

## **Vincent J. Balsamo**

Vincent J. Balsamo graduated from Mark T. Sheehan High School in 2000 as the valedictorian whose scholarly achievements were matched by athletic awards spanning multiple sports including football, hockey, and track. He went on to earn a B.A. and M.A. in mathematics from Wesleyan University where he also was awarded the William Kerr Leadership Grant, the Cardinal Club Scholar-Athlete Award, and the distinction of Football Special Teams Player of the Year. A lifelong learner, Vincent went on to earn a variety of educational certifications from the University of Hartford, SCSU, and UCONN.

Fresh out of college, Vincent began his career in education as a math teacher at John F. Kennedy High School in Waterbury, CT teaching the full gamut of math courses during his ten years there. Additionally, he served on the district Geometry Curriculum Revision Committee, the Geometry Common Formative Assessment Team, the School Leadership Team, co-chaired the Schoolwide Data Team, and co-chaired the NEASC Accreditation Steering Committee. Beyond attending to pedagogy, Mr. Balsamo created and served as head coach of the first robotics competition team at Kennedy High, a team that went on to the National Championships in 2014. Other highlights of Vincent's decade teaching and coaching include teaching a college access challenge program at Naugatuck Valley Community College and a grade 8-9 transition program at Crosby High in Waterbury. His coaching credits include stints coaching Sheehan track, Wesleyan University Football, and Coginchaug Football. His teaching career culminated in being awarded the Kennedy High School Teacher of the Year and the Waterbury District Teacher of the Year in 2012.

In 2015 Vincent Balsamo moved to the role of assistant principal of Crosby High School where he implemented protocols in the Grade 9 Academy for teachers to monitor student progress, observe peers, review student work, and improve instruction. These protocols resulted in decreased suspensions, decreased absenteeism, and an increased percentage of grade 9 students on-track for graduation.

In 2019 Mr. Balsamo became principal of Michael F. Wallace Middle School where he continues to lead a student body of 1200, a staff of 120, and to manage a budget of a million dollars a year. Under his guidance and implementation of CSDE Commissioner's Network School Turnaround Plan, Vincent successfully exited the school from Turnaround Level 5 to Focus Level 3 in 2024. He ultimately attained CSDE audit scores of Proficient or Exemplary in all indicators by Spring 2025. What a major success story!

It is the Wallingford Education Foundation's distinct pleasure to honor this outstanding education professional, Mr. Vincent Balsamo, as a 2026 Distinguished Alumnus.