

# STAMFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

A Quality Educational Experience for All





**MIND**



**BODY**



**HEART**

**The mission of Stamford Public Schools (SPS) is to provide an education that cultivates productive habits of mind, body and heart in every student.**

SPS is a learning organization that continuously improves its effective, innovative and transformational teaching and learning.

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**Our vision is to challenge, inspire and prepare all students to be productive contributing members of society.**

## A Note From The Superintendent

As we share the Stamford Public Schools (SPS) 2018-2019 Annual Report to the Community, a reflection of what seems like lifetime ago, our community continues to adjust to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the weeks since we closed our schools in mid-March, our community has come together in support of all things Stamford — inspiring us with their cooperation and teamwork. It still impresses me when I consider how, literally overnight, our administrators, teachers and families transitioned from traditional classroom instruction to Distance Teaching and Learning. We are grateful to the many community organizations and to the City of Stamford who worked with us to ensure students and families had access to technology, internet hotspots, instructional resources, meals, social emotional supports, and more. I could not be prouder of how our staff, students and families embraced this challenge and adapted to our “new normal”. While we have set the bar high, we continue to provide professional development and supports to allow everyone continue to reach for it and excel beyond.

As you review the following pages, think about how SPS works innovatively every day in support of our students. As you read the personal profiles, you will see firsthand the positive impact our district has had on each one. Please pay special attention to the design and photography, as this year’s annual report was designed by Daniel Adams, a proud SPS graduate, and many of the photographs were captured by his fellow SPS graduate (and brother) Brien. Similar to many who return to our community to work or give back, Daniel and Brien are illustrations of that Stamford legacy. These SPS graduates also reflect the diversity of talent that our Stamford Public School District yields.

These are unprecedented times, and I am confident that we will continue to face the future as an opportunity, inspiring us to pull together, think outside of the box and innovate for the good of our students. We may not know what the future will hold, but I know together, we will succeed.

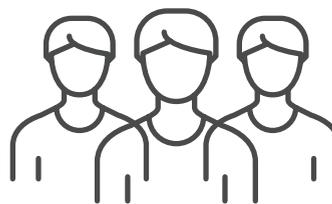


**Dr. Tamu Lucero**

Photo courtesy of Springdale Elementary School Office Support Specialist Nancy Forte

## Challenging, Inspiring and Preparing Students for the Future

SPS is committed to providing every student with an excellent education in a supportive and nurturing environment. Our organization strives to meet the unique needs of all of our students, and prepare all to become engaged and involved members of our community.



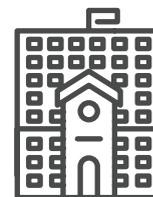
**16,053**  
STUDENTS



**13**  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS



**5**  
MIDDLE  
SCHOOLS



**3**  
HIGH  
SCHOOLS



**7**  
MAGNET  
PROGRAMS



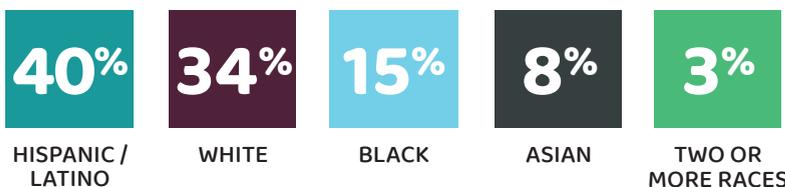
**3**  
IB PROGRAMS



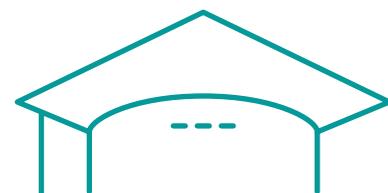
**2**  
COLLEGE DUAL  
ENROLLMENT  
OPTIONS

## Educating Global Citizens

SPS offers students a learning experience rich in cultural diversity and reflective of the global society in which they will work and live.



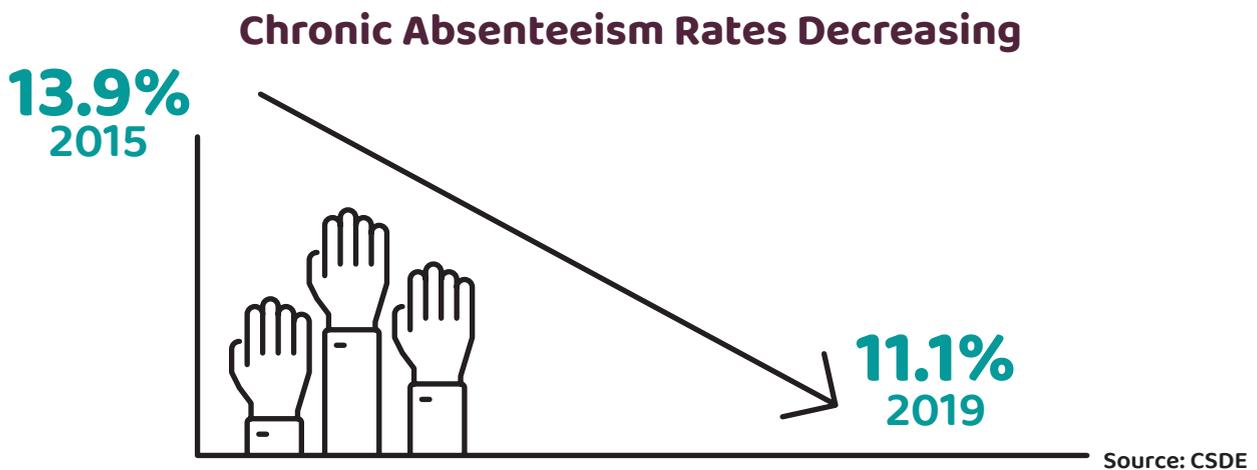
Source: Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)



**87.4%**  
Graduation rate  
(four-year)\*

\*Students with special learning or language needs may graduate in more than four years.

# 71 Languages Spoken in Students' Homes (a 42% increase since 2000)



### Focusing on the Needs of All Students

Recognizing that the skills needed for future success are constantly evolving, SPS is expanding the ways our students demonstrate learning mastery. SPS continues to implement programs that address the opportunity gap. We are using data and technology to better address the needs of all our students, with a special focus on our economically disadvantaged students – those who are eligible for the federal free or reduced lunch program, who are English language (EL) learners, or who live in public housing.

**57%**

Free / Reduced Lunch

Source: CSDE

**13%**

EL Learners

Source: CSDE

**58.9%**

of SPS students are economically disadvantaged

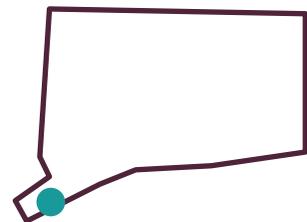
Source: Stamford Public Schools



## Engaging High Quality Staff

SPS is committed to retaining and expanding our team of highly qualified and culturally competent staff. During 2018-2019, SPS hired 131 new teachers, 51 paraeducators, four security workers and 194 substitute teachers. Fostering a culture of inclusion, half of all new administrators (eight of 15) were internal promotions. In April 2019, the Stamford Board of Education (BOE) appointed then-Deputy Superintendent Tamu Lucero as Superintendent of SPS, upon the resignation of Mr. Kim.

**54.3%**  
of our employees are also  
Stamford residents



**15%** of new teacher hires during 2018-2019 were SPS graduates themselves



- 66.6% White
- 14.1% Black
- 8.5% Unknown
- 7.8% Hispanic / Latino
- 2.4% Asian
- .3% American Indian/Alaskan
- .2% Two or more races
- .1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

# 2,252 TOTAL FULL-TIME STAFF

**1536**  
TEACHERS

**420**  
PARAEDUCATORS

**270**  
SUPPORT STAFF

**66**  
ADMINISTRATORS

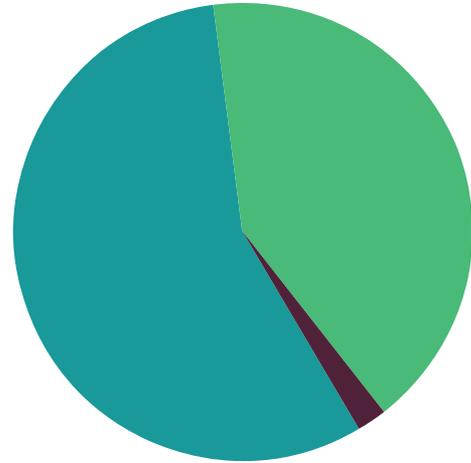
**11**  
DISCRETIONARY  
ADMINISTRATORS



Over  
**95%**  
of teachers, instructors  
and counselors have a  
master's degree or higher

6th Year – 606

Masters – 825



PhD – 29

**“I can remember so many of the teachers and administrators who took an interest in me and my goals throughout my years as a student at SPS. Our staff strives to make that same personal connection and support our students as they make decisions about their futures.”**

SPS Associate Superintendent Amy Beldotti, SHS Class of 1989

**12.6**

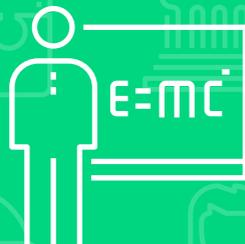
Average number  
of years at SPS

**93.3%**

Average daily  
teacher attendance

**10:1**

Student / certified  
staff ratio



Together our teachers bring

**19,580**

years of experience to  
our students!

## Embracing Our Community

Stamford is an international city that boasts a vibrant multi-cultural scene. Our engaged community offers a vast array of academic and cultural opportunities from pre-school through college and career.



**Of the 500 largest U.S. cities, Stamford is among the most ethnically diverse cities in America**

**130,824**

POPULATION

**23<sup>rd</sup>**

For linguistic diversity

**136,000**

PROJECTED POPULATION BY 2025

**31<sup>st</sup>**

most culturally diverse city in the US

Source: City of Stamford Office of Economic Development website

## A collaborative community is a stronger community.

As a school district, we recognize that not all students who enter our classrooms have equitable opportunities, supports or resources needed to reach their full potential. By collaborating with the broader Stamford community, we strive to provide every student with a comprehensive system of support and guidance.

For the past three years, Stamford Public Schools has partnered with community-based organizations, city and state officials, and business leaders as part of a collective impact initiative—Stamford Cradle to Career (SC2C). Under the leadership of the

United Way of Western Connecticut, the overarching goal of SC2C is to collectively align community resources to ensure educational success for all Stamford children and families regardless of income, race or circumstance. SC2C is focused on Kindergarten readiness, third grade reading, and ensuring every student graduates prepared for the future.

We recognize that successful children lead to a vibrant and thriving community.

**4,000**

students from all schools benefited from before-and-after-school academic and enrichment programs through the state-funded Extended School Hours Grant

**500+**

mentors / volunteers from Stamford Public Education Foundation served three high schools, six middle schools and five elementary schools

**2,100+**

breakfast meals were served daily through the federally funded School Breakfast Program



## Creating a School in 10 Days

In the first few days of November 2018, SPS and the greater Stamford community illustrated a herculean effort of cooperation and teamwork. When significant water intrusion and mold issues were discovered at Westover Elementary School, administrators, staff, parents and business leaders pulled together to successfully relocate the Westover school community in less than two weeks. Individuals, business and community partners, as well as many city agencies literally worked around the clock to make it happen. Many put personal plans on hold, sacrificed a good night's sleep or two, and laid egos aside to empty trash cans or sweep floors, so when our Westover community entered their temporary home at the former Headquarters of Pitney Bowes, they would feel safe, comfortable and productive.

In an effort to minimize the number of days that students were out of school and provide Westover staff ample time to acclimate to a new location and set up classrooms, various community organizations, including Chelsea Piers Connecticut, the Bartlett Arboretum, the Stamford History Center, the Boys and Girls Club, the Ferguson Library and others opened their facilities for educational field-trip experiences.

In the end, our Westover community was only required to extend the school year by three additional days beyond the rest of the district. They say it takes a village to raise a child and, in our case, we are thankful that Stamford is truly such a village.

## Stamford Cradle to Career

More than 60 community and non-profit organizations have come together to ensure that all Stamford youth are successful in reaching major milestones. Over the past four years, SC2C has identified four areas that have a significant impact on educational outcomes, regardless of age. SC2C is building awareness and support for:

- Improving access to a reliable food source on a regular basis
- Addressing the issues that cause a child to miss 10% or more school days
- Ensuring that every student has access to the programs and support that they need to succeed
- Engaging and involving families in every step along the way

**“SPS is filled with intelligent and caring educators. Having been a student of SPS and now witnessing their dedication through my work with Stamford Cradle to Career and SPEF, I continue to be amazed by their dedication.”**

Matthew Quinones, CEO Stamford Public Education Foundation, SHS Class of 2004

# How We Operate

Every year the superintendent and her team work to develop a budget that aligns with the true cost of operating our dynamic school district. The SPS budget, which makes up more than half of the City of Stamford's budget, supports a vast array of learning opportunities, including elementary schools of focus, K-8 magnet programs, International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, an Early College Experience program, JROTC, Agri-science, Finance Academy, mentoring, tutoring, active learning and more.

24

Facilities / office locations

3<sup>+</sup> M

Square feet of building space

300+

Acres of property

2018-2019 Operating Budget

**\$274,518,970**

During 2018-19, the City of Stamford invested **\$8.8 million** into building repair and maintenance.



Construction of Strawberry Hill, an extension of Rogers International School, continued. The new 120,000-square-foot facility was home to K-3 during the 2018-2019 school-year. The full campus will be home to K-8 by 2023.

## Bringing the Care of our Facilities In-House

The City of Stamford and SPS are committed to providing the best physical environment for our students, faculty and administrators. In fall 2018, the City of Stamford, together with SPS, established the Mold Task Force (MTF), to monitor every report of mold in our buildings, and to hold weekly public meetings to answer questions and provide updates. The MTF was charged with investigating, developing and implementing comprehensive remediation efforts, and on-going monitoring programs as well as identifying long-term permanent solutions. The work of the MTF enabled our schools' staff to remain focused on educating our students and managing the systems that support our work.

In June 2018 the MTF evolved into the Stamford Asset Management Group (SAMG), which is responsible for all work of the MTF, as well as the operational and capital management of all school facilities.

**\$30,613,226**

in funding from state and federal grants

Competitive grant awards included the Mary Fitch Trust Foundation Grant, 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants (3), State After school Grants (2), Upward Bound and Smart Start Grant

## Transportation

**12K** 

Students eligible for bus service

## Creating Learning Environments that Foster Creativity and Collaboration

A major focus during the 2018–2019 school-year, was creating new spaces and updating older areas in support of establishing collaborative learning environments. Students are engaged in collaborative learning when working in small groups to solve a problem or answer a question. Together they develop theories, test their ideas, and produce evidence of their learning. Students are encouraged to develop a personal understanding while learning and listening to the perspectives and skills of their peers.



### A Space to Research, Design and Create

In response to the evolving role of a traditional library, the Rippowam Middle School (RIPP) staff saw opportunity in their 1961 school library that featured low ceilings, florescent lighting and racks of storage space for books. Thanks to a large grant from the state, traditionally reserved for capital improvements, the RIPP team reinvented the space into a media center that leverages technology to meet student needs and positively influences student learning.

Teachers wanted to utilize emerging technologies, while students needed a space where they could work collaboratively and be creative. The result is a brand new 4,400 sq. ft. media center that features café tables and a reading lounge, as well as a design lab and flexible learning spaces.

The refurbished space integrates technology into multiple work zones, enabling numerous classes, as well as small groups to work simultaneously. An old storage room was turned into a state-of-the-art green room, where students create multimedia projects and videocasts. A new Maker Space introduces students to coding, website design, snap-circuits and more; while the Research Lab offers a more traditional classroom setup with access to individual computers and a mobile smartboard. The RIPP media center inspires students to investigate new ideas and learn in new ways. Complementing classroom curriculum, the media center offers 21st Century skills and hands-on learning.

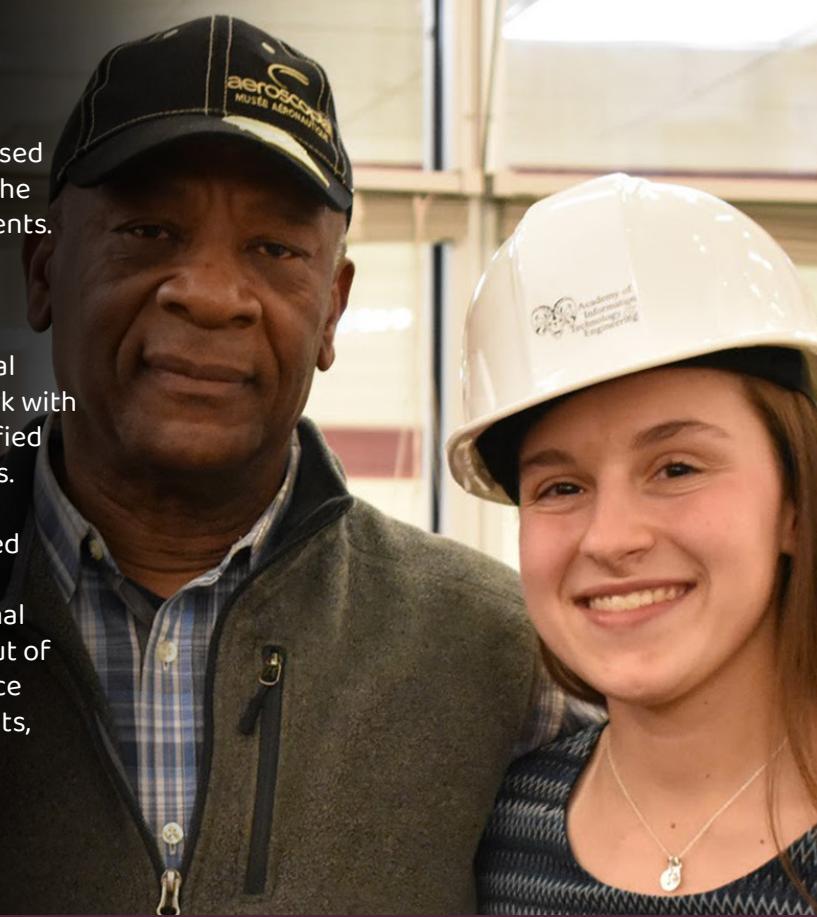
**“The updated Media Center allows us to teach important traditional skills like how to do good research or decipher what’s credible, in addition to providing opportunities for 21st Century digital learning. Students are not merely passive consumers of digital content, but innovative creators.”**

Elisavet Kousidis, Media Specialist & Technology PD Leader

## Investing in Human Capital

SPS has adopted a new recruitment strategy focused on recruiting new teachers to more closely align the ethnic diversity of our staff with that of our students. The Minority Recruitment Tour provided minority teacher candidates an opportunity to participate in unique first-hand experiences that included an opportunity to tour the district by bus, visit several schools, learn about unique programs and network with principals, teachers and parents. The event identified 35 potential candidates resulting in nine new hires.

In response to staff inquiries, the district expanded our approach to Professional Development and created more choice and variety in our professional development offerings. From getting the most out of Google Classroom to learning to use art to enhance vocabulary and cultural awareness among students, our staff members are constantly encouraged to continuously improve their teaching practice and embrace innovative approaches to learning.



### Leadership Academy

During the 2018-2019 school-year, SPS developed a Leadership Academy for aspiring administrators, with a goal to support the ongoing professional learning and growth of our future leaders.

The Connecticut Center for School Change facilitated a cohort model of nine sessions on topics including entry planning, giving and receiving feedback, implementing an improvement initiative, managing resistance to change and essential interview techniques. In addition to the monthly sessions, individual coaching sessions were offered to participants.

### Program Details:

- **Cohort model**
  - monthly community of practice
- **Self-assessment and ongoing reflection**
  - personal learning plan
  - coaching
- **Practice based professional learning**
  - mock interviews
  - develop improvement initiative aligned with School Improvement Plans
  - site visits



In the 2018-2019 school year, SPS provided approximately **10,000 hours of staff training.**

# 2019-2020 SPS Teacher of the Year

**Katelyn  
Tavolacci**

**5th Grade**

Julia A. Stark School  
Literacy & Social Studies Teacher  
Stamford High School Graduate



**13**  
**YEARS IN  
DISTRICT**

## **Why Stamford?**

I choose to teach in Stamford because I am a product of our district. My time as an SPS student impacted me in such a positive way that I wanted to serve the community that served me so well throughout my childhood and adolescence.

I teach in Stamford because I want to be part of a school system that not only provides students with rigorous and innovative academics, but also arms them with valuable life skills and lessons that will transcend their classroom walls.

## **What motivates you about your work?**

Empathy, curiosity and kindness. It is my students who motivate me to power through even the toughest of days. I continue my work here, year after year because I believe in the work that we do and the people with whom I work. Lifelong learners, Stamford's teachers and staff members are dedicated to providing the best experiences for their students.

There is almost nothing better in the world than the feeling I get after witnessing a student's "aha moment". Watching a student apply a strategy or demonstrate their understanding of content I've taught them is what makes the hours of planning, crafting, and "sweating the small stuff" all worth it.

## **How do you challenge, inspire and prepare your students?**

I recognize that my time with each class is fleeting. I spend 10 months with students before they leave and move on to the next phase of their educational careers. I work with students to set achievable academic and non-academic goals, and teach my students the importance of having a growth mindset. The biggest impact that I can have on them is to help them become engaged and curious learners, as well as responsible and respectful people.

# We Challenge

Ensuring that students are challenged to learn and are prepared for future successes requires attention at every age. SPS utilizes our resources to increase academic outcomes, improve student well-being and offer quality opportunities for our students from pre-K through graduation.

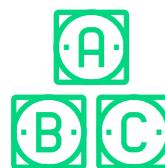


## Building Blocks for a Positive School Experience

SPS collaborates with early childhood providers, families, community leaders and educators to align and share resources in support of kindergarten readiness. The results of these efforts, the Pre-Kindergarten Transition Summary (PKTS), has been adopted citywide and establishes a clear definition for what it means for youngsters to be ready to learn in kindergarten.

**Ideally, each child entering Kindergarten will have:**

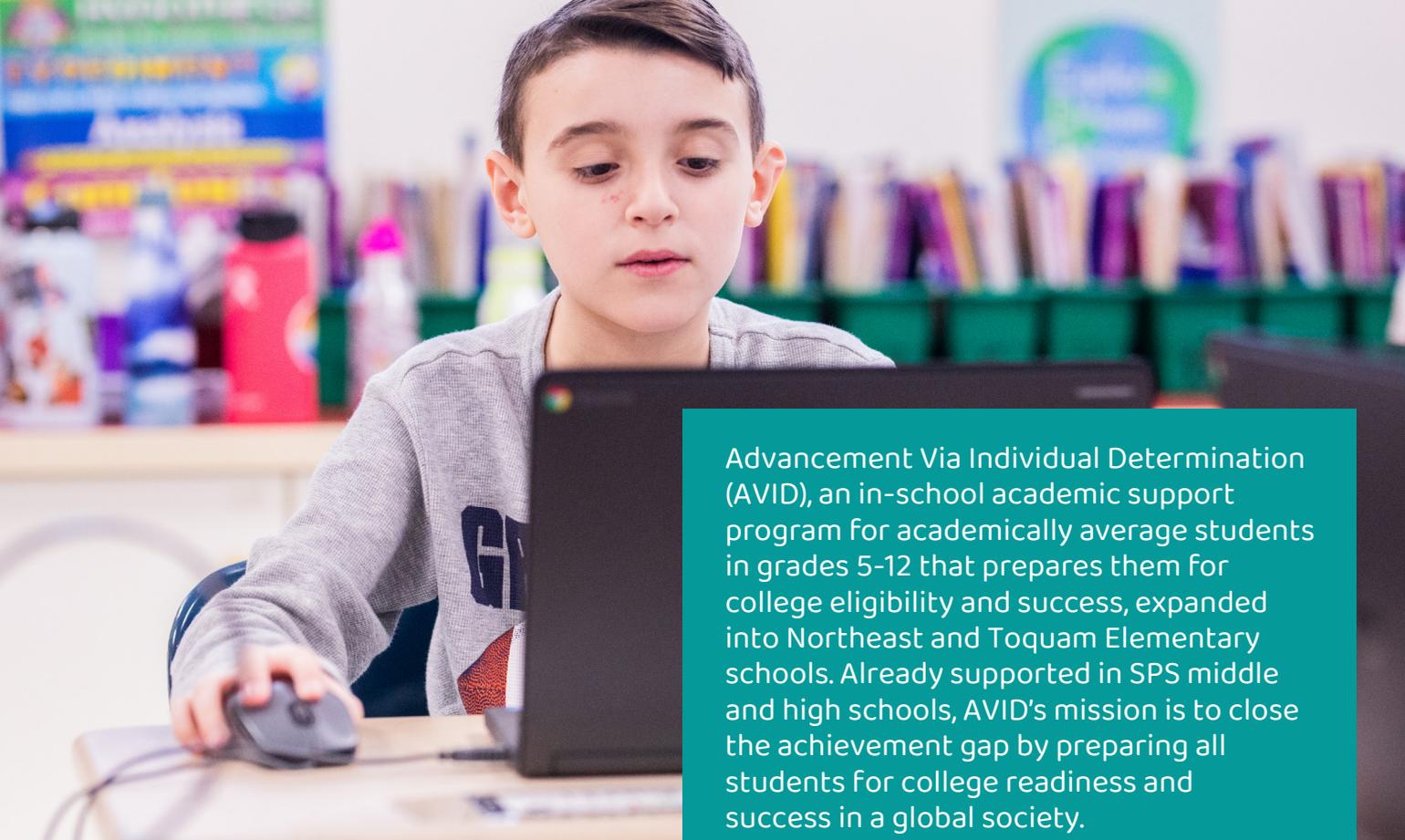
- minds that are flexible, inquisitive, focused and ready to learn
- the strength to regulate a range of motor development and self-help skills
- the ability to be mindful of their emotions and how those emotions affect others



In 2019, PKTS forms were completed for

# 84%

of incoming Kindergarten students  
(a 38% increase in just two years)



Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), an in-school academic support program for academically average students in grades 5-12 that prepares them for college eligibility and success, expanded into Northeast and Toquam Elementary schools. Already supported in SPS middle and high schools, AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

## Enhancing the Learning Environment

SPS utilizes small group instruction, learning centers, Scientific Research-Based Interventions and a tiered framework of supports and enrichment to offer a full range of academic and co-curricular opportunities for our students. Each building employs a unique combination of methods and areas of focus, tailored to their own community, including:

- Arts & Problem Solving
- Higher Order Thinking
- Leadership Through Service
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math
- 21st Century Skills (creativity, critical thinking, communication & collaboration)

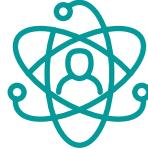
Throughout 2018-2019, the SPS Office of Adult and Continuing Education continued to expand the services, programs and enrichment courses provided to the citizens of Stamford and surrounding communities. The program has expanded beyond its Old Town Hall location to provide high school equivalency, language programs and continuing education courses at locations across Stamford and Norwalk. The program also offers over 250 six-week online courses covering a variety of subjects including accounting, computer programs, languages, arts, business, finance, health and personal development. In September 2018, SPS launched the Stamford English Language Academy (SELA). SELA is designed for beginner to advanced EL students whom English proficiency is a professional necessity, an improvement for job advancement, or necessary for the pursuit of higher education.

## Providing Opportunities for our Students to Excel

SPS offers amazing academic and educational opportunities unrivaled in the area. We offer a full complement of extra-curricular programming, including award-winning theater and choral groups, online and print news media, sports and academic teams. In addition to a robust core curriculum, SPS partners with educational and community organizations to provide students with a broad range of elective classes and higher-level coursework.



**49%** of SPS students complete Algebra 1 by end of Grade 8



SPS offers more AP Courses (top four statewide) than nearly all other districts in the state



For the second consecutive year, Stamford has the third highest number of AP tests with scores of three or more in the state

# 15%

Over the past four years, the percentage increase of AP tests taken by Stamford students who scored 3, 4 or 5

# 299

Stamford students in the Class of 2019 were recognized as College Board scholars (up from 292 students in the Class of 2018)

# 1362.5

Top 10% of SAT scores (94.7 percentile nationally)

## Percentage of SPS Students Enrolled in College and Career Courses

# 83.5 %

of 11th Graders (CT 69.3)

# 87.3 %

of 12th Graders (CT 80.1)

College-and-Career-Readiness Courses include Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Career and Technical Education (CTE), workplace experience and dual enrollment courses.

# 90

Students from the Class of 2019 graduated with a Seal of Biliteracy (students who are proficient in two or more languages at the time of graduation)



# Helping Students to Find Their Voice



In 2007, a team of teachers at Turn of River Middle School (TOR) recognized that students needed a creative platform to explore the feelings and experiences associated with adolescence and the intermediate years. They challenged their students to create a theatrical production to share their stories with the larger community. This was the beginning of "The Soul Writers Production", an after-school program offered every-other-year at TOR. Soul Writers is a year-long program that provides a comprehensive enrichment opportunity through writing, theater and the arts. Students write, choreograph, direct and produce an original musical about the struggles and triumphs of today's middle school students. Building on their own experiences, dreams and concerns, students share their creative voice with the community.

The 2019 production, "The Butterfly Effect," dealt with identity issues and encouraged students to accept people of all backgrounds and beliefs, as well as explore the idea how one small action can lead to larger consequences.

Participating students meet daily beginning in September, to create a 50+ page script, 12-15 original songs and develop the theatrical elements of the production. The 2019 team recognized that the complexity of the issue would require additional sensitivity. Focused on teaching the audience the value of empathy, students worked with staff to create a professional development module on "how to get to know students". Additionally, they coordinated a schoolwide assembly with a local non-profit that supports the LGBTQ community, encouraging acceptance and understanding among TOR students.

The innovative teaching approach of Soul Writers teaches collaboration and the importance of team dynamics. It encourages students to recognize and appreciate ideas and perspectives of others while actively learning beyond the classroom. Numerous Soul Writer alumni are now pursuing careers in theater and the dramatic arts. In addition, each year the students in the audience create a personal connection to the musical, relating to characters and seeing themselves (and their experiences) on the stage.

# Rafael Escobar

## Assistant Principal

Stamford High School  
Stamford High School Graduate



**22**  
**YEARS IN**  
**DISTRICT**

### Why Stamford?

Having the opportunity to work where I was raised, and to serve as the assistant principal at my alma mater, provides me with a distinct sense of pride and a deeper understanding of the community I serve.

### What motivates you about your work?

As a first-generation college graduate, I know, first-hand, the value and opportunity that a college education can afford. That said, I am motivated by helping students maximize their potential.

### How do you challenge, inspire and prepare your students?

As educators, we are entrusted with helping prepare students for their future. This is a responsibility that I have always taken very seriously. Beyond the academic realm, we play a role in helping students become productive members of society. I work with a wonderful team of teachers, who work daily to challenge our students to provide a solid foundation for success. We work very hard to develop the entire person and provide them with the academic and social and emotional tools to navigate life.

**“The Stamford Public Schools do an outstanding job of preparing students for the SAT exams and for college with relatively little reliance on family support. Stamford’s 2019 graduates are attending Ivy League schools and other great colleges.”**

Ellen Weston, B.A. Ed., MBA Finance,  
Founder of Children’s Educational Consulting LLC

# Using Data to Facilitate Personalized Learning



SPS strives to recognize where a student is and create the support and mechanisms to help them move forward and achieve their personal best.

Uniting data and research-based practices with a systems approach to education, SPS uses Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) to provide personalized levels of support and programming for all students. Our SRBI team is a multidisciplinary group of professionals who meet regularly to address teachers' concerns about students. The teams work collaboratively to help design targeted intervention plans and a tiered framework of support, including:

- High-quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom
- Support and additional time to learn for students who are struggling
- Common assessments of all students that enable teachers to monitor academic progress, and identify those who are experiencing difficulty early on
- Schoolwide policies and procedures to offer differentiated instruction for all learners, including students performing above and below grade level expectations as well as English language learners
- Building specific systems of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports

**Over 5,000 students have received SRBI Reading Support since the program was implemented in 2016.**

**“Data informs our work, but it does not define our efforts. Beyond data, we are focused on soft skills like social interactions and collaboration. We are raising awareness for the skills that need to be developed but are hard to quantify.”**  
 Dr. Tamu Lucero, Superintendent of Schools



Spring 2019 Smarter Balance results showed the percentage of students reaching Proficiency or Advanced has increased in Math from Spring 2016 in Grade 3 from **48%** to **52%**, in Grade 4 from **41%** to **48%** and in Grade 5 from **39%** to **44%**.

Spring 2019 SAT School Day shows the percentage of all students achieving at/above proficient in Math is **37.7%** (up from 32.3% in 2016).



**Data is Collected**

Universal Screenings, State and District Benchmark Assessments, Attendance, Discipline Referrals, School Climate Surveys, etc.



**Data Drives Practice**

<p><b>Classroom Teachers</b> use data to differentiate instruction and provide targeted small group support (Tier 1).</p>	<p><b>School Teams</b> use data to provide increasingly targeted support for individual students identified as benefiting from additional attention (Tier 2 and Tier 3).</p>	<p><b>School Counselors</b> use data to inform goal setting and coordinate student and family supports, as needed.</p>
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**Students Are Supported**

<p><b>School Data Teams</b> analyze data, curriculum and priorities to inform School Improvement Plans and identify students in need of supplemental support.</p>	<p><b>Instructional Data Teams</b> develop and analyze assessments and strategies that yield improved student outcomes.</p>	<p><b>School Teams</b> analyze data to develop intervention plans and monitor effectiveness of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.</p>
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# We Inspire

Stamford Public Schools recognizes the successes and accomplishments of our students and staff. Every day, our community builds upon this strong foundation and creates relevant and engaging learning experiences. We help our students draw the connection between what they are learning in the classroom and the real world around them. We are working collaboratively to ensure our students dream big and are equipped with the skills to attain those dreams.



## Teaching Kids to Choose Kindness

In January 2019, Newfield Elementary School embarked on a "Kindness Campaign". Responding to an annual survey that showed that parents, staff and students were using the term "bullying" as a buzzword for everything unkind, the school hosted informational events for parents, staff and students (in English and Spanish).

United in an effort to replace the term "bully" with a positive term, Newfield's "Choose Kind" initiative was born. Principal Lisa Saba-Price challenged the staff to find inspirational quotes to place outside their room and teachers took kids on "gallery walks" to discuss what the quotes meant.

## Students Have Access to Over 1 Million Books

Linked Libraries is a partnership between SPS and the Ferguson Library, ensuring student access to library materials. Piloted in two elementary schools in 2016, the program is now available to all 16,053 SPS students. Linked Libraries offers an on-demand delivery program, enabling students access to Ferguson Library's online catalog to request books and other materials. Students can then access the information online or have it delivered to their school's media center.

**"Linked Libraries enables our libraries and school district to share an educational mission, and come together to deepen learning opportunities for children."**

Alice Knapp, President of The Ferguson Library



**Sandra Canales**

## **SPS Adult Education Program Graduate**

Casework Administrative Coordinator, Person to Person

### **How has SPS prepared you for the next phase of life?**

When I started in the Adult Education Program, I really didn't speak English. The SPS ESL program provided me with a true foundation in the English language. Having gained confidence and the skills I received in the course, enabled me to become a contributing member of the community and participate fully in the American culture.

### **Why do you think it is important for SPS to focus on more than just academics?**

As Hillary Clinton said, "It takes a village!" In this day and age, I think it's imperative that any educational institution focus on the development of individuals as a whole. The entire SPS ESL program was hands-on, practical and immediately useful in my day-to-day life.

### **What advice would you give to a future SPS student?**

I would tell all interested students, regardless of their age, to take advantage of the opportunities that SPS offers. In addition to the ESL program, SPS Adult Education Program offers online classes in different fields such as business, finance and arts.

## **SPS Alumni | Mathematician**

Associate Professor of Mathematics, Tufts University  
Stamford High School Graduate

### **How has SPS prepared you for the next phase of life?**

I had a great academic experience at Stamford High. Even now, 27 years later, I remember a number of extremely inspiring teachers! I was pretty math-focused by the time I got to high school, but lots of other classes stand out too: philosophy, history, chemistry. And I got into lots of things beyond academics, like debate team, drama club and even the wrestling team. (I wasn't very good, but who's counting!) My senior paper was on Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, an incredible novel about race and alienation. I got a running start in college and ended up majoring in math and gender studies, then got my PhD and became a math professor. These days I teach math and civics, and direct the Science, Technology and Society program at Tufts. And I run a lab of redistricting researchers that is having a big impact tackling gerrymandering in America.

### **Why do you think it is important for SPS to focus on more than just academics?**

You never know where you'll find your niche. If I had focused on just math, I don't think I would have found the mix of topics that I find so rewarding today. My work on the law, voting and fairness definitely pulls from early interests in debate and civil rights, and from a broad liberal arts education. Stamford Public Schools are also really diverse, and that's a major value of a public education.

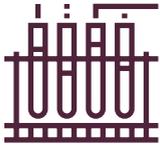
### **What advice would you give to a future SPS student?**

Don't just be one kind of person, like a drama person or a math person. SPS is a great place to start being an everything person.



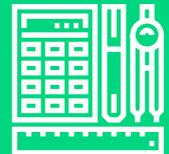
**Moon Duchin**

# Student Highlights & Accomplishments



Scofield Seventh Grader Aryan Pandalai took 1st place in 2019 Connecticut Science and Engineering Fair.

2nd and 3rd place – two teams from Rogers International placed in the top three at the 37th Annual National Academic Championship in Washington, D.C.



The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) awarded Stamford High School rising Seniors John Bolognino and Samantha Heller a 2018 Achievement Award in Writing.

AITE Student Ryan Edkins won 1st Place in the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) NY Metro Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge.



Stamford High School's "The Round Table" was awarded a Gold Medal by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association for the fourth time.

3 SPS students earned recognition in the 2019 NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing.



Stamford High Junior Maggie Meister earned a Silver Medal in photography in the National Scholastic Art and Writing Competition.

45 SPS athletes were recognized as FCIAC Scholar-Athletes.



# Student Highlights & Accomplishments

Stamford High's Sam Diamond and Westhill High's Taryn Duncan were named Academic All-Americans in swimming.



19 SPS students from Westhill High and Academy of Information Technology & Engineering qualified for the Future Business Leaders of America's (FBLA) National Leadership Conference.

10 SPS high school students were selected to perform in the Connecticut Music Educators Association Western Region High School Festival, five students advanced and participated in the All-State Festival.



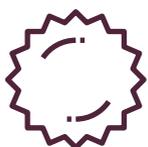
Westhill and Stamford High theater students brought home honors from the Connecticut Drama Association Festival, including "Outstanding Production Award" (WHS) and the "Theatrical Excellence Award" (SHS).

The all-girls Odyssey of the Mind team from the Academy of Information Technology & Engineering finished 10th in the World at the 40th Odyssey of the Mind World Finals.



6 SPS middle school students received Student Leadership Awards from The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation named 15 SPS seniors as Commended Students among the 34,000 students recognized nationwide for their exceptional academic promise.



Westhill High School Seniors John Coleman and Julien Matrullo, were named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists.



**Leslie Guerra**  
Academy of Information  
Technology & Engineering  
Class of 2020

**What are your plans after graduation?**

My plans after graduation include attending Yale University and pursuing a major in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. I hope to one day become a wildlife veterinarian and establish sanctuaries in various parts of the world.

**How has SPS prepared you for the next phase of life?**

SPS has prepared me for my future by exposing me to a diversity of both individuals and courses. I have met and forged friendships with a multitude of people from drastically different backgrounds. Working alongside such a wide range of identities and ideas has greatly improved the way I work with others and how I view the world. SPS has provided me the opportunity to take many different classes and explore what I want to study prior to entering college, including AP Environmental Science and Pre-veterinary Medicine.

**What is one of your favorite SPS experiences?**

One of the greatest experiences was working with my guidance counselor, Mrs. Maria DeAntonis. She is the epitome of what I envisioned a perfect educator to be in that she truly cares about the adolescents she is working with. She believed in me, thoughtfully supported my progress and encouraged me to apply to my dream school.



**Santiago Grisales**  
Stamford High School  
Class of 2020

**What are your plans after graduation?**

Inspired by my two years of college level physics at Stamford High, I plan to study Electrical Engineering. I will be attending the Naval Academy Prep School with plans to attend the Naval Academy the following year.

**How has SPS prepared you for the next phase of life?**

Having the opportunity to take a challenging course load has challenged me to really learn how to use my time effectively in and outside of school, while learning to balance school with extracurricular activities such as work. This is very important as it has taught me a lot of discipline and has inspired the confidence in me to take on even more challenging tasks in the future.

**What is one of your favorite SPS experiences?**

Being part of the BuildOn club at Stamford High expanded my world view and taught me the power and importance of education. BuildOn is a global organization whose main goal is to break the cycle of poverty in areas of the world by providing education and building schools. One experience in particular was when a representative from BuildOn came in to speak about the logistics of the "trek" to build a school. He helped me to recognize common things we take for granted, and appreciate the infinite number of bigger things we have access to every day in Stamford.

**What advice would you give to a future SPS student?**

There are so many opportunities to be part of things you may be interested in, as well as taking specific or advanced courses. SPS teachers are very enthusiastic in what they do, and they will inspire you to also be enthusiastic about learning.



**Kary-Ann McDowell**  
Westhill High School  
Class of 2020

**What are your plans after graduation?**

I aspire to be an architect. I am looking forward to receiving an associate degree from Norwalk Community College. After that, I hope to continue my academic career at Parsons School of Design in New York.

**How has SPS prepared you for the next phase of life?**

The support, love and respect I have received from the faculty, staff and administration has given me the chance to mature in a blessed and respectful manner. Although I came from another country and was absorbed into a new school environment, I was still able to maintain my individuality, and feel that it was being honored. SPS offers a wide range of programs for students with different interests and goals — from all ethnicities and cultures. Attending a school with such a diverse student population promotes growth and a sense of awareness that prepares us all for our journeys beyond high school.

**What is one of your favorite SPS experiences?**

My artwork has been selected by the Visual Art teachers for participation in many shows and competitions in Stamford and the state of Connecticut. Everyone's creative experience is different, and it is inspiring to see what other students my age are creating. The recognition that I have received encourages me to produce more great work.

**What advice would you give to a future SPS student?**

Be prepared to be a part of a learning community that wants the very best for you. The SPS family provides the skills you need to have an impact on the future. Most importantly, remember to recognize and appreciate all the members of the SPS staff and community for all their efforts toward ensuring the success of each individual student.



# We Prepare

SPS is working to ensure that every SPS student graduates with the skills needed to compete and thrive in the 21st century world. Through in-school enrichment programming and after-school activities we are preparing our students for a successful transition into higher education and careers, including:



**Professionalism and work ethic**



**Oral and written communication**



**Teamwork and collaboration skills**

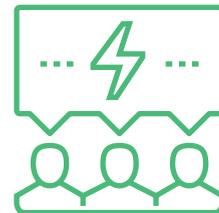
## Real World Experience

Each year, hundreds of SPS students explore an area of interest outside of the constructs of their formal schooling. The SPS Senior Internship Experience, a partnership with the Mayor's Youth Employment Program, is designed to help students gain professional experience and learn what they enjoy in a career. It also supports a smoother transition from high school to college, the work place or military service. The one-month program fosters independence and decision making skills. The internship program offers career experience at area businesses including Stamford Hospital and SoundWaters, as well as NYC partners like the financial services firm, Cantor Fitzgerald.



**225**

students worked an average of 120 hours over 4 weeks



**162**

interviews were completed, with each participant receiving formal feedback on resume and interview technique

## Social Emotional Learning

During 2018-2019, SPS implemented a therapeutic day program, located at Julia A. Stark Elementary School, for elementary students with disabilities, specifically those who exhibit significant social-emotional and behavioral challenges. The program was designed to support students who have difficulty regulating and managing emotions and/or who exhibit clinically significant conditions, such as oppositional defiant disorder, anxiety or depression. The program includes individual and group therapy, applied behavior analysis, an embedded social skills program, and family counseling and consultation. The goal of the program is to provide students with the skills and strategies to be able to re-integrate back into their district school.



## Deeper Learning

Toquam and K.T. Murphy Elementary schools each received 21st Century After-School Grants, totaling almost \$300,000 for a five-year cycle. The grants enable our school communities to provide students with creative and engaging programming beyond the classroom.

Each year, 8th Grade students at Scofield Magnet Middle school participate in Exhibition. This project is an opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate their abilities as learners and teachers, creating a comprehensive research paper and associated presentation focused on a specific technology.

The objectives of the Exhibition program are to illustrate a students mastery of research, communication, critical thinking and evaluation.

SHS, WHS and AITE offer students an extensive selection of dual credit classes, where students can enroll in college courses through local partnerships with Norwalk Community College, UConn and others, and receive both high school and college credit.

# Debra Wilson

## 8th Grade English

Turn of River Middle School



# 24

## YEARS IN DISTRICT

### **Why Stamford?**

I love the diversity in Stamford Public Schools! I am proud to work in a district that has so much to offer its youth, whether it's academic, athletic or community-related. I am also proud that both of my daughters attended Stamford Public Schools. They both had amazing experiences and went on to excellent colleges, including MBA work.

### **What motivates you about your work?**

Although there are days that I leave completely exhausted, I am still incredibly passionate about teaching and cannot imagine any other career. In addition, any time I leave a PPT meeting, I am astounded at the professional capacity and empathetic nature of the process we have in place to service our students. I love that I have the privilege to impact the lives of young people in a city with such a diverse population, and that I have the opportunity to work with other equally passionate professionals.

### **How do you challenge, inspire and prepare your students?**

Now, more than ever, I am proud to be an educator in SPS, a district that truly strives to empower its students and their families. I have the unique opportunity to impact the lives of so many by modifying instruction to meet the individual needs of each student. I am excited to be able to use technological resources to offer digital learning opportunities, along with more traditional means of instruction.

I am especially excited to be able to offer SEL strategies such as mindful moments at the beginning of each class. I love that I get to meet new students through my work as the Program Manager for our AST Program. A community-school collaborative that provides an opportunity for students to participate in after school clubs beyond academics, it is just one of the many ways SPS seeks to foster connections with the community.

# Staff Highlights & Accomplishments



Apples Early Childhood Educational Center established a chartered pre-school parent organization. Apples is the only pre-school in CT to hold a charter.



The Connecticut Parent Teacher Association named SPS Director of Early Childhood Development Kendra Brown the 2019 Outstanding Pre-School Principal.



Springdale Elementary and Toquam Magnet Elementary schools were designated as Schools of Distinction by the Connecticut State Department of Education.



For the 10th year in a row, College for Every Student (CFES) Brilliant Pathways recognized Cloonan Middle School as a School of Distinction.



Stamford High School launched its International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, one of only nine high schools in Connecticut to offer the program. In the first year, there were 26 students enrolled in the program.



Six SPS teachers earned advanced degrees in Bilingual, Multicultural Education and TESOL through an ongoing partnership with Southern Connecticut State University.



Fifteen Stamford Public Schools teachers showcased their works of art at The Ferguson Library Winter Exhibit.

**"In Stamford Public Schools, there is always an opportunity for growth, whether it be an innovative afternoon of Professional Development, or a new way to engage parents and families. I am inspired on a daily basis."**

Debra Wilson, Teacher, Turn of River Middle School



## Daniel Adams

**AITE Graduate | Creative Lead at Cratejoy**  
Graphic Designer of the 2018-2019  
SPS Annual Report To The Community

### **How has SPS prepared you for the next phase of life?**

SPS allowed me to learn that you can have a career in the arts. All of my teachers were very supportive and helpful. My favorite teacher in high school was Ms. Kochiss, who taught me both traditional and digital art. Without her pushing me to be my best, I would not have had the experience or knowledge that I needed to have before entering the real world.

### **Why do you think it is important for SPS to focus on more than just academics?**

SPS has the technology and the teachers to let any student discover who they want to be later in life. I would like to see SPS focus more on the arts. We use and see art in every part of our daily lives.

### **What advice would you give to a future SPS student?**

Take advantage of the amazing teachers. They have so much knowledge and, in my experience, they are always willing to help you with whatever you need. The teachers want you to succeed.

## Brien Adams

**AITE Graduate | Photographer and Musician**  
Photographer for the 2018-2019  
SPS Annual Report to the Community

### **How has SPS prepared you for the next phase of life?**

We had a class called Media Tech at AITE and I loved coming up with video and working the camera. It helped me learn how to use a camera and be creative while having fun at the same time.

### **Why do you think it is important for SPS to focus on more than just academics?**

Art, music, and creative classes make kids want to wake up and go to school. Not everyone excels in academics and some kids might not want to. I think art and music really do save people. Give the kids what they want and need.

### **What advice would you give to a future SPS student?**

Don't be afraid to change classes and try something new. Your counselor is there to help you find the subjects, teachers and courses that fit you best. Also, take the art and music classes and be a rebel.

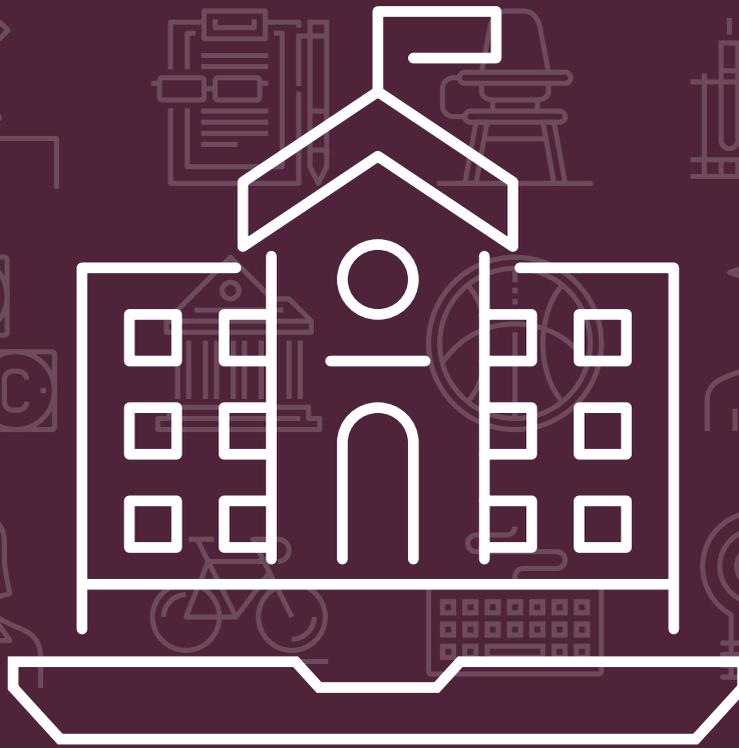
# Congratulations to the Stamford Public Schools Class of 2019

We wish our graduates well as they head to institutions of higher learning, careers and the U.S. Armed Forces.

Albertus Magnus College  
Alfred University  
American University  
Arizona State University  
Becker College  
Benedict College  
Bentley University  
Binghamton University (SUNY)  
Boston College  
Boston University  
Brandeis University  
Bridgewater State University  
Brigham Young University - Idaho  
Bronx Community College  
Brooklyn College  
Bucknell University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Central Connecticut State University  
Champlain College  
Clemson University  
College of Charleston  
College of the Atlantic  
College of William & Mary  
Connecticut College  
Cornell University  
Dean College  
Delaware State University  
Dickinson College  
Drew University  
Drexel University  
Duquesne University  
Eastern Connecticut State University  
Elms College  
Elon University  
Emory University  
Endicott College  
Fairfield University  
Fashion Institute of Technology  
Fiorello H. LaGuardia Community College  
Fordham University  
Georgetown University  
Georgia Highlands College  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Hamilton College  
Harford Community College  
Harvard University  
Hawaii Pacific University  
High Point University  
Hofstra University  
Housatonic Community College  
Howard University  
Hunter College (CUNY)  
Indiana University at Bloomington  
Iona College  
Ithaca College  
Johns Hopkins University  
Johnson & Wales University  
Keene State College

La Salle University  
Lehigh University  
Liberty University  
Lincoln Technical Institute  
Loyola Marymount University  
Loyola University Chicago  
Lynn University  
Manhattan College  
Manhattanville College  
Marist College  
Marlboro College  
McGill University  
Mercy College  
Miami University Oxford  
Michigan State University  
Middlebury College  
Monroe College  
Montana State University  
Montclair State University  
Morgan State University  
New England College  
New England Institute of Technology  
New York University  
Nichols College  
North Shore Community College  
Northeastern University  
Northwestern University  
Norwalk Community College  
Pace University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Pine Manor College  
Plymouth State University  
Porter and Chester Institute  
Post University  
Pratt Institute  
Princeton University  
Providence College  
Purchase College (SUNY)  
Queens University of Charlotte  
Quinnipiac University  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Rhode Island College  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Rutgers University-New Brunswick  
Sacred Heart University  
Salem State University  
Salve Regina University  
Sam Houston State University  
Savannah College of Art and Design  
Southern Connecticut State University  
Springfield College  
St. Francis College  
St. John's University  
Stony Brook University  
SUNY Broome Community College  
SUNY Canton  
SUNY Maritime  
Suffolk University

Syracuse University  
Temple University  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
The Catholic University of America  
The College of Westchester  
The George Washington University  
The Ohio State University  
The University of Arizona  
The University of Maine  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
The University of Tampa  
The University of Vermont  
Tufts University  
Tulane University  
United States Military Academy  
University at Albany (SUNY)  
University of Bridgeport  
University of California Los Angeles  
University of Colorado Boulder  
University of Connecticut  
University of Delaware  
University of Florida  
University of Hartford  
University of Louisville  
University of Maryland College Park  
University of Massachusetts Lowell  
University of Miami  
University of Michigan  
University of New Hampshire  
University of New Haven  
University of Notre Dame  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Rhode Island  
University of Saint Joseph  
University of South Carolina  
University of South Florida  
University of Valley Forge  
University of Virginia  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Virginia Tech  
Wake Forest University  
Wentworth Institute of Technology  
Wesleyan University  
West Virginia University  
Westchester Community College  
Western Connecticut State University  
Western University  
Wheaton College  
Winston-Salem State University  
Xavier University  
Yale University



**Stamford Public Schools recognizes and celebrates the successes and accomplishments that happen every day in our schools. We will continue to work collaboratively as teachers, administrators, students, parents—and the community—to ensure that every student is challenged, inspired and prepared to reach their maximum potential.**

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**[stamfordpublicschools.org](http://stamfordpublicschools.org)**