-5562 | janet_garagliano@newenglandssc.org

Hartford – Three Connecticut high schools—**Conard High School** (West Hartford), **Edwin O. Smith High School** (Storrs), and **New Britain High School** (New Britain)—have been invited to represent their state at a regional conference on effective strategies for improving teaching and learning in the 21st century.

The conference, **High School Redesign in Action** (newenglandssc.org/conference), will take place March 22–23, 2012, in Norwood, Massachusetts. It is sponsored by the New England Secondary School Consortium, a regional partnership committed to high school innovation, in collaboration with the departments of education for Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. **All the selected schools have made significant progress raising student achievement, graduation rates, college-enrollment numbers, or other indicators of educational success.**

“I’d like to commend Conard High School, Edwin O. Smith High School, and New Britain High School for being recognized, and thank them for representing Connecticut at the upcoming Regional Conference. The three schools’ work to embrace innovative approaches to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap is laudable, especially at this critical moment for public education in Connecticut,” said Stefan Pryor, Connecticut Commissioner of Education.

Conard High School has been working diligently to prepare all their students for college and careers in the 21st century. Their innovative program is focused on increasing *personalization*—in other words, attending to student learning needs and incorporating personal interests and aspirations into lessons and learning experiences. Conard also utilizes real-world activities—connecting learning to community issues and real-life contexts—to improve future preparation and increase the number of students attending postsecondary institutions.

Faced with increasing demands to reduce dropout rates and prepare all students for success after graduation, **Edwin O. Smith High School** has been expanding courses and programs to increase academic options for students and redefine what a comprehensive high school can be. A comprehensive “intervention” program, which provides extra support to struggling and at-risk students, has helped teachers reduce behavioral issues and academic failures.

Raising learning standards and strengthening teaching can be an ongoing challenge for any high school. To make the job a little easier, **New Britain High School** has developed a system that gives teachers time to meet every week to develop new lessons collaboratively, improve their instruction, and

incorporate the Common Core State Standards (corestandards.org)—a set of challenging national learning standards designed to prepare all students for college and the modern workplace.

The New England Secondary School Consortium is a regional partnership working to advance forward-thinking innovations in secondary education that will empower the next generation of citizens, workers, and leaders. The Consortium's goal is to ensure that every public high school student receives an education that prepares them for success in the colleges, careers, and communities of the 21st century. The Consortium is funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (nmeffoundation.org), the largest philanthropy in New England focused exclusively on education, and it is coordinated by the Great Schools Partnership (greatschoolspartnership.org), a nonprofit educational-support organization in Portland, Maine. The Nellie Mae Education Foundation has committed more than \$2 million to support the Consortium, which includes \$1 million in partnership grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

For more information:

newenglandssc.org/conference

Connecticut's High School Redesign in Action Presentations

WHEN I GROW UP: DESIGNING HIGH-IMPACT POSTSECONDARY PLANNING PROGRAMS

Schools: Conard High School, West Hartford

Presenters: Julio Duarte (assistant principal), Courtney Heutson (school counselor), Marylou Shand (school counselor), Cindy Vranich (teacher)

Presentation Information: Thursday, March 22 | 3:45 pm + Friday, March 23 | 12:45 pm

Website: www.whps.org/school/conard

Contact: Julio Duarte | julio_duarte@whps.org

ONE SCHOOL, MANY STUDENTS: CREATING MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Schools: Edwin O. Smith High School, Storrs

Presenters: Lou DeLoreto (principal), Christine Lee (director, STARR program), Brad Martin (director, Depot Campus-Big Picture School), Karen Paruolo (social studies department chair, professional development committee co-chair), Sarah Smith (teacher, professional development committee co-chair)

Presentation Information: Thursday, March 22 | 3:45 pm + Friday, March 23 | 10:45 am

Website: www.eosmith.org

Contact: Lou DeLoreto | ldeloreto@eosmith.org

THE COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL REDEFINED: DEVELOPING A 21ST CENTURY CURRICULUM IN CONCERT WITH THE COMMON CORE

School: New Britain High School, New Britain

Presenters: Michael Foran (principal), David Messina (division chairperson, social studies), Sondra Sanford (department chairperson, career technology education), Heather Verdi (division chairperson, social studies)

Presentation Information: Friday, March 23 | 9:15 am

Website: www.csdnb.org

Contact: Heather Verdi | verdi@csdnb.org

##