

FARMINGTON'S VISION OF THE THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2026!



CELEBRATING THE FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2026

The Farmington High School Class of 2026 has made their mark, earning acceptances to over 275 colleges, universities, and advanced schools across the country and internationally. Their hard work, talent, and commitment to their futures are reflected in an incredibly diverse list of post-secondary plans that span every region, interest, and ambition. **See the full list at:** —→



College & Post-Secondary Acceptances

Our students will be attending a wide array of prestigious institutions, including:

Ivy League Schools:	Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, Brown University, Dartmouth College, Cornell University, and the University of Pennsylvania.
Liberal Arts Colleges:	Williams College, Bowdoin College, Bates College, Vassar College, Wesleyan University, Smith College, Amherst College, and Wellesley College.
Top Research Universities:	Johns Hopkins University, Northwestern University, Georgetown University, Emory University, Carnegie Mellon University, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Notre Dame.
Flagship State Universities:	University of Connecticut (Storrs, Hartford, and Stamford campuses), University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, University of Florida, University of Texas at Austin, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of California system (including Berkeley and UCLA).

Military Service & Maritime Commitments

We are also incredibly proud of our graduates who plan to pursue rigorous specialized leadership training through military service or military academies.

This year's class includes students committing to:

The United States Armed Forces:	Enlistments in the United States Army, the United States Marine Corps, and the United States Air Force.
The National Guard:	Serving in the Army National Guard, including specialized pathways in the Military Police.
Military & Maritime Academies:	Preparatory and specialized training at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and Georgia Military Academy.

Specialized Pathways & Technical Education

Many students have chosen specialized programs in areas like the arts, technology, engineering, cosmetology, and skilled trades. Acceptances include:

Savannah College of Art and Design and the Rhode Island School of Design	Construction Education Center, Bristol Technical Education Center, and Porter and Chester Institute	The International Institute of Cosmetology
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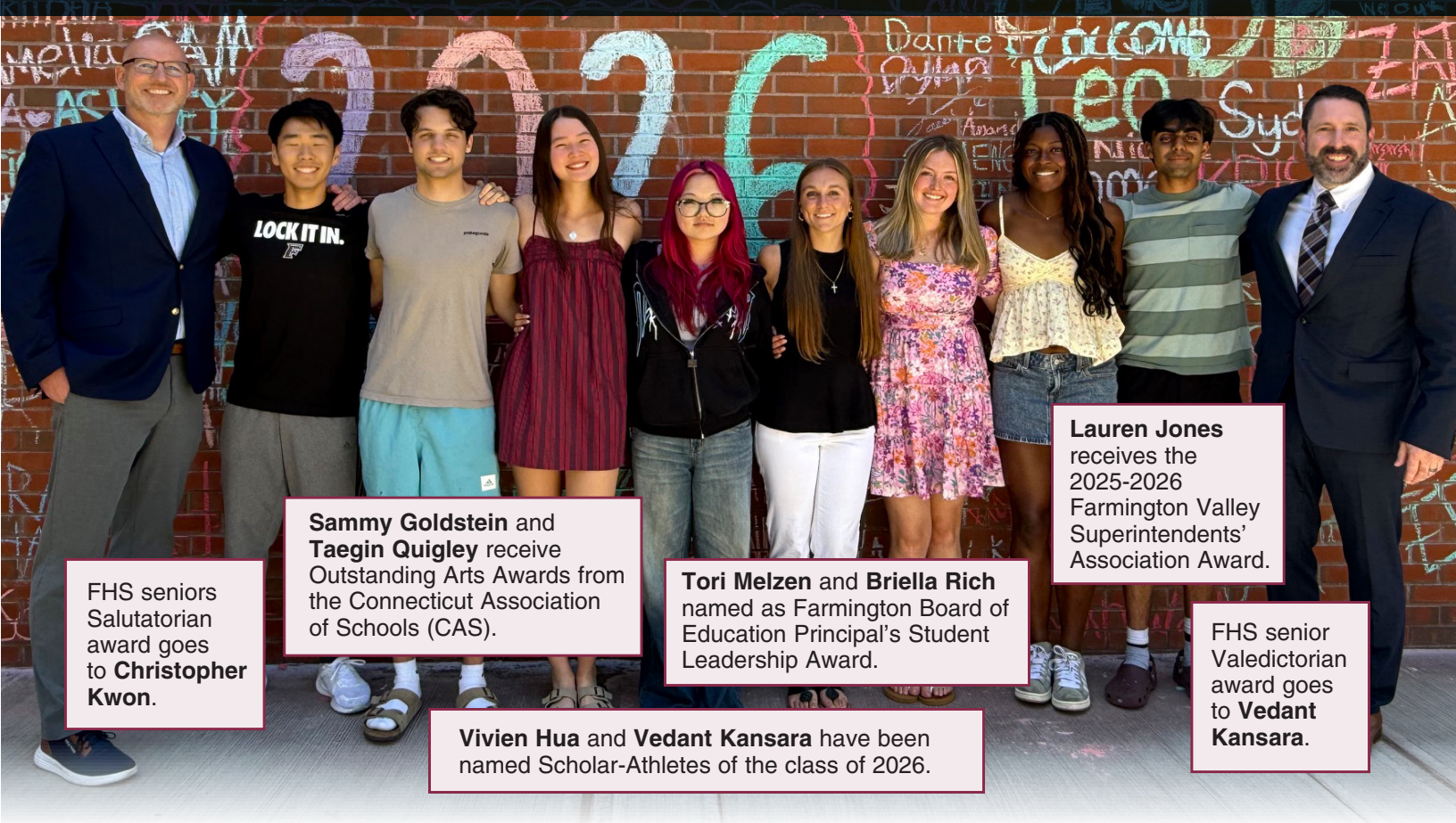
Others are beginning their education at two-year pathways through our **CT State Community College** system at the following campuses: Tunxis, Middlesex, Gateway, and Manchester or exploring global opportunities at international institutions such as **McGill University**, **University College Dublin**, and the **University of Glasgow**.

Whether pursuing education, vocational, military, and/or employment experiences close to home or across the globe, the Class of 2026 is stepping forward with exceptional academic and interpersonal skills aligned with our Vision of the Global Citizen. We are immensely proud of their journeys and can't wait to see how they continue to shape their world.

Congratulations, Class of 2026!

CLASS OF 2026 FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL AWARD RECIPIENTS

Left to Right: FHS Principal Russ Crist; Christopher Kwon; Sammy Goldstein; Vivien Hua; Taegin Quigley; Tori Melzen; Briella Rich; Lauren Jones; Vedant Kansara; Superintendent of Schools Jess Giannini.



FHS seniors Salutatorian award goes to **Christopher Kwon**.

Sammy Goldstein and Taegin Quigley receive Outstanding Arts Awards from the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS).

Tori Melzen and Briella Rich named as Farmington Board of Education Principal's Student Leadership Award.

Vivien Hua and Vedant Kansara have been named Scholar-Athletes of the class of 2026.

Lauren Jones receives the 2025-2026 Farmington Valley Superintendents' Association Award.

FHS senior Valedictorian award goes to **Vedant Kansara**.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dear Farmington Public Schools Community,

As we close out the school year, we celebrate a major milestone: the graduation of the **Farmington High School Class of 2026**. We are incredibly proud of their 13 year journey and excited to see how they impact the world as true Global Citizens. Whether their next chapter takes them to college, careers, military service, or other opportunities, our entire community stands proud of all they have accomplished!

Inside this edition, you will find stories highlighting students, from all seven of our schools, as they bring our Vision of the Global Citizen to life each day. We are thrilled to celebrate our students' academic, athletic, and artistic achievements from the past year, while also recognizing the generous community partners whose support enriches these experiences. Additionally, you'll find resources for prospective employees, enrollment information for the incoming Class of 2039, and engaging summer learning opportunities for students and families.

Public education is at its best when schools, families, and the community work together. Thank you for your continued partnership and support. We wish you a safe and joyful summer and look forward to welcoming our students back on Monday, August 31, 2026.

Sincerely,

Jess M. Giannini, *Superintendent*

Andrea Sobinski, *Board of Education Chair*



“
I know myself and how to
care for my own well-being.

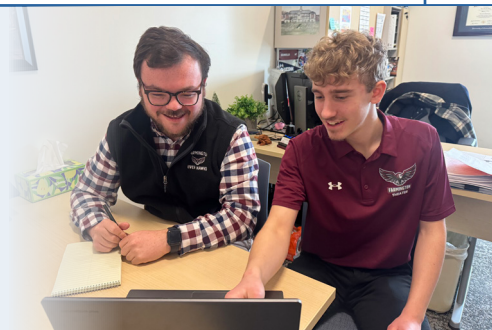
I can assess my own personal strengths and needs, persist in overcoming obstacles to reach my own goals, make wise choices and informed decisions, and adapt to new challenges and opportunities by regulating my emotions and adjusting my behavior to positively impact myself and others.”



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS

FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Every junior meets with their school counselor and family to build a personalized roadmap for high school and beyond. By connecting their unique strengths, interests, and values to future goals, students learn that meaningful planning begins with knowing who you are.



WEST WOODS UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

During a multi-day Winter Olympics unit, fifth and sixth graders competed and celebrated as part of student-created “countries,” complete with their own flags and team spirit cheers. Along the way, students learned a little more about themselves by reflected on their own effort, mindset, and emotional responses to winning and losing.

EAST FARMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

New literacy and math games in K-4 classrooms give students meaningful practice navigating both the excitement of winning and the frustration of a difficult challenge. Through play, students build the emotional awareness and self-regulation that help them grow inside and outside the classroom.



IRVING A. ROBBINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

In *Poetry of Place*, eighth graders spent time outdoors observing nature before writing poems that connected their surroundings to their own emotions and experiences. Through reflection, revision, and sharing their work on a community poetry walk at the Farmington Land Trust, students discovered that paying closer attention to the world around them helped them better understand themselves.

EMPOWERED LEARNER



“

I'm a knowledgeable, reflective, and resourceful learner.

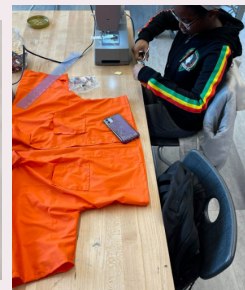
I can explore interests, take initiative, ask questions and conduct research. I can use technology and media tools skillfully, and learn from my successes and failures by engaging in feedback and self-assessment protocols.”



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS

FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Juniors and seniors in ASPIRE – Fashion Design II chose a personal driving question, from combating fast fashion to raising awareness for wrongful convictions, then researched, designed, and sewed an original garment. From initial concept to final stitch, students made decisions, overcame challenges, and brought their ideas to life.



WEST DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

To close out their Sun, Moon, and Stars unit, first graders researched how engineers land spacecraft on Mars before designing and testing their own landers to safely deliver a “ping pong ball astronaut.” Through each round of testing and redesign, students learned that both curiosity and learning from mistakes are essential parts of discovery.

EAST FARMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

First graders set their own phonics goals during word study and design engaging games to practice the skills they're working to master. Through games like Bingo and Go Fish, students take ownership of their learning while making practice both meaningful and fun.



IRVING A. ROBBINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Eighth graders analyzed student-written Tiny Memoirs to identify the craft moves that made each piece effective before applying those techniques to their own submissions for the New York Times Tiny Memoir Contest. Careful analysis and evidence-based feedback from peers helped strengthen their writing and sharpen their thinking.



DISCIPLINED THINKER

“
I can apply strategic thinking to
develop ideas & solve problems.”

I am a critical consumer of information recognizing point of view and bias. I can reason with evidence, synthesize and evaluate data, and connect concepts and ideas while thinking creatively and flexibly to design and develop innovative solutions, strategies, and outcomes.”



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS

IRVING A. ROBBINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Through the CT Humane Society’s “Beyond the Breed” program, eighth graders explored dog DNA and selective breeding, analyzing how genetic differences influence physical traits and health concerns. Using DNA evidence to guide their thinking, students learned how scientists uncover patterns and make informed conclusions.



WEST DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Second graders became paleontologists, analyzing body and trace fossils to gather evidence and develop claims about ancient organisms. Their Fossil Museum showcased conclusions built through careful observation, reasoning, and scientific thinking.

FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Students secured a virtual water treatment plant from cyberattacks and toured the UConn Data Center to see how real infrastructure is protected statewide. By analyzing threats, evaluating vulnerabilities, and designing solutions, students applied strategic thinking to solve this challenging problem.



WEST WOODS UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Fifth graders used the Engineering Design Process to build helmets that protect fragile “pasta shells” from impact, testing one variable at a time to analyze which design choices were most effective. Through data collection and evidence-based revisions, students learned how engineers use careful reasoning to improve solutions.



“
I can work effectively & respectfully with diverse groups.

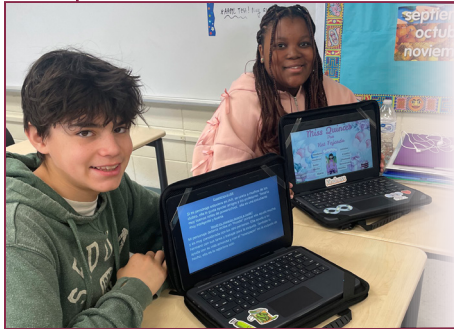
I can actively listen and seek to understand the ideas of others, self-monitoring for biased thinking. I can create inclusive environments for dialogue that establish and adhere to group norms for effective communication and conflict resolution.”



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS

NOAH WALLACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Second graders became amusement park engineers, designing rollercoasters that put forces like gravity, magnetism, and friction to work before building and debugging code to bring their Lego rides to life. Working together through challenges, students discovered that great designs are built through collaboration.



IRVING A. ROBBINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

After reading a Spanish-language book of their choice, students explored how characters reflected IAR's core values and discussed their thinking through Spanish interviews with classmates. Through thoughtful questions and active listening, students strengthened their ability to communicate and learn with others.

FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

More than 120 students brought the musical Anastasia to life this spring, both on stage and behind the scenes. Working toward a shared goal, they created an experience that entertained and inspired the entire school community.



WEST WOODS UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In the “¡En el Restaurante!” unit, fifth and sixth graders collaborated on original restaurant menus, then dined at each other's restaurants speaking entirely in Spanish. Playing both server and guest, students practiced the active listening and quick thinking that real conversation requires.



“
I can actively contribute to
a better world community.

I understand complex interdependent systems and their impact on people and the environment. I question prevailing assumptions, develop my cultural competence, and seek solutions through negotiation and compromise in order to contribute to the betterment of my local/global communities through service and civic participation.”



SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS

FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Ninth graders stepped into the role of museum curators, developing proposals for new exhibits, podcasts, and installations for the Stanley-Whitman House. By helping shape how Farmington's history is shared with the public, students used their learning to make a meaningful contribution to our community.



UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Third graders presented their waste-reduction program to the town's Green Efforts committee and requested funding for a stainless steel sorting table. The committee was so impressed that it approved the funding showing our young students that they can inspire meaningful change in the community.

IRVING A. ROBBINS MIDDLE SCHOOL

In a lesson honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., IAR Crews carried out acts of service across the community, creating crafts for preschoolers, recycling tennis balls into shelter dog toys, and organizing a pencil drive. Students discovered that even small acts of service can make a real impact.



WEST DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Third graders spent the year tracking leaf drop and bud burst on trees they named, including Marvelous the Maple. Their observations became part of a Harvard University research database, showing students that even young scientists can contribute to important research.

Community Contributors & Partnerships

Overview

The FHS Career Center partners with numerous community organizations and town residents to support authentic and meaningful opportunities for students to explore careers, develop transferable skills, and serve their communities. The FHS Career Center is immensely grateful to all the community partners that have sponsored programs, participated in career conversations, and hosted internships, site visits, and volunteers.



Sponsorships

The Farmington Community Chest is sponsoring the Cutting Edge Program for the third consecutive year with a grant to cover the cost of participation in the 2-week internship program at UConn Health for 15 FHS students.

Internships

UConn Health will be hosting 15 rising FHS seniors this summer to participate in the 2-week Cutting Edge Program, which will allow them to work with PhD students on experimental research projects and develop essential biomedical laboratory science skills.

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Central Connecticut State University will be hosting 12 FHS students this summer for its CHEM 138 course, which gives them an opportunity to work on a research project with faculty mentor and be introduced to research methods, learn how to approach quantitative analysis, gain experience with instrumentation, and perform data analysis.

The Department of Computer Science at Central Connecticut State University will be hosting 6 FHS students as interns this summer to support research on cybersecurity, machine learning, and intrusion detection.



Site Visits

A variety of organizations in and around the Farmington community hosted FHS students on visits to learn about different career opportunities, converse with professionals in fields of interest, and observe professionals at work. Among many community partners that supported these visits were: By Carrier, CT State at Tunxis, Central Connecticut State University, Ron's Automotive Unionville LLC, Construction Education Center, Accounting Connections, Junior Achievement, The Walker Group, The Bushnell, Bristol TEC, Jefferson Radiology, Claggett, Sykes, & Garza, and Travelers Claim University.

Career Conversations

Community members supported a variety of career conversations throughout the 2025-26 school year via the Capstone Networking Event, business and nonprofit open house, and spring career speaker series. Town residents and FHS parents from the following organizations were among those who supported these career conversations: New England Asset Management Group, Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, Miller Music, LLC, By Carrier, Tow Youth Justice Institute, Middlesex Health, UConn Health, Central Connecticut State University, The Walker Group, Claggett, Sykes, & Garza, Pediatric Associates of Farmington, LLC, Burke Aerospace, H.O.P.E. Partners of Farmington, ebm-papst, UBI Federal Credit Union, Northwest Community Bank, COCC, Cardinal Health, and Farmington Police Department.

Volunteer Opportunities

Partner organizations also provided opportunities for students to serve their communities, explore careers, develop job readiness skills, and build their resumes through volunteering. Among the organizations that provided volunteer opportunities to FHS students were: Farmington Libraries, Farmington Land Trust, Probus Greater Hartford, UConn Health, Hospital of Special Care, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, and Hospital of Central Connecticut.

District Awards, Honors, & Distinctions

Athletics

River Hawk Athletics celebrated an exceptional 2025–2026 school year! Nearly 800 students (797) participated in interscholastic athletics, with 30 teams qualifying for CIAC state tournaments. Farmington captured CIAC State Championships in Girls' Crew and Girls' Golf, while the Boys Outdoor Track 4x400 relay team won the CIAC State Open. River Hawks also earned seven conference championships and three conference tournament titles, and 27 student-athletes committed to continue their academic and athletic careers at the collegiate level. Academic excellence remained a priority, with Vivien Hua and Vedant Kansara recognized as Scholar Athletes, while our Unified Sports program continued to provide meaningful opportunities for students through successful soccer, basketball, and kickball seasons. Together, these accomplishments reflect the dedication, sportsmanship, leadership, and pride that define River Hawk Athletics.



FHS Robotics

At the 2026 Western New England and Hartford District qualifiers, the Farmington High School FIRST Robotics team excelled by securing both the Quality and Engineering Inspiration Awards while serving as the 8th and 5th Alliance Captains, respectively. Their success peaked at the NE District Championship, where they won the prestigious New England District Engineering Inspiration Award—their highest-level accolade since 2007—earning them an invitation to the FIRST World Championship. Additionally, individual talent shone as Purva Mahajan was named a District Championship FIRST Leadership Award Semi-Finalist. The team capped off their impressive season by placing 5th in the elimination matches at the CIAC Robotics State Championship. Finally, three team members, Sumanaga Ganta, Avineesh Senthilkumar, and Vinisha Sisodia, were each selected as members of the 2026 CIAC All-State Robotics team.



IAR Science Bowl

Five IAR students delivered a great performance at the National Science Bowl in Washington D.C. at the beginning of May, advancing past their division and competing through three intense rounds of double elimination. In the cyberchallenge competition, they demonstrated their skills in coding and computational thinking, placing 10th overall. It was inspiring to see our students' teamwork and their passion for learning as they connected with like-minded peers from across the country.



Union School Waste Sorting

Student council members at Union School designed and implemented a waste sorting program in the cafeteria. They conducted research, created a plan, gathered resources, and led the implementation of the project, which includes containers for sorting compost, recycling, and trash. Compost is collected weekly by Blue Earth, a company located in Southington, and turned into soil. After implementation, students documented a significant reduction in daily garbage output, by several bags to the point where multiple dumpster pick ups each week are no longer needed. In May, a group of third graders presented to the town's Green Efforts committee. They requested funding for a stainless steel sorting table in order to make things more efficient in the cafeteria during lunch waves. The committee was so impressed with their presentation that they voted to fund the table.





Halo Awards

The Farmington High School Theater Company celebrated another successful year of theater with two shows: *You Can't Take It With You* and *Anastasia*. During the 2025-2026 School Year, over one-hundred and twenty students contributed both on and off stage to the successful run of these productions, accounting for approximately **9.6% of Farmington High School Students**.

Our theater company was honored to accept sixteen nominations at the **2026 Semina DeLaurentis Halo Awards** at the Palace Theater in Waterbury (May 2026). Over seventy students and faculty attended the awards ceremony. From our nominated categories, three recipients were chosen:

- **Vienna Beaupre ('26)** for Best Program Art for *You Can't Take It With You*
- **Morgan McDade-Parsons ('26)** for Best Performance in a Supporting Female Role in a Play in *You Can't Take It With You*
- **Isabella Oliveira ('27)** for Best Performance in a Leading Female Role in a Contemporary Musical in *Anastasia*.

Theater at Farmington High School has a long-standing history that spans back almost one-hundred years to our earliest recorded performance in 1932. Our cast and crew have found a beautiful new home in our revolutionary auditorium, bringing student-led learning and performing to new heights and possibilities. FHS Theater Co. looks forward to celebrating the **95th Anniversary of FHS Theater** during the 2026-2027 School Year.

Grant Funding Fuels Innovation

The Noah Wallace Fund awarded **more than \$33,000** to support seven innovative projects for the 2026–2027 school year. Funded initiatives include an outdoor learning space, multilingual literacy resources, student publishing stations, creative arts and engineering experiences, Spanish language enrichment, a professional theater production, and a new student wellness and sensory space.

Celebrating Our 2026 Retirees

Farmington Public Schools proudly recognizes eight educators retiring at the conclusion of the 2025–2026 school year.

Together, they have dedicated 175 years of service to our students, schools, and community. We thank them for their commitment and wish them all the best in retirement.

Carleen Bumsch – Grade 3 Teacher, East Farms Elementary School (20 years)

Sabrina Dashefsky – World Language Teacher, West Woods Upper Elementary School (33 years)

Pamela Fielding – Mathematics Teacher, Irving A. Robbins Middle School (29 years)

Lanelle Gallo – Speech Language Pathologist, East Farms and West District Elementary School (9 years)

John Kostal – Mathematics Teacher, Farmington High School (12 years)

Pamela Rose – Mathematics Teacher, Farmington High School (20 years)

Yvonne Stoops – World Language Teacher, Farmington High School (6 years)

Tricia Troxell – Eighth Grade Language Arts Teacher, Irving A. Robbins Middle School (22 years)

Nancy McCarthy – Special Services Paraprofessional, Farmington High School (24 years)

— 175 Years of Combined Service —

Thank you for making a lasting difference in the lives of Farmington students.

Town of Farmington
1 Monteith Drive
Farmington, CT 06032

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Superintendent of Schools

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WELCOMING BACK STUDENTS ON MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2026

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Farmington Public Schools Resources for Families.

Stay connected and prepare for the upcoming school year with these helpful resources and opportunities.

