

There's still time to apply...

The Vanguard Schools Application Deadline is extended to January 23, 2007.

As part of Connecticut's ongoing school improvement efforts, the *Vanguard Schools Initiative* was designed to build a statewide network of schools highlighting evidence-based practices and strategies. This is a collaborative project among the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the State Education Resource Center (SERC), and Connecticut's Business and Industry Association (CBIA), as well as various business partners.

The *Connecticut Vanguard Schools Initiative* is designed to focus on school reform efforts that have demonstrated success in light of challenges associated with raising student achievement scores. Successful schools are identified that serve as model school improvement sites. The focus is on specific effective school improvement strategies, the steps and choices that result in success, and practical, useful tools and services for school and district leadership teams.

There are two ways in which a school might be considered a CT Vanguard School:

- First, as a *High Performing School*. A *High Performing School* has at least 80% of its students at or above goal in all three areas on state assessments for two or more years.
- Second, as a *Significantly Improving School*. A *Significantly Improving School* has a consistent trend toward increasing the percentage (%) of students at or above goal/proficiency in all three areas of state assessments for two or more consecutive years.

Why Apply?

Selection as a Connecticut Vanguard School is a prestigious honor that will be recognized publicly: locally, regionally, and state-wide. Research clearly indicates that improved student performance is always linked to very specific and sustained strategies that have been put into practice with broad-based planning, thorough implementation, on-going monitoring, evaluation and revision.

Benefits: Vanguard Schools will receive:

- \$15,000 award for discretionary use to continue implementing best practices
- \$5,000 to share best practices with schools in need of improvement
- Public recognition via state, regional and local media
- Formal recognition at a State Board of Education meeting
- Opportunity to present at a state-wide best-practice conference in Spring 2007

Attached you will find the *Vanguard School Initiative Rubric* and *Vanguard Schools Application Packet*

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact David R. Cormier, Consultant, SERC (860) 632-1485, ext. 320, cormier@ctserc.org.