

**Superintendent:** Dr. Joseph Macary

**Assistant Superintendent:** Mr. Robert Testa

**Members of Board of Education:**

Paul Grabowski, Chair

Kristiana Wintress, Vice Chair

Karen Colt, Secretary

Anthony Bedlack, Susan Jablonecki, Kriste Nucci, Jesse Schoolnik, Simone Sewell, Susanne Vacek

**Responsibilities and Duties:** The authority, the duties and the responsibilities of the Board have been established by the Connecticut statutes, federal laws, and the town charter. The Board of Education scheduled regular meetings on the second and fourth Mondays of each month with the exception of July, when it did not meet, and August and December when it met only once. In addition, Board committees met throughout the year to deal with budget, policy, facilities, negotiations, curriculum and communications.

**School Data:**

The following is a list of the seven schools, the grade levels in those schools, and the October 1, 2025 enrollment for each school:

- Center Road School 440 (PK-5)
- Lake Street School 254 (K-5)
- Maple Street School 244 (K-5)
- Northeast School 258 (PK-5)
- Skinner Road School 328 (PK-5)
- Vernon Center Middle School 701 (6-8)
- Rockville High School 989 (9-12)

The total enrollment for the district was 3,214. The total budget for the 2025-26 school year was \$60,419,570.

**Mission Statement**

The Vernon Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.

### **Core Beliefs**

- Advocate a “whole child” approach to student learning
- Maximize student performance and set high expectations
- Integrate family and community with the education system

### **Diversity Statement**

The Vernon Board of Education reaffirms our commitment to continue the work being done and continues to look for new opportunities that promote equity and diversity in the Vernon Public Schools. We embrace diversity and inclusion, and absolutely condemn racism and discrimination.

### **District Goals**

- *Goal 1* – Build and improve relationships and partnerships with family and community
- *Goal 2* – Increase the achievement of every student through high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- *Goal 3* – Promote safe environments that are socially, emotionally, and physically conducive to learning

### **Vision Statement**

The Vision of the Vernon Public Schools is that every graduate is a Critical Thinker, Collaborator, Communicator, Resilient Individual, and Responsible Citizen.

### **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Directors of Teaching and Learning** **Meghann Burr (Secondary) and Melissa Trantolo (Elementary)**

Vernon Public Schools remains dedicated to ensuring every student has safe, high-quality, and equitable learning experiences, aligning with the district’s Student Success priority. Under the leadership of Assistant Superintendent Robert Testa and the Directors of Teaching and Learning, the district continues to advance its goal of increasing the achievement of every student through high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment. To ensure an equitable environment where all students can thrive, the district has implemented a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) designed to address diverse academic and social-emotional needs.

The Office of Teaching and Learning is committed to enhancing professional capacity and organizational coherence. This is evidenced by the New Teacher Academy, a three-day program for new hires that focuses on classroom management and relationship-building, followed by job-embedded coaching. Furthermore, certified teachers engage in ongoing collaboration through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), fostering consistency and excellence across all classrooms.

During the 2025-2026 school year, professional learning has specifically targeted the implementation of a standards-based, rigorous curriculum. Elementary educators have prioritized the science of reading and social-emotional learning, while secondary teachers have focused on deepening instructional rigor through formative assessment and student-to-student discourse. These efforts are supported by district instructional coaches and content-area consultants who provide actionable feedback to refine practices, ensuring the instructional core remains cognitively engaging for all students.

The Office of Teaching and Learning actively works to provide a culturally relevant curriculum and inclusive environments that value student voice and choice. This commitment includes a strategic focus on recruiting a diverse staff and promoting a sense of belonging, which supports the development of graduates who are responsible citizens and resilient individuals.

**CENTER ROAD SCHOOL:**           **Mrs. Heather Earley, Principal**  
                                                         **Mrs. Lori Purcaro, Assistant Principal**

Center Road School is the largest elementary school in the town of Vernon. This Pre-K through grade five school houses a student population of over 440 students and a dedicated staff. We host a number of programs for the district including 3 Preschool classes; one of them being the pilot full day 4's Pre-K program and the Renaissance Program.

To support student achievement in English Language Arts, we use a balanced literacy approach. This year our Language Arts blocks were more integrated to incorporate more authentic reading and writing opportunities for our students. We had dedicated time for phonics and vocabulary instruction to strengthen students core skills. Students were given plenty of opportunities to see their teachers model reading and writing of grade level texts and expectations and then practice on their own. Teachers engaged students in small groups to meet individual needs of all students. Each of our math lessons begins with a productive struggle problem. These problems encourage students to use multiple strategies to solve the same problem. The discussion that happens after allows students to hear how others solve problems and for the teachers to understand students understanding and misconceptions on the topic being presented. Our WIN blocks in reading and math allow our Interventionists and Special Education teachers to support the students on their caseloads and for classroom teachers to see additional small groups. Through close monitoring of student data (both formal and informal), staff are able to make instructional decisions that meet all students' needs. Staff meets regularly to review student data to group students based on changing needs to ensure we are appropriately challenging all students.

Students are able to engage in a variety of enrichment activities throughout the year. Identified students in grades 3-5 work with the district Gifted and Talented Teacher weekly to extend their learning. Outside of the school day, students are able to

participate in Lego League competitions in the fall. This past year we offered an after-school art enrichment club for K-2 students in order to provide them enrichment opportunities outside of the school day as well. Our classroom teachers work to provide students with enrichment activities within the classroom to extend students learning and focus on their interests.

Technology is infused in daily learning across the grades. Classrooms either have smart boards or Newline interactive whiteboards. In addition, there are Chromebook carts available for whole class and small group use. Our K-2 classrooms are equipped with iPads for center activities. Students have access to quality platforms such as iReady and Lexia to practice individualized reading and math skills.

The Center Road core values are Caring, Responsible and Safe and these are embedded in all we do. In addition to our student-centered classrooms, we offer activities such as Student Council, Game Club, Chorus and Band. Also, social/emotional growth is fostered through our positive behavior supports, trauma informed approach and the use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Step curriculum along with other Social-Emotional lessons facilitated by our Social Worker and School Psychologist. This year we moved away from Buddy Classrooms and implemented Advisory Groups where students in K-2 and 3-5 were grouped in small cross grade level groups that met monthly beginning in February to build community. These groups will continue with the same students and staff each year so students will have a strong relationship with the other students and staff in their advisory groups. This year we continued the Remarkable Roadrunners recognition program where, staff are able to recognize students weekly who demonstrated our core values. Students are recognized over the announcements on Fridays and families are notified via ParentSquare that their child was recognized and why.

Center Road School is an integral part of the community. Yearly, our students contribute to the local food pantry, CCMC PJ Day, the firefighter's toy collection, and the American Heart Association. Teachers engage in report card conferences twice per year and have other routine communication with parents. The implementation of the ParentSquare communication platform allows for families and all teachers to connect easily.

Center Road School strives to build deep and personal relationships with students so that they can be caring, responsible and safe individuals both in and out of school!

**LAKE STREET SCHOOL:**                      **Mrs. Terese (Tracy) Duenzl, Principal**

Lake Street School is a dynamic school of students in grades K-5. Student learning in a positive and safe environment is our priority. The moment the students walk into the school until the busses pull away, we are all hands-on deck.

Our mission statement is the backbone of our school community: *We are proud to be a community of learners that treat each other with respect, take responsibility for our own*

*learning, cooperate with others and strive for a safe and positive school for all.* Our positive school climate is the result of a school wide effort, led by our Climate committee, to promote respect, responsibility, cooperation and safety. We believe in doing what's best for our students by working together.

Our rich and rigorous curriculum drives student learning in the classroom, enhancing knowledge/skills outlined in the Vernon Public Schools' Vision of the Graduate: collaboration, critical thinking, communication, resilience and responsibility. We monitor student progress and provide targeted intervention supports in English Language Arts, Mathematics and social and emotional needs. Technology is infused throughout the curriculum and available through the use of interactive tech boards, chrome books, and iPads in the classroom. Our classroom schedules include two WIN (What I Need) blocks during the day to meet the intervention and extension supports for students in Reading and Math. Classroom lessons are supplemented with field trips, to support the curriculum, such as the Belding Wildlife Center, CT Science Center and the New England Air Museum. Our generous PTO provides in class lessons from High Touch, High Tech and the Lutz Museum. Our school teams meet consistently throughout the year to monitor students' growth and ensure they are getting what they need academically, social/emotionally and family support with strong school attendance.

Lake Street School embraces diversity. We host our district wide Activities Based Learning program, for elementary students of Autism. These students learn how to function independently within our school community, through communication, social skills, school jobs and interactive life functioning activities.

LSS includes a successful integrated program for ESL students, from as many as 16 countries, enriching our school community, K-5. We embrace the opportunities to share our rich cultural experiences.

Students benefit from a variety of activities to extend their learning, such as Band, afterschool intramurals, Chorus and Lego League. Students in fifth grade are recognized for Visual and Performing Arts at a Celebration of the Arts through the CT Association of Schools.

Students learn best when families and schools work together. Lake Street School benefits from a strong relationship with families who support our students in a variety of ways. Parents are welcome to enjoy lunch with their children, volunteer in the classroom, support learning from home. Each grade level invites families to participate in events throughout the year, such as the third grade Wax Museum, where students portray someone they studied in their biography unit. We celebrate the Veterans in our school community with an annual ceremony provided by the Lake Street staff. Our students perform in well attended winter and spring concerts. Multicultural Night and VIP (Very Important Person) breakfasts are family favorites. Our active PTO sponsors several events for families throughout the year, including Ice Cream Socials, a Trunk or Treat and Family Fun Fair.

At Lake Street School, the feeling of success is doing your very best!

**MAPLE STREET SCHOOL:**      **Mr. Joshua Egan, Principal**

At Maple Street School, our guiding principle and daily promise is that “Every Student Matters and Every Moment Counts.” We are deeply committed to providing a dynamic, student-centered learning environment where high standards are set for our students and held equally by our staff. True education extends far beyond traditional academics, which is why we tirelessly advocate for the whole child. Day in and day out, our passionate educators work relentlessly to ensure that every single student’s academic, social, and emotional needs are fully met, championed, and celebrated.

A central pillar of our mission at Maple Street School is building meaningful, long-lasting relationships both within our school walls and throughout the broader Vernon/Rockville community. We firmly believe that families and community members are invaluable partners in the educational process, bringing rich perspectives and vital support to our school culture. To cultivate these essential connections, we warmly invite our community to participate in a wide variety of engaging learning and social events throughout the academic year. Families can look forward to participating in hands-on Literacy and Math Nights, our festive Trunk or Treat, the vibrant Glow Art Show, our annual Spelling Bee, Read Across America Day, the Geography Bee, the Polar Plunge, and Career Day. Furthermore, each individual grade level hosts dedicated family engagement events designed to showcase student achievement and give parents practical ways to partner in their child’s academic progress.

Beyond the regular school day, Maple Street School offers a rich array of extracurricular activities designed to nurture physical fitness, creative expression, problem-solving, and leadership. Run directly by our dedicated staff members, these intramural offerings provide safe, enriching environments where students can explore new interests and build strong peer connections. Students can participate in specialized groups such as Cursive Club, Mural Club, LEGO League, and Pokémon Club, or stay active through non-competitive intramural sports like volleyball, gymnastics, and basketball. We also place a strong emphasis on student leadership and civic responsibility. Our Grade 5 Safety Patrol allows fifth graders who consistently model our core values to serve as visible school leaders with important daily responsibilities. Additionally, our Student Council includes elected student representatives all the way from Kindergarten through Grade 5, giving even our youngest learners a platform to lead community-focused service projects that help others. We are also deeply fortunate to partner with Hartford HealthCare through our Family Resource Center, a collaboration that provides vital wrap-around support services to our building, our students, and our school families.

We take immense pride in our strong academic accomplishments and our steady progress in lowering chronic absenteeism rates every year since the pandemic. By prioritizing authentic relationships and fostering a deep sense of belonging and connectedness, we have created an environment where learners feel truly valued, loved, and heard as active participants in their own education. Our students genuinely want to be in school each day because they know they belong to a community that cares for them. This positive culture

directly feeds our academic success, which is driven by our staff's dedication to continuous data collection and analysis during our morning grade-level meetings. These collaborative sessions allow teachers to deliver targeted, high-quality instruction and hold every child to ambitious standards, while always going above and beyond to support students and their families.

Social-emotional learning is deeply woven into the daily fabric of Maple Street School. Every grade level sets aside dedicated instructional time each day to teach our social-emotional curriculum, equipping students with essential life skills like self-regulation, empathy, and constructive communication. Complementing this daily focus is our Friday Advisory program, where all staff members meet twice a month with small, multi-grade groups of students. These advisory sessions are designed to foster cross-grade relationships, reinforce our social-emotional learning goals, and ensure that every single student in our building identifies and connects with at least one trusted adult they can turn to whenever needed.

Ultimately, Maple Street School is a unique, close-knit community where educators, families, and neighbors come together with a unified purpose: to enrich the lives of our children. By empowering our students, nurturing their academic growth, and prioritizing their social and emotional well-being, we are preparing a future generation of confident, responsible, and productive twenty-first century citizens. At Maple Street School, we remain forever true to our core belief—Every Student Matters, Every Moment Counts.

**NORTHEAST SCHOOL:      Mrs. Melissa Ross, Principal**

Northeast School is a vibrant learning community where every child is known, valued, and empowered to reach their full potential. We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Through purposeful structures, meaningful relationships, and high expectations, we ensure every learner has the opportunity to grow and succeed.

At Northeast School, we are "**Leading the Way**" by creating learning experiences that ignite curiosity, inspire creativity, and empower students to think deeply, solve problems, and embrace challenges with confidence. At NES, students are excited to learn because our staff makes learning exciting! Our instructional approach is grounded in inquiry and deep student thinking. Through application of evidenced-based practices students collaborate, take intellectual risks, explain their reasoning, and actively construct their own understanding. Our teachers are leaders of inquiry who continually reflect, learn, and innovate to create meaningful learning experiences. In turn, our students become leaders of their own learning by setting goals, asking thoughtful questions, monitoring their progress, and taking ownership of their growth. Every learning experience is intentionally designed to help students become the critical thinkers, collaborators, communicators, resilient individuals, and responsible citizens outlined in Vernon Public Schools' Vision of the Graduate.

We hold high expectations for every learner and use evidence based instructional practices to meet the unique needs of each child. Through our unique "teaming time", we engage in collaborative planning, ongoing assessment, and responsive instruction, we ensure all students are challenged, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential. We believe every child deserves access to engaging, rigorous learning experiences where thinking is visible, every voice is valued, and mistakes are embraced as opportunities for growth.

We also recognize that students cannot learn if they are not present. Promoting and recognizing consistent attendance and establishing positive school habits from the earliest grades remain essential priorities, helping every child fully benefit from the rich learning experiences our school provides.

Northeast School proudly celebrates the many cultures, traditions, perspectives, and languages represented within our community. We believe every student deserves to feel seen, valued, and affirmed. We embrace the gift of a second language and recognize that the diverse experiences our students and families bring enrich learning for everyone. By fostering belonging and embedding culturally responsive practices throughout our school, we prepare students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

Families are essential partners in every child's success. We believe meaningful collaboration between home and school creates the strongest foundation for learning. Through open communication, authentic partnerships, and engaging family learning opportunities, we work alongside families to support every child's academic, social, and emotional growth. Together, we strive to cultivate a school community where every child knows they belong and every family feels welcomed.

Our dedicated team of classroom teachers, specialists, paraeducators, interventionists, special education staff, school psychologists, social workers, office personnel, custodial staff, and administrators works collaboratively to ensure every student is supported, challenged, and celebrated. We foster a culture of curiosity, innovation, inclusion, kindness, and continuous improvement because we believe learning flourishes when relationships are strong and everyone is empowered to contribute.

Northeast School's commitment to excellence has earned national and state recognition, including designation as a 2020 National Blue Ribbon School and multiple School of Distinction honors. These accomplishments reflect the dedication of our students, staff, families, and community to creating exceptional learning experiences for every child.

At Northeast School, we are preparing students not simply for the next grade level, but for a lifetime of learning, leadership, and contribution. By "Leading the Way" through innovation, inquiry, and collaboration, empowering students as owners of their learning, celebrating the rich diversity of our community, and engaging families as true partners, Northeast School is shaping confident learners who are ready to make a positive impact in their school, their community and the world.

**SKINNER ROAD SCHOOL:      Mr. Bryan Kerachsky, Principal**

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our students, staff, and families, Skinner Road School continues to be recognized for exceptional academic growth and achievement:

- **5-Time Connecticut School of Distinction** (Since 2017)
- **2023 National Blue Ribbon School** (U.S. Department of Education)
- **Top 10% School in Connecticut** (Next Generation Accountability Index, 2024–2025)

These national and state honors reflect our unwavering commitment to closing achievement gaps and providing learning opportunities for all students.

**Reaching for the S.T.A.R.s**

At Skinner Road School, we believe in every student's potential to reach for the **S.T.A.R.s**. By modeling and practicing our core pillars—being **Safe, Truthful, Academic, and Respectful**—our students learn to excel both inside and outside the classroom, growing into thoughtful, contributing members of the Vernon community. Guided by our hardworking staff, SRS is truly a school that cares for all!

**Strong Family & Community Partnerships**

We deeply value our partnerships with families and know that strong home-school connections are essential to student success. We encourage open communication and invite parents to connect with teachers whenever needed. Through ParentSquare and social media, we give families a daily "sneak peek" into our classrooms—celebrating student achievements, sharing special events, and highlighting the amazing work happening every day across our school.

**VERNON CENTER MIDDLE SCHOOL:    Mrs. Melissa Luke, Principal**  
**Mr. Michael Savignano, Asst. Principal**  
**Mr. Brett Distasio, Assistant Principal**

**Grades 6, 7, 8 Highlights**

As the 2025–2026 school year comes to a close, Vernon Center Middle School reflects on a year of meaningful growth, collaboration, and measurable progress. Guiding this work was our schoolwide theme, ***One School, One Dream, One Team***, reflecting our shared belief that meaningful improvement is only possible when students, staff, families, and the community work together toward common goals while remaining grounded in the Vernon Public Schools Strategic Plan and the Vernon Center Middle School Improvement Plan.

Throughout the year, we intentionally focused on building systems that would support both immediate improvement and long-term sustainability. Those systems became the framework for every instructional decision, operational improvement, and relationship we cultivated. As a result, VCMS experienced measurable gains in student achievement, attendance, and school climate while establishing a strong foundation for continued success.

Our work began well before students returned in August. Through more than eighty individual staff conversations, collaborative planning sessions with VCMS families, and the analysis of student achievement, attendance, climate, and perception data, we identified strategic areas to strengthen our instructional practices and schoolwide systems. These conversations established a shared vision for improvement and helped guide decisions throughout the school year.

Academically, our SBAC cohort growth demonstrated exceptional progress. Seventh grade math grew by 11.9 points, eighth grade math by 3.7 points, and VCMS overall by 9 points! These results represent the highest mathematics growth VCMS has experienced in recent years and reflect the extraordinary work of our mathematics teachers and instructional teams. ELA showed similar trends, with seventh grade growing by 10.4 points and eighth grade by 3.1 points, and VCMS overall by 2 points. These gains reflect stronger Tier I instruction, high quality teachers, increased student attendance and focus, and more consistent use of data through ILT, RISE, and team meetings.

Attendance also remained a major area of focus. Weekly Attendance Team meetings, enhanced family communication, proactive student supports, and consistent relationship-building contributed to a reduction in chronic absenteeism from **21% to 16%**. This progress reflects the collective efforts of our faculty, counselors, support staff, families, and students to ensure that every child has the opportunity to engage consistently in learning.

Throughout the year, VCMS changed and continued to strengthen the systems that support both student success and school culture. Several initiatives were introduced to maximize instructional time, improve organization, and create a more predictable learning environment. Three high-leverage system improvements had a particularly significant impact on our school community:

- Transition bells that maximized instructional time.
- Electronic devices stored in lockers throughout the instructional day.
- Recess following lunch to promote student wellness and readiness to learn.

These initiatives created a calmer and more focused school environment while reinforcing consistent expectations across the building. Students reported that these changes helped them. They felt more focused, more organized, and ready to learn.

Equally important was our continued investment in school culture and student belonging. Students participated in a wide variety of academic, artistic, athletic, and extracurricular opportunities including our Drama Production, Math Bee, Hip Hop Day, Special

Olympics Torch Run, record attendance at concerts and school performances, field trips, Student Council, Eagle Eye Council, athletics and our music program also celebrated a historic milestone as the VCMS Band earned first place at its first-ever competition, highlighting the talent and dedication of our students and music staff. These experiences strengthened relationships, fostered school pride, and reinforced our belief that student success extends far beyond academic achievement.

Strong partnerships with families remained central to our work. One of the clearest themes that emerged from our family partnerships was the importance of consistent communication. Our weekly newsletters became a cornerstone of our communication system, helping us stay aligned, informed, and connected within VCMS and with our families. Families repeatedly shared how much they appreciated the clarity and consistency. As a result, family participation at concerts, athletic events, and school celebrations increased noticeably, strengthening the sense of pride and community throughout VCMS.

The accomplishments of the 2025–2026 school year are the direct result of the dedication, professionalism, and collaborative spirit of our faculty, staff, students, families, and community partners. The progress achieved this year reflects what is possible when a dedicated school community works toward a common purpose. VCMS has built tremendous momentum, and we look forward to continuing this important work as we prepare every student for future success. We did something special this year, and we are just getting started.

**ROCKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL:**

**Mr. Jason Magao, Principal**  
**Mr. Daniel Pichette, Assistant Principal**  
**Mrs. Erin Houlihan, Assistant Principal**

**OVERVIEW**

**Rockville High School: Celebrating the Class of 2026 and Another Year of Excellence**

We are proud to share that Rockville High School had another successful and inspiring year! The Class of 2026 graduated 230 outstanding students who have left their mark on our school and community.

Throughout the year, our programs continued to thrive. Students were recognized for their excellence in athletics, ASTE, creative writing, and music, showcasing the depth and diversity of talent at Rockville High School. Our guiding mantra—**"Our House, where we Work Hard, Play Hard, and Own It"**—remained central to our school culture, empowering students to build meaningful legacies.

This year, our graduates earned an impressive **\$450,400 in scholarships** and received acceptances from numerous distinguished colleges and universities. In addition, students

enrolled in college credit courses earned a remarkable **2,858 college credits**, preparing them for continued success in higher education.

The Rockville High School community remains deeply committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. Through strong collaboration with families and community partners, we strive to ensure that every student graduates ready to thrive as a productive and engaged member of a dynamic, global society.

We believe that rigorous academic experiences, along with enriching extracurricular opportunities, give all students the foundation to grow as **Responsible, Open-Minded, Critical, and Knowledgeable Thinkers**.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026—and thank you to all who continue to support the Rockville High School mission!

### **SCHOOL CLIMATE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

**Rockville High School continues to thrive, thanks to the unwavering support of our families who consistently show up for our students and their many endeavors.**

This year, we proudly hosted a wide variety of events—from athletic competitions and musical performances to club activities, open house nights, and dynamic drama productions. One of the highlights of the spring was our 4th annual **ROCK the Arts** evening—a vibrant celebration where students showcased an impressive array of talents. It was truly an inspiring night that captured the creativity, passion, and spirit of our school community.

### **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

- 10 Students from the TALC Program earned their CPR and First Aid certifications.
- The National Honor Society raised \$428.00 for Connecticut Children’s Hospital
- The National Honor Society raised \$151.00 for Pack Leaders Animal Rescue
- The National Honor Society hosted a Unified Sports tournament with five surrounding districts.
- The National Honor Society raised over \$400.00 in cash and donated gifts for Cornerstone in Vernon.
- Eleven ASTE students will be receiving their FFA State Degree at the Connecticut State FFA Convention this spring
- The Rockville FFA poultry Team earned Bronze at the 98th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis
- The Rockville FFA Floriculture CDE team placed second in the state with Imani Grant, Cullen Bickford, and Meadow Bornhorst placing in the top 10 as individual competitors.

- The Rockville FFA Livestock Evaluation CDE Team placed first in the state consisting of Avery Ingraham, Rachel Griffin, Julia Cohen, and Avery Johnson. They will be representing Connecticut at the 99th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis this fall.
- An American Literature Honors Student, Isabelle Wilbon, was accepted into the Nook Farms Writers Collaborative.
- Creative Writing Competition Winners and Honorable Mentions:
  - Kadyn Bouley and Abigail Zaushny received honorable mentions with their short fiction and poetry at Eastern's Literary Festival for High Schoolers
  - Iris Hida Gold Award and Honorable Mention for CT Student Write, Gold Key and Honorable Mention in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Contest
  - Abigail Zaushny received Honorable Mention in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Contest
  - Arctis Coombs published in Stranger Sagas
- RHS Art students earned recognition at the Scholastic Art Awards, bringing home two honors: Thomas Glinski Jr. received an Honorable Mention, and Jacob Koch was awarded a Silver Key, both for their outstanding work in photography
- The Connecticut Association of Schools has recognized Thomas Glinski Jr. as the 2025–2026 Outstanding Arts Award recipient.
- The Connecticut Association of Schools has recognized Meredith Ross as the 2025-2026 Outstanding Performing Arts Award recipient
- The RHS Marching RAM Band placed 2nd at the 2025 USBANDS State Championships
- The RHS Band traveled to New York City and performed a selection of patriotic music aboard the USS Intrepid.
- RHS Choir student Charles Firetto auditioned for and was accepted into the Mixed Choir for the Connecticut Music Educators Association Eastern Region Music Festival hosted at UConn.
- The RHS Choir competed at Music in the Parks on Friday, May 15th, and won 2nd place overall. Based upon the judges' scores of our adjudicated repertoire, the RHS Choir earned the highest possible rating of superior.
- The RHS Musical Theater Company received numerous nominations for the Halo Awards (Hosted by the Palace Theater). To name a few: Best Comedic Performance: Carson Dionne as OLAF, Best Supporting Actress: Shealeigh Thomas as ELSA, Best Running Crew, Best Lighting Design, Best Overall Contemporary Musical
- Unified Sports hosted the following events: CIAC Bowling Tournament with athletes from numerous schools, the NCCC Unified Basketball Championship, and the National Honor Society Tournament, and the CIAC Flag Football event.

- Molly Wilson and Caroline Burg were recognized as the CIAC Scholar Athlete recipients.
- 30 varsity sports offered, 14 JV teams, 2 freshmen teams
- 448 total athletes (46.9% of students)
- 79 three sport athletes
- Fourteen students earned the Seal of Biliteracy in the following languages: French, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, and Mandarin Chinese.
- Through a continued focus on MTSS, Ram Center staff implemented Star Reading and Star Math assessments for the first time this year to measure student progress and intervention outcomes. This data informed targeted interventions and timely academic support, contributing to a 15% increase in intervention students meeting proficiency in both Star Reading and Star Math.

### **NEW INITIATIVES**

- ASEP and TALC students visited Ebony Horsewomen, a therapeutic equestrian center that provides equine-assisted programs focused on healing, empowerment, and youth development. The experience promoted responsibility, teamwork, and positive connections with the animals, making it a meaningful new initiative we hope to continue each year.
- Students from Practical Math and the Alternative Special Education Program participated in their second year of an immersive activity at the Frog Rock Summer Shack restaurant where they applied skills learned in the classroom to a real work environment. They engaged in role-playing various job positions, and enhanced their understanding of money management, financial responsibility, and employability skills.
- TALC has implemented a vocational initiative that includes hosting community members as speakers. This year, the program hosted a local barber and a correctional officer.
- Math Department worked on creating and implementing investigative and collaborative tasks to increase student discourse and engagement. The math teachers have been working with Yale students to pilot a module professional development program. This program has provided some great discourse strategies to implement while students are engaged in our more rigorous tasks.
- The ASTE department initiated Mentor Mondays as a way to increase freshman engagement. Upperclassmen partnered with the freshman to assist them in adjusting to RHS.
- The business, family and consumer science and technology education departments were successfully merged as the new Career Technical Education department.

- Katheryn Madrak developed an extensive curriculum for UConn's Popular Music ECE course, creating detailed materials and successfully running the class for a full semester. This new RHS music course provides a historical overview of popular music in America, exploring a wide variety of genres such as jazz, blues, country, pop, rock, and hip-hop. Throughout the course, students study influential musicians and their music from each genre through the context of society, diversity, and popular culture as applicable. Furthermore, students analyze the evolution of music genres throughout the 20th and 21st centuries in relation to technological advances for sharing music such as the radio, television, and the internet as well as the invention of new electronic instruments and recording equipment.
- Maxine Cunningham was awarded a grant to purchase professional camera equipment, enabling the documentation of athletics and events at Rockville High School. This initiative will provide students with valuable, real-world experience in event photography, helping them develop practical skills in a professional setting; while also giving back to the community.
- On a monthly basis, the Art and Music Departments proudly recognize outstanding "Spotlight Students" who consistently go above and beyond in their classes. These students demonstrate exceptional creativity, dedication, effort, leadership, and passion for the visual and musical arts. We celebrate their hard work and the positive impact they make in our classrooms and school community.
- Renovations were completed on the first classroom in the second floor science wing, with two more classrooms being renovated this summer.
- The Science Department proposed a new required Grade 9 science course, Integrated Physical Science, and a new suggested course sequence of science courses to begin next school year. This will ensure that all students receive instruction across all three disciplines of science included in the Next Generation Science Standards.
- The new 9th Grade Academy structure fundamentally reshaped the transition experience from 8th to 9th grade. By establishing a deep sense of belonging and having quarterly incentive events, we successfully reduced chronic absenteeism from 24.3% to 9.5% from 8th to 9th grade. There was also a 57% reduction in total freshman suspensions comparatively from last year's 9th grade.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

- The ASTE program opened our new Aquaculture lab and classroom with a ribbon cutting ceremony.
- ASTE was able to purchase a new van for field trips and new skid steer for equipment operations.
- ASTE had a record enrollment for 2025-26 of 165 students!

- Fourteen students with IEP or 504 Plans attended a panel discussion at Manchester Community College regarding “Transitioning from High School to College for Students with Disabilities.”
- The Penguin Plunge raised a total of \$2,417, with 50% of the funds supporting Special Olympics Connecticut and the remaining 50% returned to Rockville High School to be distributed among the six participating teams based on their fundraising totals; Unified Sports retained 10% from each team to support event organization. The event included 28 registered participants, along with three administrators who participated in the plunge as fundraising milestones were reached. Interest and enthusiasm following the event were very positive, with many students and staff already expressing interest in participating again next year.
- The Avengers Leadership Program was able to host the Josten’s Leadership Conference in March of 2026 that had many schools from New England in attendance.
- English’s Multicultural Literature class was able to host Dr. Josie Brown, the Dean of the University of Hartford, semester one for a class discussion. The class was also able to host Dr. Rydell, a renowned speaker, for a class discussion in semester two.
- The National Honor Society raised \$428.00 for Connecticut Children’s Hospital
- The National Honor Society raised \$151.00 for Pack Leaders Animal Rescue
- The National Honor Society raised over 400.00 in cash and donated gifts for Cornerstone in Vernon.
- Creative Writing Competition Winners and Honorable Mentions:
  - Kadya Bouley and Abigail Zaushny received honorable mentions with their short fiction and poetry at Eastern’s Literary Festival for High Schoolers
  - Iris Hida Gold Award and Honorable Mention for CT Student Write, Gold Key and Honorable Mention in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Contest
  - Abigail Zaushney received Honorable Mention in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Contest
  - Arctis Coombs published in Stranger Sagas
- The World Language Honor Society inducted six students of French into the Société Honoraire de Français and 8 students of Spanish into the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica.
- The RHS Musical Theater company set attendance records with their 2025 performances of FROZEN, the Broadway Musical. Halo award nominations will be announced at the end of May.
- Students at Rockville High School hosted the fourth annual *Rock the Arts* event, a vibrant celebration of the artistic, musical, and cultural talents of the RHS student

body, showcasing the diverse creative achievements that thrive within the school community.

- The RHS Choir had a successful year of significant community service, including performing at the Vernon Police Department Awards Ceremony, caroling at Vernon Winterfest, and bringing holiday joy to our local citizens at eight different locations during our third annual Community Caroling Tour.
- 60 all conference athletes
- 10 all state athletes (spring pending)
- 87.79 Athlete grade average during season
- The percentage of 11th grade students scoring at or above proficient on the CT Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment increased 9 points compared to last school year, from 32% to 41%.

## APPENDIX A

### 2025 Vernon Public Schools: Together, Students Learn, Achieve and Succeed

Traditionally, during this time of the year, everyone starts the New Year by making resolutions and striving to make their lives better than the year before. Before you can move forward in 2026, it is a best practice to reflect on the past year's work. As a former Social Studies teacher, you need to know where you have been in the past before you chart a new course for the future. Our ultimate goal is to create an optimal learning environment for Vernon students to grow by learning, achieving, and succeeding.

Today's students have different academic, social, and emotional needs than those of earlier generations. Their needs are continually changing, and schools need to adapt. To accomplish this transformation, the Vernon Public Schools must take steps towards maximizing student growth through high-quality teaching and learning. These steps are grounded in the district's core beliefs to: *advocate a "whole child" approach to student learning, maximize student performance and set high expectations, and integrate family and community with the education system.* These core beliefs drive our educational work.

The Vernon Public Schools administration has adapted to this "transformational change" by focusing on the essence of education. As stated by Martin Luther King, Jr. *"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."* This quote helps us realize the true meaning of education. He reminds us that academic, social, and emotional learning must occur in our education – both in schools and the community.

Despite all the challenges in 2025, here are some impressive accomplishments this past year:

- ✓ The best indicator of student learning is Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System Results, is a broad set of 12 indicators that help tell the story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. School Accountability Results are similar to a student's report card – looking at the overall growth in one's education compared to others. The CT State Department of Education released the 2024-2025 Accountability Results for Schools. **Vernon earned 76.3% points, in comparison to the CT State Average 71.8%.** Vernon ranked #1 (with a score of 76.3) among the 36 Alliance Districts in Connecticut. This was an amazing accomplishment considering today's societal challenges to students and schools.
- ✓ Based on the Connecticut Next Generation Accountability results, schools with significant growth and achievement are deemed "Schools of Distinction." This year, the **Northeast School was deemed a School of Distinction** for its High Performance and High Growth (All Students) in English Language Arts (ELA) and High Growth (High Needs Students) in ELA. Congratulations to students, parents, teachers, staff and administration at Northeast School for their efforts and accomplishments in being named a "School of Distinction." Great Job!
- ✓ The Vernon Public Schools was honored as a finalist (one of 3 in the nation) for the category of Culture, Vision & Strategic Planning for *Vernon's Blueprint for Success* and its impact on student achievement and innovative practices. 'DALI Schools of Distinction' refers to **Districts of Distinction** awarded by the District Administration Leadership Institute (DALI), recognizing innovative K-12 school districts for impactful programs in areas like student achievement, technology, wellness, and community engagement, highlighting successful models for others to emulate. Vernon was the only Connecticut District to be honored by DALI this year. One of only three districts in the nation (CO, CT, WI) to be a finalist for this award for Developing District Coherence and Capacity in the Vernon Public Schools. These are national awards celebrating forward-thinking education initiatives and leaders.



- ✓ Congratulations to Bryan Kerachsky for being named the 2025 Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Elementary Principal of the Year! This is an amazing achievement at the state level. Bryan has been the Principal at Skinner Road School (SRS) for the past 8 years. This is fitting tribute to a person who has demonstrated extraordinary leadership and an unrivaled commitment to his students, school and community. Bryan represented Connecticut at the National Elementary Principalship level. Thank you Bryan for what you do for the students in Vernon. Proud of you.
- ✓ Rockville High School and the Vernon Public Schools celebrated the opening of a new Natural Resources and Aquaculture Lab for the school's popular Agricultural Science and Technology Education (ASTE) program. Rockville ASTE has offered an aquaculture program for several years, but it has been inside the program's mechanic shop. The new \$1.7 million building will enable the aquaculture program to expand and give students new opportunities to learn about an important aspect of agriculture in Connecticut. Its opens up new Career Pathways for ASTE students.
- ✓ Rockville High School senior Tommy Glinski has been collecting socks and other items for people who are homeless since he was in third grade. Each year, Tommy would distribute boxes, then collect the socks and other items and deliver them to Cornerstone, a social services agency in Vernon that runs a clothing bank, homeless shelter and other services. Cornerstone shares items with Hartford Police Officer Jim Barrett, who works to assist the capital city's homeless population. Tommy created 'Socktober' and has collected over 13,000 socks for the homeless in the last decade.
- ✓ For the eighth year in a row, Vernon has students qualifying for the National History Day contest. Congratulations to Madison Gordon, Grade 8, who took 1st place in Junior Individual Exhibits with a project on Native American Boarding Schools, and to Jacob Brown, 9th grade, who took 2nd place in Senior Individual Exhibits with a project on Sheff v. O'Neill.
- ✓ The Vernon Board of Education won two Bonnie B. Carney Awards of Excellence for Educational Communications under special projects for "Board Member Handbook" and "PSAs, Live Feeds, Facebook & X" under the Social Media category at the 2025 CABA (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) Convention. In addition, the Vernon BOE received 'honorable mention' awards for the "District Billboards" and our "End of the Year Survey." These four communication awards highlight the positive community outreach in the school district.
- ✓ During the 2024-2025 school year, 304 Rockville High School students earned a total of 2,567 college credits through dual enrollment programs. Students either passed Advanced Placement exams, completed University of Connecticut, Eastern CT, or Southern CT State University Early College Experience courses, or completed an articulated class in the Connecticut State College System (Manchester, Middlesex) or Goodwin College. The 51 Early College Experience course offerings include science and math, but also Contemporary Social Issues in Sport, Introduction to Human Rights, Environmental Science, American Studies, Biotechnology, Digital Media Design, Spanish, French, Public Speaking, Advanced, Creative Writing, If you Love it – Teach it, Plant System Fundamentals and Animal Behavior.

- ✓ By June 2025, 304 students in a school of 975 received college credit through their academic studies at Rockville High School. These credits, earned by all RHS students during this time, translated to a total of \$1,518,252 in savings on college tuition and fees. In addition, 82 seniors were awarded Vernon community scholarships totaling \$427,150.
- ✓ On the Next Generation Accountability Index: Indicator 6 (Passing Exams) is the percentage of student in Grades 11 & 12 achieving either College & Career Readiness benchmarks on at least one of the following: SAT, AP or earning three or more dual enrollment credits. Four-year graduation rates are impacted as well:

| 2018-2019 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 37%       | 39.8%     | 43.5%     | 49.4      | 53.5%     |
| 82.2%     | 79.0%     | 82.2%     | 82.0%     | 89.6%     |

- ✓ Over 72% of Rockville High School Graduates (Class of 2025) are furthering their education at the college level. Some of the colleges our students are attending include Arizona State University, CT State Community College, Duke University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Syracuse University, University of Connecticut, University of Massachusetts, University of Rhode Island, Wesleyan University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.
- ✓ Sixteen Seniors from the RHS Class of 2025 signed up to play a sport in college. They include Isabel Baidy for Soccer at Elms College; Matt Bannon for Track & Field at UConn; Thomas Bannon for Track & Field at UConn; Peter Glidden for Baseball at Southern (SCSU); Liam Hodson for Baseball at Springfield College; Piper Jones for Soccer at Delaware Valley University; Jonathan Kasamba for Football at Stonehill College; Sarah Landry for Soccer at University of St. Joseph; Connor Michaelson for Baseball at Houghton University; Gabby Montano for Soccer at Elms College; Katherine Morey for Tennis at University of Hartford; Brady Ramsdell for Football at Husson University; Charlotte Rumovicz for Track & Field at Mount St. Mary's College; Nate Thomas for Hockey at Central Connecticut State University; Liana Wheelock-Bonet for Basketball at Westfield State University; and Matt Woodward for Track & Field at Southern CT (SCSU).
- ✓ Congratulations to the Cast & Crew of the Rockville HS Theatre Department for 11 Halo Award Nominations for Clue and the Addams Family Productions. The nominations were for the following: Best Performance in a Comic Role to Carson Dionne (Colonel Mustad) and Lorelei Hutchings (Mrs. Peacock) in Clue; Best Performance in a Comic Role to Emily Owens (Grandma) in the Addams Family. Best Lighting and design/execution to Charlotte Rumovicz for Clue and Best Scenic Design/Execution to Larsen Owen, Derek Morgan & Lucas Mele-Levesque for The Addams Family; Best Chorus to Rockville HS in Addams Family; Best Performance in a Supporting Role to Paul Westerberg (Uncle Fester) and Abigail Brown (Wednesday) in the Addams Family; Best Standout Performance in an Ensemble Production to Pail Westerberg (Wadsworth) and Evelyn Colon (Mrs. White) in Clue; and Best Contemporary Play to Rockville High School for Clue.
- ✓ The Vernon Board of Education won the CABA (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) **Board of Distinction Award in 2025**. The CABA Board Awards are designed to recognize boards that provide effective leadership to their districts through the use of good practices. This program acknowledges the importance of school board members and superintendents working together as effective teams. This is the tenth year (2016-2025) in a row that Vernon has won this Level II Award, which is the highest bestowed by CABA. Vernon was one of only 16 school districts in Connecticut to receive this prestigious leadership award in 2025 – a decade of positive leadership.

- ✓ In June 2025, the district conducted an 'end of the year survey' of over 515 people in the community and received the following results: 86% of the people rated the Overall Education in Vernon a grade of "A" or "B." A majority (91.4%) say they receive favorable services from the teaching staff in our schools. Additionally, 87.7% of the respondents say the Vernon Public School District is heading in the right direction based on the mission and vision statements.
- ✓ Lastly, in 2013 the Vernon Public Schools was deemed an Alliance District by the State Department of Education. Defined by CT State Statutes, the school system was one of the 30 lowest performing districts in Connecticut. In 2025, there are 200 school districts in Connecticut between cities, towns, regionals, magnets, charters, etc. Using the Next Generation Accountability Index, (CSDE Report Card), the results in November 2025 rank the Vernon Public Schools 86 out of 200 school districts in Connecticut. Clearly, the growth and improvement in Vernon Schools' education makes it no longer one of the 30 lowest performing districts.



As you can see, the Vernon Public Schools has achieved much in 2025. The above district accomplishments and student accolades clearly demonstrate the potential of the Vernon Public Schools to be one of the best districts in Connecticut. Together - students, parents, families, teachers, staff members, administrators, board members, and the community - work towards student growth every day and make our district a better place for all children. I am proud to be a part of this culture, and I can say that in **2025 – Together, Students Learn, Achieve and Succeed.** Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Joseph Macey*

Superintendent of Schools  
Town of Vernon, CT

## APPENDIX B



# **VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

30 Park Street • P.O. Box 600

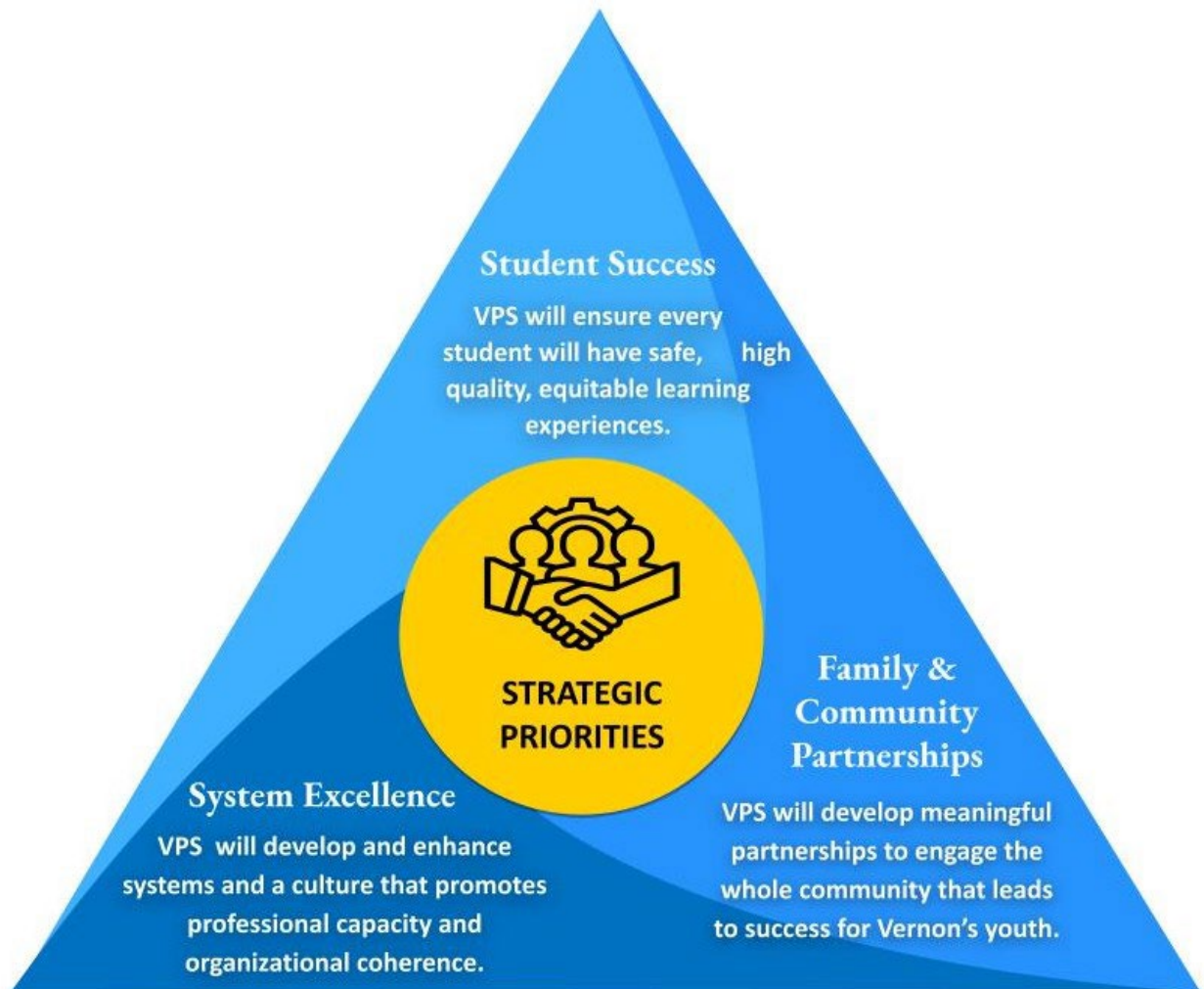
Vernon, CT 06066-0600

Website: [www.vernonpublicschools.org](http://www.vernonpublicschools.org)

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## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

2022 – 2027



*Where Students Learn, Achieve and Succeed*

## Table of Contents

|                                  |        |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Forward                          | Page 2 |
| Committee Members                | Page 3 |
| Vision, Mission and Core Beliefs | Page 4 |
| Blueprint for Success            | Page 5 |
| Equity Stance                    | Page 6 |
| Vision of the Graduate           | Page 7 |
| Strategic Priorities             | Page 8 |
| Metrics for Success              | Page 9 |

## Forward

This *Strategic Plan* is a 3 to 5 year roadmap to drive school improvement efforts in Vernon. The Strategic Plan affirms our vision, mission and core beliefs, while creating a pathway towards the next level of educational excellence for all students. The Strategic Plan is built upon successful district initiatives like the Blueprint for Success, Vision of the Graduate, and District Equity Stance which have guided improvement efforts to date. Input was solicited from over 100 individuals and students through community based focus groups and stakeholder feedback. Gratitude is extended to the Strategic Planning committee that included key district leaders, administrators and Board of Education members. This plan is the culmination of a comprehensive strategic planning process that outlined a road map for the district to follow. This Strategic Plan ensures students will adopt the knowledge, skills and dispositions identified in our Vision of the Graduate in order to become successful members of the community. It will be monitored and adjusted as needed on a regular basis to ensure fidelity to the goals of the plan.

The Vernon Public Schools serves 3,500 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th. The district has 5 elementary schools (PK-5), a middle school (6-8) and one high school. Vernon is in northeastern Connecticut. In addition, Vernon administers a regional Adult Education program for 14 towns and a regional agriculture, science, technology, education (ASTE) program for 10 surrounding towns. The town of Vernon is a diverse community and is a compilation of urban, suburban and rural areas that comprise this microcosm of Connecticut. According to the October 2020 census, 55% are identified as free/reduced lunch students; 18% of the students are identified as special education; and 46% are minority students made up of 21% Hispanic, 10% African

American, 7% Asian, and 7% two or more races. Four percent of the students are deemed as having limited English proficiency.

### **Strategic Planning Committee Members**

|                                 |                                                  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Laura Boutilier                 | Facilitator, Partners for Educational Leadership |
| Kevin Brown                     | Member, Vernon Board of Education                |
| Jennifer Buckler                | Member, Vernon Board of Education                |
| Patricia Buxton, Ed.D.          | Secretary, Vernon Board of Education             |
| David Caruso                    | Principal, Vernon Center Middle School           |
| Anne Fischer                    | Chair, Vernon Board of Education                 |
| Melissa Iles                    | Director of Pupil Personnel                      |
| Mark Kalina                     | Member, Vernon Board of Education                |
| Richard Lemons, Ed.D            | Facilitator, Partners for Educational Leadership |
| Stephen Linton                  | Member, Vernon Board of Education                |
| Joseph Macary, Ed.D             | Superintendent of Schools                        |
| Jason Magao                     | Principal, Rockville High School                 |
| William Meier III               | Director of Business & Finance                   |
| Jennifer Miller                 | Principal, Center Road School                    |
| Deborah Rodriguez               | Member, Vernon Board of Education                |
| Melissa Ross                    | Supervisor of Elementary Special Education       |
| Robert Testa                    | Assistant Superintendent of Schools              |
| Mason Thrall                    | Vice-Chair, Vernon Board of Education            |
| Melissa Trantolo                | Director of Elementary Teaching & Learning       |
| Kristiana Wintress              | Member, Vernon Board of Education                |
| Cynthia Zingler<br>Partnerships | Director of Family, School & Community           |

## **Mission Statement**

The Vernon Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.

## **Core Beliefs**

- Advocate a “whole child” approach to student learning
- Maximize student performance and set high expectations
- Integrate family and community with the education system

## **Diversity Statement**

The Vernon Board of Education reaffirms our commitment to continue the work being done and continues to look for new opportunities that promote equity and diversity in the Vernon Public Schools. We embrace diversity and inclusion, and absolutely condemn racism and discrimination.

## **District Goals**

*Goal 1* – Build and improve relationships and partnerships with family and community

*Goal 2* – Increase the achievement of every student through a high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment

*Goal 3* – Promote safe environments that are socially, emotionally, and physically conducive to learning

## **Vision Statement**

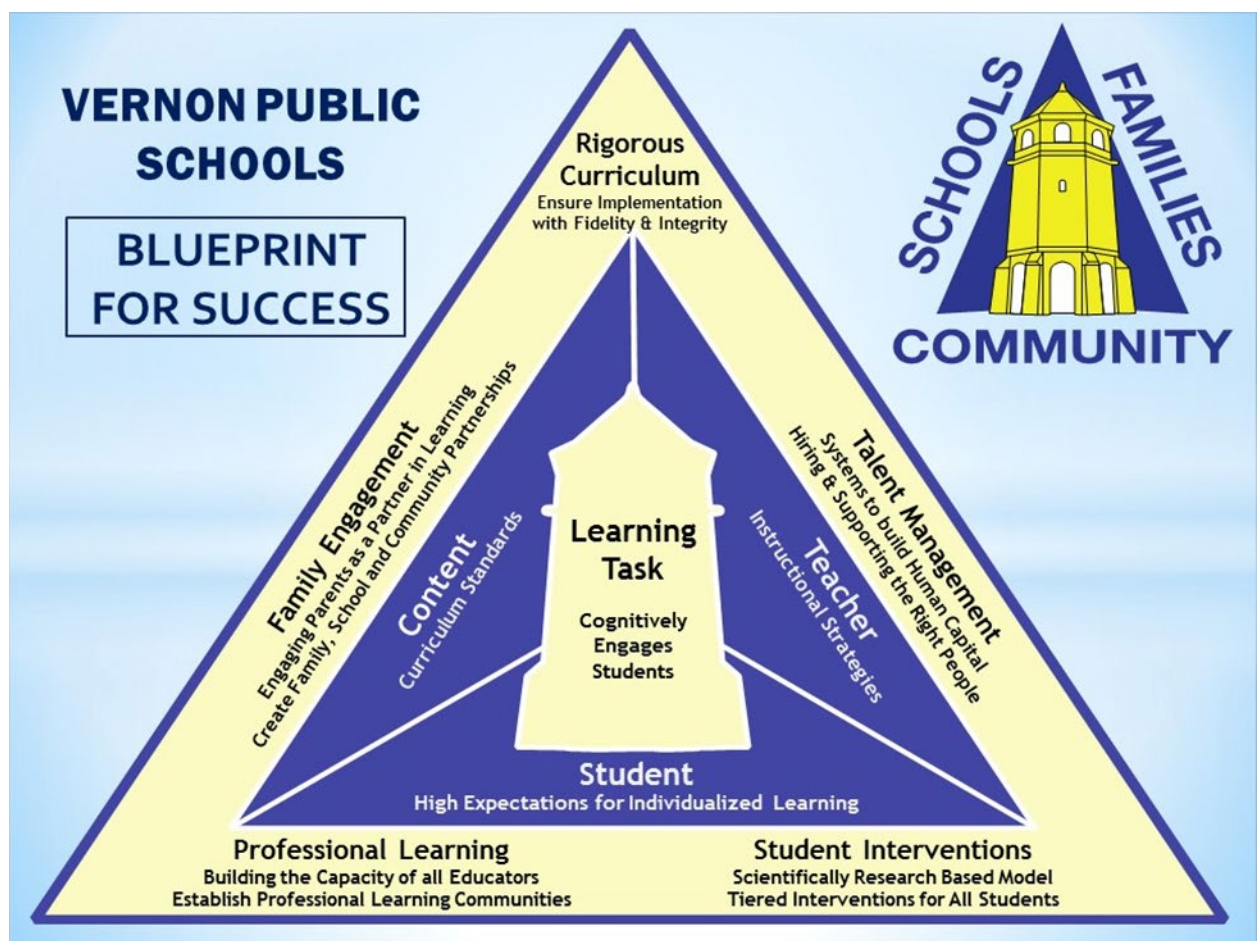
The Vision of the Vernon Public Schools is that every graduate is a Critical Thinker, Collaborator, Communicator, Resilient Individual, and Responsible Citizen.

## Blueprint for Success

The Vernon Public Schools Blueprint for Success employs five district and school-level improvement drivers that will enhance and support our work around the Instructional Core. The five improvement drivers are:

- Rigorous Curriculum
- Talent Management
- Family Engagement
- Professional Learning
- Student Interventions

Each driver is integrated into the instructional core and linked to learning. The philosophy of the Vernon Public Schools is to maximize student achievement by setting high expectations for individualized learning and focusing on the Instructional Core. Leadership priorities and continuing support for high quality instruction for every child is grounded in the Vernon Public Schools Blueprint for Success to take the district to the next level of educational excellence. Together we can accomplish great things for the children and families we serve.



## Equity Stance

The Vernon Public School district recognizes and values the rich diversity of race, ethnicity, abilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, and economic background of our students.

We also acknowledge the existence of a range of inequities that exist across our nation and within our local community that impact our students. These inequities create disproportionate outcomes ranging from gaps in academic achievement to dropout rates. The impact of these gaps extends well beyond school, correlating with indicators of physical health, emotional well-being, income, and civic participation.

Equity in education is achieved when student outcomes are not predicted by gender, race, ethnicity, economic background, sexual orientation, language or abilities and where all students reach a level of efficacy and competence that supports a rewarding and productive life.

This requires the elimination of inequitable policies, programs and practices that currently contribute to disproportionate learning and achievement among student groups. In addition, it requires the identification and implementation of new strategies that promote equitable experiences and outcomes.

In order to provide an equitable education for all students, the Vernon Public School district, in partnership with the community, will:

- Focus on inclusive Pre-K education and other research-based practices known to reduce bias and discrimination while reducing gaps
- Provide access, experiences and opportunities through an inclusive, student-centered environment that values voice and choice resulting in equitable outcomes
- Develop systemic practices that allow all students to learn from others that represent a broad range of backgrounds and experiences
- Recruit and retain a faculty and staff more representative of the experiences and backgrounds of students
- Support a professional learning community where educators have an equity lens, self-awareness, and professional skills to support all students

Our commitment to equity allows us to achieve our Mission, ensuring that every student **can** become an independent learner and a productive contributor to society.

*Adopted November 2020*

## Vision of the Graduate

The Vision of the Vernon Public Schools is that every graduate is a Critical Thinker, Collaborator, Communicator, Resilient Individual, and Responsible Citizen.

| Knowledge, Skill or Disposition | Definition or Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Critical thinker                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Works through difficult challenges with analytic reasoning</li> <li>● Solves novel and complex problems with innovative and creative thinking</li> <li>● Functions as a problem solver by identifying and using appropriate resources, tools and technology to approach and solve challenges</li> <li>● Critically evaluates ideas and evidence by asking relevant questions, analyzing multiple sources of information, identifying and considering the reliability of sources, deliberately questioning competing information, and drawing conclusions</li> </ul> |
| Collaborator                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrates openness to different viewpoints while demonstrating respect for others' assets and contributions</li> <li>● Effectively works with, and within, diverse groups to plan, strategize, make decisions, and successfully execute tasks</li> <li>● Seeks and utilizes feedback from others in solving tasks</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Communicator                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actively listens to understand the perspectives of others</li> <li>● Communicates thoughts and opinions clearly and respectfully</li> <li>● Utilizes multiple communication mediums to express viewpoints effectively to a wide range of audiences for a variety of contexts</li> <li>● Uses technological skills and social media appropriately to meet goals</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Resilient Individual            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Perseveres through challenges and setbacks while embracing failure as an opportunity for growth</li> <li>● Demonstrates flexibility by adapting approaches to the given situation and context taking appropriate risks as necessary</li> <li>● Demonstrates stamina in multiple contexts and persists in completing tasks</li> <li>● Possesses self-confidence and independence</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Responsible citizen             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recognizes the experiences and needs of others, demonstrating empathy, compassion and respect for all</li> <li>● Communicates and acts with ethics and values</li> <li>● Positively contributes to the quality of classroom, school, community and the environment</li> <li>● Possesses and acts with self-awareness</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

*Adopted September 2019*

## **Strategic Priorities**

### **Student Success**

Vernon Public Schools will ensure every student will have safe, high quality, equitable learning experiences.

#### Strategic Actions

- Provide a meaningful, culturally relevant curriculum that engages all students, beginning with universal pre-school continuing through college and career pathways.
- Deliver personalized instruction, assessments and interventions that support academic and social emotional needs for all students.
- Foster a culture of high-expectations for all students with goals for meaningful post-graduation success.
- Create a sense of belonging for all students by deepening connections and relationships with adults and others in the community supportive of the skills in the Vision of the Graduate.

### **Family and Community Partnerships**

Vernon Public Schools will develop meaningful partnerships to engage the whole community that lead to success for Vernon's youth.

#### Strategic Actions

- Create innovative opportunities for student, family, and community voice that build connections based on trust and strong relationships.
- Deepen our understanding of family backgrounds and real life experiences within our community in order to promote student success.
- Foster comprehensive communication using multiple methods and languages, so families understand the district's vision, the educational progress of their child, and how to partner and advocate on behalf of their child.
- Nurture a culture that promotes wellness, diversity, and inclusion.

## **System Excellence**

Vernon Public Schools will develop and enhance systems and a culture that promote professional capacity and organizational coherence.

### **Strategic Actions**

- Develop a creative approach to recruiting high quality staff reflective of the population of Vernon.
- Enhance systems that encourage collaboration, address professional learning needs, maximize resources, and recognize good work.
- Create a positive school culture of teaching and learning for all students, staff and families.
- Promote safe classrooms and school environments that are socially, emotionally and physically conducive to learning.

### **Metrics for Success**

- At least 95% of our students attended school every day
- On-Track for High School Graduation (measured in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade)
- Staff Demographics: Percentage of Minority Employees with the District
- Students in Kindergarten who have a pre-kindergarten experience (Target 100%)
- ELA Performance: Students at/or above grade level standards (SBAC)- All
- ELA Performance: Students at/or above grade level standards (SBAC)- High Needs
- Math Performance: Students at/or above grade level standards (SBAC)- All
- Math Performance: Students at/or above grade level standards (SBAC)- High Needs
- Physical Fitness: Student meeting the Health Fitness Zone Standard (passing all 4)
- Students & Families say 'they feel they belong to the Vernon School community'
- Family & Community supporting the District's Mission & Vision (June Survey)

# VISION



**THE VISION OF THE  
VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
IS THAT EVERY GRADUATE  
IS A CRITICAL THINKER,  
COLLABORATOR,  
COMMUNICATOR,  
RESILIENT INDIVIDUAL,  
& RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN.**



THE VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY,  
IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION, WITH HIGH EXPECTATIONS,  
IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL STUDENTS BECOME INDEPENDENT LEARNERS  
AND PRODUCTIVE CONTRIBUTORS TO SOCIETY.

