

# CT Vanguard Schools

## Standards & Indicators

**Standard 1 A Clear and Common Focus:** In high-performing schools, administrators, teachers, students, and parents share and commit to clearly articulated and understood common goals based on the fundamental belief that all students can learn and improve their performance. There is clear evidence of school practices to support this belief.

### Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- Shared beliefs, goals, and values to improve student performance are evident throughout the school and school community.
- All participants can articulate a common focus to significantly improve student performance over time.
- A systemic and sustained approach in the use of time, materials, and professional development activities is aligned with the common focus to improve student performance.
- Goals, objectives and action plans to improve student performance are developed, prioritized, implemented, and evaluated according to district and building guidelines.
- The common focus to improve student performance is directly related to assignment of staff time and resource allocation.



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**Standard 2 High Standards and Expectations:** High-performing schools show evidence that each teacher believes “all students can learn and I can teach them.” Staff members are dedicated to helping every student achieve challenging state and local standards. All students are engaged in an appropriately ambitious and rigorous course of study in which the high standards of performance are clear and consistent and the conditions for learning are modified and differentiated. This results in all students being prepared for success in the workplace, post secondary education, and civic responsibilities.

## Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- Instruction is focused on high standards and expectations for student performance and modified or differentiated to ensure all students improve their performance. Teaching and learning strategies are implemented to narrow the achievement gap including: inquiry, active participation, cooperative learning, in-depth learning, higher-order critical thinking skills, and performance assessments.
- Staff members focus on curriculum and instruction that are designed to provide consistency and continuity across grade levels and subjects.
- Over time, there is an increase in the number of students taking and being successful in rigorous courses.
- Teachers focus on the implementation of a high quality curriculum that is available to all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special needs, or English language proficiency.
- Student performance goals include a focus on academic performance; producing quality work and demonstrations of learning outcomes to real audiences; and utilizing self-reflection and goal setting to improve performance.
- Student improvement and performance is assessed on a regular basis with a variety of strategies including: CMT, CAPT, classroom assessments that include performance assessments and portfolio assessment to demonstrate significant improvement over time.



**Standard 3 Strong Leadership:** School leadership is focused on enhancing the skills, knowledge and motivation of the people in the organization and creating a common culture of high expectations based on the use of skills and knowledge to improve the performance of all students. Leadership fosters a collaborative atmosphere between the school and the community while establishing positive systems to improve leadership, teaching, and student performance.

## Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

### Strong Leadership (Administrative)

- Facilitates the development, articulation and implementation of, and provides stewardship for a common focus on improved student performance that is shared and supported by the staff and parents.
- Advocates, nurtures, and sustains a school culture and instructional program that promotes the improvement of performance for staff and students.
- Ensures management of the organization, operations, and resources to support a school climate that is safe, efficient, respectful, and promotes the joy of learning.
- Works to develop leadership in the members of the staff and community so that leadership is a collaborative, distributed process.
- Seeks collaboration with families and community members and mobilizes community resources to support the school's focus on improved student performance.
- Facilitates the development and implementation of a school improvement plan which reflects the collaboration of staff, students, parents and community to improve the performance of all students.
- Spends the majority of his/her time on instructional leadership focused on identified improvement activities.
- Establishes a collaborative, systemic, and sustained process of supervision and evaluation to improve leadership, instruction and student performance.



## Standard 3 Strong Leadership cont...

### Strong Leadership (Teacher)

- Effectively implements district curriculum through instruction that is modified and differentiated to ensure all students improve their performance and achieve the school's high standards and expectations.
- Effectively utilizes state and local assessment so that data is available to support instructional decisions to differentiate instruction for improved student performance.
- Collaborates with and mentors other teachers to improve student performance.
- Provides a safe, efficient, effective learning environment which promotes increased student learning.
- Collaborates with staff, students, and parents to get feedback and ideas to improve the school climate so that all students improve their performance.
- Serves as a role model of a successful, motivated, and independent leaders and assumes leadership roles in the school.

### Strong Leadership (Student)

- Helps to improve communications between home and school.
- Serves as a role model of a successful, motivated, and independent learner for other students.
- Takes responsibility for helping to establish a school climate that is safe, efficient, respectful, and promotes the joy of learning.
- Serves as a peer tutor and mentor.



**Standard 4 Supportive, Personalized, and Relevant Learning Environment:** In high-performing schools, supportive learning environments provide positive personalized relationships for every student while engaging them in rigorous and relevant learning

## Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- Diversity of thought, ethnicity, and culture are demonstrated and celebrated throughout the curriculum and school practices.
- The conditions for learning are modified and differentiated to ensure teaching and learning are built on student's readiness, interests, and learning preferences so that all students improve their academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal performance.
- Programs are in place that identify and meet students' academic and non-academic needs.
- Culture and climate focus on and celebrate individuals as teachers and learners.
- Students, school staff, and parents behave in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Students take personal responsibility for their learning and behavior.
- Students have adult advocates who support their needs.
- Individual and timely interventions are used to support student learning.

Please use the rubric to evaluate your successes as a potential vanguard School.



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**Standard 5 Parent/Community Involvement and Collaboration:** In high-performing schools, parents and community members help develop, understand, and support a clear and common focus on core academic, social, and personal goals contributing to improved student performance and have a meaningful and authentic role in achieving these goals. The school community works together to actively solve problems and create win-win solutions. Mentoring and outreach programs provide for two-way learning between students and community/business members.

## Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- Staff, parents, students, and community members participate and collaborate in a professional learning community that focuses on improved student performance through specific and sustained school improvement strategies.
- Parents and community members have an active voice and involvement with staff on committees and problem solving teams that lead to improved conditions for learning and result in improved student performance.
- Staff provides and maintains a systemic process for ongoing and intentional outreach to parents and the community for meaningful involvement.
- Parents receive support in understanding child and adolescent development and child-rearing skills.
- Diverse opportunities exist and parents and community members are recruited, trained, and provided with a variety of volunteer activities to improve student performance (e.g. committees, volunteering, monitoring student homework progress)
- There is frequent and on-going two-way communication using a variety of means (e.g. newsletters, meetings, school events, formal and informal conferences, video, email).
- The school provides parental support on how the home can increase student performance.



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**Standard 6 Frequent Monitoring Accountability and Assessment:** In high-performing schools, teaching and learning are continually adjusted on the basis of data collected through a variety of valid and reliable methods that indicate student progress and needs. The assessment results are interpreted and applied appropriately to improve individual student performance and the instructional program.

## Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- The goals for student performance are clear and explicit.
- A variety of valid and reliable assessments, which are free from cultural, racial, and gender bias, are used to evaluate student performance.
- Assessments are well-designed and aligned with state frameworks, local curriculum, and classroom instructional methods.
- There is a strong, continuous link among curriculum, teaching and assessment.
- Assessment methods, procedures, and the amount of time allocated to assessment is in balance with the time allocated to instruction. All are closely monitored so that the maximum amount of useful data and information is obtained in the most efficient manner.
- Modifications are made as needed in assessment methods and procedures to address special needs of students.
- When appropriate, assessment instruments are accompanied by clear descriptions of how the quality of student performance will be assessed and that information is conveyed to teachers, students, and parents.
- Assessments provide information to teachers, administrators, and parents about the performance of individual students and groups of students over time, so that decisions can be made to improve the performance of all students.
- There is sufficient time allotted to interpret and use data and other information related to student performance for the improvement of instruction.
- Assessment provides information to students and their parents on a timely basis so that they will become active participants in improving their performance.



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- Teachers and administrators receive training in how to create, use, and interpret the results of tests and assessments to make changes that improve the performance of all students.

**Standard 7 Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:** High-performing schools have aligned curriculum with core learning expectations to improve the performance of all students. Students achieve high standards through rigorous, challenging learning. Staff delivers an aligned curriculum and implements research-based teaching and learning strategies. Students are actively involved in their learning through inquiry, in-depth learning, and performance assessments.

## Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- Teachers allocate a significant amount of time to instruction with an emphasis on learning. Instruction is personalized and emphasizes motivation as well as knowledge and skills.
- All classes have a current standards-based curriculum that promotes enduring understanding of concepts and promotes learning across the disciplines, connections to the larger world, and skills for life-long learning.
- Curriculum reflects clear and explicit goals and promotes consistency and continuity of learning to improve student performance.
- Curriculum supports the practices of differentiated instruction and provides a continuous improvement model of teaching and learning to improve the performance of all students.
- Curriculum promotes the students as a motivated, constructive, self-reflective learners who take responsibility for improving their performance.
- Teachers are involved in the development and review of curriculum using curriculum standards, student performance, and the needs of life-long learning as a focus for the review and revisions.
- Teachers are engaged in a variety of professional development activities based on curricular goals and student performance.
- The school system supports a systematic, systemic, and sustained process of curriculum improvement and implementation and provides appropriate instructional materials to implement the curriculum.
- All staff can describe the degree to which student performance is improving.
- Supervision, through on-going classroom visitations by the principal, supports best instructional practices.



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Please use the rubric to evaluate your successes as a potential vanguard School.

**Standard 8 Professional Development:** Ongoing professional development which is aligned with the school's common focus and high expectations to improve the performance of all students is critical in high-performing schools. These professional development offerings are focused and informed by research and school/classroom based assessments. Appropriate instructional support and resources are provided to implement approaches and techniques learned through professional development.

## Indicators

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- Professional development addresses student learning needs as well as program needs identified through a variety of means (assessment, data, mandates, and curriculum changes).
- Professional development is planned, ongoing and systemic.
- Professional development which addresses school and district goals is a collaborative process involving all stakeholders.
- Professional development supports the development of collaborative learning communities by providing time for staff to meet, share, reflect, and modify instructional practice.
- Professional development results in improved student performance.
- Professional development outcomes are implemented with appropriate support and resources.
- Professional development programs are monitored and evaluated through data gathering and analysis.

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**Standard 9 Time and Structure:** High-performing schools are flexibly structured to maximize the use of time and accommodate the varied lives of their students, staff, and community in order to improve the performance of all students. The structure of programs extends beyond the traditional school day and year as well as beyond the school building. The program draws on the entire community's resources to foster student achievement.

## **Indicators**

These research based indicators represent qualities found in a Vanguard School.

- School programs extend beyond the traditional school day and year.
- School programs extend the educational environment by making use of community resources and creating community partnerships.
- Instructional use of technology is appropriate and pervasive.
- The structure of the school affords each student the opportunity to connect with a peer group and cadre of adults.
- Instructional time and transitions are structured appropriately to optimize student learning

Please use the rubric to evaluate your successes as a potential vanguard School.



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