



Goodwin School Principal Peter Dart Selected as Next Superintendent

The Mansfield Public Schools Board of Education announced that it has selected Peter Dart as the next Mansfield Public Schools Superintendent. Mr. Dart, who has served as Principal of Dorothy C. Goodwin Elementary School in Mansfield since 2018, will succeed Kelly Lyman effective July 1, 2022 upon her retirement.

“Peter has been a strong contributor to the administrative team here in Mansfield, offering deep experience in and contributing to growing our educators, one of our Core Beliefs,” says Kathleen Ward, Chair of the Board of Education who led the committee. “Under his leadership, Goodwin earned School of Distinction status in 2020 for high growth and overall performance in ELA/Reading, and in 2021 *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Goodwin School twelfth out of 621 Connecticut elementary schools. Our school community clearly responds to his leadership.”



Peter Dart will lead the district as Superintendent effective July 1.

Peter Dart previously served as Assistant Superintendent for Talent Management at Hartford Public Schools where he worked with district and school leaders to support 52 schools in developing talent, leadership, professional learning, and equity. He was promoted to this role after serving for four years as

(See SUPT. on pg. 4)

Mansfield Middle School Students Earn Art and Writing Recognition



Kalyani Tihaiya, Ella Gan, Alice Han and Sophie Marcus earned recognition from the highly competitive Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards were established in 1923 and are a prestigious, nationwide competition challenging middle and high school students to express their creative ideas. Among the 975 students in Connecticut who entered this year's Scholastic Art & Writing Awards contest, four Mansfield Middle School students earned state-level awards.

Sophie Marcus, a grade 8 student, earned a Gold Key and was nominated for the American Voices Award for her poem, "Frozen." As a Gold Key recipient, a top award in the competition, Sophie advances to the national competition.

Alice Han, grade 7, earned two Silver Keys for her poems, "Her Story" and "Behind Closed Doors".

Honorable mentions were awarded to two students. Ella Gan, grade 7, earned honorable mention recognition in two different media, one for her art piece, "Education Should Not Be Manipulation" and her story, "The World Beyond." Grade 8 student Kalyani Tihaiya earned an honorable mention for her poem, "Parasailing".

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Kim King Advocates for Students as Connecticut Teacher of the Year

We are still bursting with pride that Mansfield's own Kim King was named as Connecticut's 2022 Teacher of the Year last fall. The celebration at Southeast School's gymnasium was memorable, and included visits from Governor Lamont and Commissioner of Education Russell-Tucker. Grade 3 and 4 students from Vinton and Southeast Schools performed special music, and a video production highlighted art projects by Mrs. King's students. Surrounded by the circle of television reporters in her post-announcement interview, Kim calmly answered questions about her passion for her work and her students. Kim's ease in promoting the power of education proves she will make a strong advocate for her fellow teachers across our state this year.

Since being named as Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Mrs. King has been featured by the Connecticut Education Association in a social media campaign, spoke at the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Equity and Inclusion Conference in January and will be a keynote speaker for the Northeast Teaching for Artistic Behavior Association Conference. Fox61-TV in Hartford interviewed her for their CT Futures Campaign, and she has attended events at the Mark Twain House & Museum and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum with other state teachers. The nationally broadcast Drew Barrymore



Vinton and Southeast Schools Art Teacher Kim King was selected as Connecticut Teacher of the Year. She is the first art teacher in the state who has earned this honor.

Show also included Kim in a teacher appreciation episode.

Within the past four years Mansfield teachers have progressed to finalist twice (Kim King and Riley Zawodniak) and to semi-finalist (Ashley Rancourt) in the Teacher of the Year consideration. This is a track record of which any community would be proud!



UConn Neag School of Education Dean Jason Irizarry visited Mansfield Middle and Goodwin Schools. On his tour, he stopped in to observe a math lesson and engaged with students practicing their work.

U.S. News & World Report Ranks Our Schools Among Top in Connecticut

U.S. News & World Report for years has published a list of the best schools in the country. This year they also ranked elementary and middle schools, and Mansfield is very well represented. Of the 621 elementary schools ranked in the state, Goodwin School was listed as number 12.

Among Connecticut middle schools, Mansfield Middle School ranked 18 of 304 schools. Rankings were made based on 2019 data including performance on state-required tests, graduation, and how well students are prepared for high school. It is notable that nearly all other schools with higher rankings are schools in wealthy, large suburbs. To see the lists visit www.usnews.com/education.

Meeting Social Emotional Needs of Students

Mansfield Schools' Core Beliefs are the principles which are practiced in classrooms and in the hallways every day across the district. Among these is **Develop the Whole Child: We believe schools have an obligation to teach academic and social skills while nurturing the emotional, physical and behavioral development of all children.**

Families and educators recognize that schooling during the pandemic has been challenging to everyone, especially our children. In fall 2018, long before the COVID shutdown in March of 2020, Mansfield Schools

established a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Task Force that identified three key areas of focus for social emotional learning: Cognitive Regulation, Emotional Processes, and Social/Interpersonal Skills.

The SEL Task Force supports staff in learning how to assist students to deal with stress, cope with anger, self-regulate emotions, reduce anxiety, and develop a stronger sense of personal responsibility. SEL opportunities are worked into daily lessons to provide students the language—and the time—to open up about their feelings.

Checking in with students cannot be an occasional practice. The district has committed to daily contacts and social-emotional routines each school day. At the middle school, for example, school counselors conduct “minute meetings” with students to learn which adults they feel closest to within the school, students' close friends, personal goals, and what activities interest them at school. All of this learning helps to shape relationships and guide social emotional plans, especially for students who seem disconnected.

At Vinton Elementary School, Principal Mike Seal routinely hosts “check-ins” with students to learn what's on their minds. Southeast and Goodwin

Schools used an equity survey to gain a sense of students' feelings of belonging and acceptance, and at Mansfield Middle School the staff rolled out surveys about empathy. Schools are working hard to find ways to connect with students' feelings.

During the pandemic, each school established a CAREs team to reach beyond students to their families. These teams provide technology support, ensure basic needs are met by connecting families with food or housing resources, and offer academic supports as needed. Students themselves have been involved with sneaker drives, and cereal box and canned foods collections in support of families.

School staff including special education teachers, school psychologists and counselors provide direct support to students with mental health and behavioral needs. A partnership with the Town of Mansfield's Youth Services Bureau offers additional counseling options at school during the day, plus after-school programs, mentoring opportunities with UConn students and interns, and family relationship-building sessions at school.

These combined efforts will help to nurture our young people and build their sense of community belonging.

Core Beliefs

-  Lead with **EQUITY**.
-  Develop the whole **CHILD**.
-  Ensure **ACTIVE** learning.
-  Build **PARTNERSHIPS**.
-  Prepare **GLOBAL** citizens.
-  Grow **EDUCATORS**.



Mansfield is being recognized for its efforts with Social-Emotional Learning in schools.

Recently Eileen Melody and Kristina Lee, Mansfield Middle School Counselors, were invited to present about their practices to the Connecticut General Assembly's Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity.

Their presentation focused on Utilizing Social Emotional Learning to Address and De-escalate Situations of Peer Conflicts, Bullying and Student Mental Health Concerns before the commission's Social Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative. We are honored by this invitation.

Superintendent Named *(cont. from page 1)*

the principal of the Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker serving 600 PreKindergarten to grade 8 students from 45 towns.

"I'm honored to step into this role to best serve our students, families, and staff. Mansfield is an amazing community and I am proud to be a part of this story as we continue to develop and highlight experiences that lift equity and best practices," says Mr. Dart. "This is a district strong in tradition with deep commitments to education and innovation. My aim is to continue the great results that we're achieving here, and to ensure a smooth transition to our new school for teachers, staff and students. I'm super excited to help open our new elementary school and move our district's Core Beliefs forward," he says.

MMS Student Awards *(cont. from page 1)*

All students selected to advance to the national level will have the opportunity to travel to New York City for a star-studded ceremony. Gold medal awardees are also eligible for scholarships.

Congratulations to these Mansfield students for being recognized for their original art!



Goodwin School welcomed families to view their students' projects created for the Invention Convention.

Board of Education's Budget Advances District's Teaching and Learning Practices

The Mansfield Board of Education voted to adopt a budget for 2022-23 which reflects a .2% decrease from the current year. The budget will be presented to the Town Council on April 13 as part of the town-wide budget process.



The \$23,963,290 budget is far below the Board of Education's 10-year average increase of 1.66%. The budget accounts for and supports the transition to one elementary school while also maintaining class size, programs and resources for all learners. The budget also keeps in place needed resources to support students and staff addressing the effects of the pandemic, while providing professional growth opportunities and supporting teachers' practices in teaching and learning.

Staff salaries and benefits are the largest part of any school budget, and they account for 83% of this proposed budget. With the consolidation to one elementary school, staffing is reduced by 11.7 positions resulting in significant savings. Energy savings of operating one new school are also projected to save nearly \$200,000 in energy costs, and annual building operations will also decrease by \$68,750. These reductions yield great savings — \$1.3 million in total.

The budget also address the effects of the pandemic. Superintendent Lyman proposed adding a Literacy Acceleration Teacher at Mansfield Middle School and a Specialized School Psychologist. To support the district's academic excellence, the budget includes a Director of Teaching and Learning and a Technology Integrationist position. The district is also proposing to share a full-time Custodial Supervisor position with the Town of Mansfield.

For details on the proposed budget, go to: <https://mansfieldct.gov/1776/Budget-Information>



A Message from the Board of Education

Our school year is passing quickly, and already spring has appeared on the calendar. This entire year, the school community has had its eyes on what's next, and the new future that is coming for Mansfield Schools.

Recently we announced that Peter Dart will serve as our next superintendent. The search process for just the right leader for our next chapter was informed by input from our students, staff and community, and we are excited for a strong leader emerging from within our school family. He will also benefit from extra time to collaborate with Superintendent Lyman on important transition details.

Mansfield Elementary School's Principal Lauren Rodriguez has been planning for the future with the staff of the new elementary school at sessions all year, too. The aim is to provide an exciting and reassuring experience for all PreK to grade 4 school students when the doors open at the new school, and building a cohesive teaching team is the first step to success. We have already approved the budget for 2022-23 to move forward to the Town Council. The budget is an important tool for achieving our mission, and another element of the careful planning by our administrators to sustain our outstanding learning plans.

New leadership. A new school. New opportunities. Big changes are coming, and we are confident that the future is bright for Mansfield children.

Our Mission:

It is the mission of the Mansfield Public Schools, in partnership with the Mansfield community, to ensure that each and every child develops the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for civic engagement and personal excellence in learning, life, and work within our local and global community.

Videos Position Mansfield as a Great Place to Work: *Your Place to Grow*

Mansfield Public Schools has produced five videos which highlight the cutting edge curriculum, daily practice of Core Beliefs and commitment to growing educators for which Mansfield is known. Through a grant to the district from Insight Education Group, the district has produced a series of videos to highlight Mansfield as a great place to work and go to school.

Over two days in December, a video crew recorded 17 teachers and administrators, visiting classrooms and planning sessions. The videos outline Mansfield's strengths in both scripted and unscripted sessions. The goal is to attract prospective employees by presenting Mansfield as a diverse district providing opportunities for teachers and staff to contribute and grow.

This collaboration with Insight Education Group has helped the district shape its focus on equity, and contributed to its work to hire diverse professionals, empower teachers and school leaders, and facilitate conversations around bias, prejudice, and race.



Lights, camera, action! Mansfield Middle School Science Teacher Raechel Suprenant records her message outdoors talking about Mansfield's Core Beliefs. Staff members across the district participated in the video recordings. The videos can be seen on the district's job posting landing page and other website pages, and on the district's Facebook page.

Mansfield Board of Education
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Mansfield Elementary School will be the Tigers! Grade 3 students worked in teams researching attributes of mascot options, wrote compelling descriptions and created video campaigns. All elementary students voted from among six mascots, and the winner was revealed on trading cards distributed at lunchtime the next day. Go Tigers!

Growing Interest in String Instruction

This year, Mansfield Schools has expanded strings instrumental instruction to more elementary students and the program has stimulated extraordinary interest among families! While there were 21 returning students in grades 2 to 4, 70 new students have enrolled to study cello (14) or violin (56). This program, Suzuki in the Schools, is supported by low- or no-cost rentals of instruments through our local Suzuki partner. The program enrollment last year fell to just 24 students, and we are so pleased to expand access to 91 students this year. An additional 60 students in grades K and 1 are on a wait list. The benefits to our students, and our musical program at the middle school, will be felt for years to come.

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Mansfield Public Schools

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