

VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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Vernon Public Schools Mark First Day of School with Hugs, High Fives and Momentum

Thursday was the first day of school in Vernon, and after first day ceremonies and celebratory hugs and high fives, students, teachers and staff got to work.

Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary and Assistant Superintendent Robert Testa visited each of Vernon's five elementary schools to check in with principals about how things were going, greet teachers new to the district and give pencils and a pep talk to every kindergarten student.

"The first day of school is always a great day," Dr. Macary said. "It's exciting to see kindergarteners and other students who are ready to learn."

Vernon police also visited every school on Thursday to check the perimeter of each building and ensure a safe learning environment.

Everyone is hopeful this school year will be "normal." The past three school years have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, either through school being remote or absences by students and staff who became ill. Across Connecticut and the nation, the pandemic has taken a toll on student achievement as measured by standardized tests.

But those tests also revealed good news in Vernon, where Dr. Macary pushed for a return to in-school learning as early as possible. While every district saw scores decline, there were bright spots in Vernon.

"Vernon outperformed the state average in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science during the 2021-2022 school year," Mr. Testa said. "Our district goal is to improve every year. We focus on growth in schools."

The Vernon Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.

And last school year, our students' achievement outperformed the state average in these three key areas. That means we have momentum to keep moving forward."

The state measures the percentage of students who reach their personal academic growth targets.



Vernon Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Macary hands out pencils to kindergarteners at Center Road School on Thursday, the first day of school.

"In third grade, every student, based on their performance, is assigned a growth target," Mr. Testa said. "The average percentage of growth target achieved by our students outperformed the state average in English Language Arts and Mathematics."

For the Vernon Public Schools, 72.3 percent of students reached their targets in math and 61.7 percent reached their targets in English Language Arts. The state average was 65.2 percent in math and 60.4 percent in English Language Arts. This is truly meaningful progress and our goal is to keep moving forward."

"In person learning and targeted use of math and English interventionists was the key," Dr. Macary said. "When we identified a student who was struggling, we immediately provided the assistance that student needed to be successful. Our teachers and administrators work hard every day to make sure our students are getting the support they need."

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Several times during Thursday's tour of the elementary schools, Dr. Macary and Mr. Testa talked to principals about making sure interventionists went to work immediately with students who have already been identified as needing support.



Vernon Superintendent Dr. Joseph Macary has a tradition of welcoming every new teacher on the first day of school. Among them is Tariana Ebron, a fifth grade teacher at Skinner Road School.

“We have high expectations of our students and we know that they can achieve,” Dr. Macary said.

“We also have high expectations of our teachers and administrators,” Mr. Testa said. “No one slips through the cracks in Vernon. Every student matters and we are committed to making sure every student gets the support they need to be successful.”

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