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My name is Kathy Greider and I am the Superintendent of the Farmington Public Schools.

The CAPSS NextED report reflects many of the initiatives the Farmington schools are working on to achieve a more personalized, student-centered and mastery-based approach to teaching and learning. I want to share some aspects of our improvement work in Farmington to illustrate the importance of the NextED Next Steps report.

Six years ago, the Farmington community joined together to create Farmington's Vision of the Graduate which outlines the knowledge and skills every graduate should master prior to graduation. At the same time, Farmington created a unique Framework for Teaching and Learning that all teachers and students implement each day to achieve a personalized student-centered approach and our Vision of the Graduate.

We are a focused, innovative learning organization with a clear vision for all students and a plan to achieve that vision. Each day, Farmington students, in partnership with their teachers, lead their own learning through highly engaging, meaningful and authentic learning opportunities. Student voice, choice and partnership are at the core of our work. Our students join us on coaching visits to classrooms and instructional rounds beginning in elementary school so that their voice is heard when it comes to influencing our continuous improvement efforts. This also provides students with a clear understanding of their role as a learner.

Each day, students K-12 are provided learning targets and opportunities to analyze their progress against those learning targets, set personal goals and demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways. Learning is interactive and integrates collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking and self-direction with a focus on rigorous real-life tasks that connect the world to the student and the student to the world with a focus on technology integrated instruction. In Farmington, learning is the constant and time is the variable, allowing our students to truly own their own learning through a personalized and student-centered approach. Recently, student-led parent conferences have emerged because our students are so aware of their strengths, needs and goals and they are prepared to share this information with an authentic audience, their parents. As a result, we have created a unique and profound synergy between students, teachers and parents leading to high levels of engagement and achievement outcomes.

This approach requires a significant investment in administrator and teacher professional learning that occurs throughout the day through teaming and the support of instructional coaches and through other types of professional development opportunities. It also requires new curriculum writing and assessment development. Our improvement efforts emerge from the work of all members of our school district community creating a high level of ownership, commitment and enactment. Our Board of Education, along with our Town Council and community are champions in supporting our efforts to ensure all students in Farmington are highly successful in college, careers and as citizens of our world community.

This improvement work has led to the implementation of not only a personalized and student-centered approach to teaching and learning, it has created new and exciting learning opportunities for our students with the implementation of maker-spaces and engineering labs, a unique partnership with Jackson Lab, student instructional rounds, elementary world language programming, personalized Capstone Courses, new integrated units of study and many other new programs and practices.

Here are some notable outcomes when it comes to our personalized, student-centered approach:

- Farmington Public Schools is a Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) National District Exemplar highlighted for our innovative programming and our commitment to 21st century skills;
- Farmington administered the College Work and Readiness Assessment (CWRA) to all 10th graders last year to provide an outside measurement of our Vision of the Graduate. Our 10th graders outperformed 12th graders across the country on the CWRA;
- Students and faculty continue to be recognized at the state and national levels; and
- Farmington Public Schools' students present at multiple state, national and international conferences on our student-centered teaching and learning approach because they truly own the improvement work in Farmington.

The NextED report outlines the focus and investment required so that all Connecticut students thrive in college and careers and as citizens of our world community through a personalized, student-centered approach to teaching and learning. In Connecticut, it is imperative that we provide an exemplary and future-oriented education so that students across our state are fully prepared for the challenges and opportunities of our 21st century world community.