



THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

May 7, 2018

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Mr. Stafford Thomas, Principal
Hillcrest Middle School
530 Daniels Farm Road
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

Dear Stafford,

Congratulations! The Middle Level Honors and Awards Committee of the Connecticut Association of Schools has selected Hillcrest Middle School as the CAS Middle School of the Year for 2018-2019. Hillcrest Middle School is clearly an exemplary school in many ways, and this honor and distinction have been well earned by the entire middle school community.

The Awards Committee was duly impressed with the outstanding work going on at Hillcrest Middle School. The warm and inviting welcome and sense of safety are evidence of a well-established positive culture and climate. Your implementation of SOARR insures that all members of the Hillcrest community are committed to the ideals of safety, ownership, attitude, respect, and responsibility. Students are well connected to at least one, if not more, adult at Hillcrest. This is a strong indicator that the Hillcrest staff understand the importance of social and emotional well-being for middle school age children; commendable and admirable.

We were continually impressed with each group we met as they complimented the leadership and shared-vision of Hillcrest Middle School. Students spoke proudly of their teachers' availability and flexibility for extra help or conversation in the classroom and beyond their school work hours. The show of support by the community and the parental knowledge about school programs was notable. The strong parent group has become partners with your staff in the education of their children, and they are truly invested in helping to support Hillcrest Middle School. Leadership is shared and encouraged as teachers felt supported with autonomy to make decisions. When asked to describe their school, teacher responses were *team effort, trust, supportive administrative response to our needs, great kids and families, and a feeling that everything is possible.*

You are absolutely a model of what a progressive middle school should be! The Connecticut Association of Schools is appreciative of your efforts through the application process and visitation. We are proud to be represented by you as the CAS Middle School of the Year for 2018-2019.

Sincerely,

Donna Schilke

Assistant Executive Director
Middle Level Division

CC: Dr. Gary Cialfi, Superintendent
Visiting Committee