

FUND FOR TEACHERS

2025 Connecticut FFT Fellows

The following teachers' fellowships were funded through the generous support of the Dalio Foundation and the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation ().*

Michelle Amezzene & Laura Bassler | Brien McMahon High School - Norwalk

Deepen understanding of Spanish and French culture, history, and heritage through immersive experiences in these countries to inform language curricula with nuanced perspectives on the ways in which African and Latin American influences shape these regions.

Sean Anderson | Kaynor Technical High School - Waterbury

Attend the PBL World 2025 conference in Napa Valley, CA, to engage students more deeply, encourage collaboration, and ensure that their learning experiences are relevant to their academic and career goals.

Marie Armon & Maryann Lennon | Orange Avenue School – Milford

Attend the Grand Ball of Europe Festival in Gennetines, France and explore Paris' artistic heritage to learn international folk dances and build a program that prioritizes the physical, social-emotional and cultural well-being of students.

Maria Avery | Long River Middle School – Prospect

Journey along the Camino de Santiago, focusing on the seven elements of a pilgrimage (separation, journey, intention, rituals, learning, growth and reflection) to inspire students' personal pilgrimage narratives that reflect their lived experiences or aspirational odysseys as part of a "Pilgrimages around the World" curriculum.

Jill Blasi | Woodland Regional High School – Beacon Falls *

Collaborate with Tanzanian experts to directly observe relationships between adaptations, behaviors, and keystone species within savanna ecosystems and how these factors influence conservation efforts to enhance students' understanding of ecological interconnectedness and raise awareness of effective conservation practices.

Norine Brown | Martin Kellogg Middle School – Newington *

Explore the effect of climate change in Iceland through interactions with residents, park rangers, and Icelandic educators to initiate an after-school environmental club for students to facilitate discussions, activities, and events that educate peers and community members on environmental issues.

Matthew Cadorette | Waterford High School – Waterford

Explore in Vietnam the country's 2500-year history to expand student learning of its people and their culture beyond what is commonly reduced to the years around the Vietnam War.

Mary Carlson | Conrad High School – West Hartford

Expand understanding of Democratic Socialism in Northern Europe and its impact on history and social justice (specifically economic equality, workers' rights, healthcare, and education) to foster students' critical thinking about economic systems beyond the oversimplified dichotomy of Capitalism vs. Communism.

Julie Chiffer | RHAM Middle School – Hebron *

Create videos and on-site footage of Hawaiian birds in their environments to develop evolutionary biology lessons that inspire critical thinking labs in which the students similarly observe local environments and determine how birds adapt.

Mellisa Curran & Amie Lavallee | Plainfield Central Middle School – Plainfield

Explore ancient artifacts of Greece to inspire curiosity, questions, and a global mindset rooted in appreciation for Greek mythology and student motivation to connect personally with their own histories.

JoAnn Dixon | Leonard J. Tyl Middle School - Oakdale

Attend the "Mindfulness for Teachers: A Hands-on Approach" course in Dublin, Ireland, then travel to Reykjavik, Iceland, for the "AI in Education: Shaping the Classroom of Tomorrow" course, gaining insights into innovative methodologies that enhance teaching and learning in the AI era.

Kristin Duchscherer | Fitch High School – Groton

Victoria Fleury | Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School - Groton

Attend the 24th International Conference on the Education of the Deaf in Rome and, afterwards meet with school leaders and experts in the Deaf Communities of Paris, Hamburg and Örebro, Sweden, to improve visual language teaching skills and better train colleagues, parents and, above all, direct service and instructional time with students.

Heidi Edel | New Fairfield High School – New Fairfield

Laura Faga | Lewis S. Mills High School - Burlington

Participate in the Vive l'Expérience French Educator Program in Senegal to learn first-hand about a non-European country where French is spoken and create lessons that broaden student perspectives.

Jessica Fisher | Greene Hills School – Bristol

Ryan Fisher | Bristol Central High School - Bristol

Participate in a Spanish-language immersion program that includes a homestay in Bucaramanga, Colombia, followed by a guided tour to Teyuna (an archaeological site said to predate Machu Picchu by 650 years) to more effectively support our multilingual learners academically, socially, and emotionally.

Janet Forbes | Bullard-Havens Technical High School - Bridgeport

Embark on a study tour of German vocational education in Hesse and Bavaria, meeting with schools, teachers, and students, to implement teaching practices that enhance trade instruction for English language learners through a student-centered approach.

Brian Forte | Rockville High School - Vernon

Research in Portugal origins of the transatlantic slave trade and how it became a blueprint for the American slave trade and, more importantly, how this country has made a concerted effort to confront its past through government programs and education.

Maria Fox | Westwood Middle School - Norwalk

Explore sustainability initiatives in Palau while developing unique immersive learning experiences in Augmented and Virtual Reality to engage various content area teachers and students in the Technology Lab who explore science and social studies curriculum concepts.

Amy Frenis, Marci Hinton & Krislyn Petti | Wilby High School - Waterbury

Explore an array of multicultural expressions of tribal communities across Northern, Coastal and Sub-Saharan Africa to encourage more authentic learning for underrepresented voices, bridge curriculum gaps and provide insight into the diverse tapestries of Africa.

Melissa Geffken & Michael Gilday | Wallace Middle School – Waterbury

Observe in Kyoto and Tokyo Japan’s melding of technological advancements and cultural heritage with experts in robotics, education, and cultural studies to continue building robotics programs that meet the diverse needs of students who thrive on interactive, kinesthetic learning experiences.

Nicole Geffken | Roger Sherman - Meriden

Become immersed in the Incan culture of Peru by exploring its history, architecture, religion, urban development to create hands-on learning experiences that align with the first grade Core Knowledge Language Arts curriculums' focus on Early American Civilization.

Diedre Henriques | New Visions - Hartford

Attend The International Conference on Education and Technology in Copenhagen, accompanied by related workshops, school visits and meetings with Scandinavian experts in language acquisition strategies for alternative education, to create equitable approaches for developing language skills that empower the potential of all learners.

Amanda Hinrichs | Hebron Avenue School - Glastonbury

Research New Zealand's Māori culture by visiting museums, cultural performances, and villages, while also consulting with play-based learning experts, to integrate this approach combined with Māori song and dance into a music curriculum.

Sara Hsiang | Harry B. Flood Middle School - Stratford

Explore the learning and instruction of Code.org's introductory computer-coding curriculum in urban Tanzania and Kenya to strengthen personal competency with the curriculum and instill in students a greater sense of responsibility for their learning and empathy for peers learning the same lessons without their own computers or trained teachers.

Minnette Junkins | Calf Pen Meadow Elementary School - Milford

Experience in Bogotá, Colombia an immersive workshop providing Spanish language development and teacher training with specialized workshops on effective teaching methods, social-emotional learning, and well-being to create joyful, effective classroom environments.

Alyssa Lemke & Jody Quinn | Nathan Hale Ray Middle School - Moodus *

Navigate Iceland's Golden Circle, lagoons, geysers and volcanoes to gain a deeper understanding of how climate impacts erosion and support students' questions related to climate change and earth’s features with real world experiences, first-hand examples and artifacts.

Kathrine Letellier | East Lyme Middle School - Niantic

Enroll in an intensive summer French language immersion/home stay program at the French Language and Cultural Institute in Lyon to deepen knowledge of French language, culture and culinary traditions and create an authentic contemporary classroom experience for language students.

Jennifer Magnavice | Waterbury Arts Magnet School - Waterbury *

Join a women-only backpacking journey from Landmannalaugar to Thorsmork, Iceland, to explore glacier-fed lakes, waterfalls, towering shards of obsidian, and multiple geo-thermal features and create Earth Science and Climate Change units that emphasize our impact on the planet and future career opportunities for negating our carbon footprint.

Megan Martin | Southington High School - Southington

Experience Puerto Rico's art, music, food and the language of the Isla del Encanto alongside fellow Spanish teachers to build a culturally rich curriculum and community connections aimed at increasing students' cultural competency.

Anna McCormick | Silvermine Dual Language Elementary - Norwalk

Complete language and cultural immersion courses at Intercultura Costa Rica in Heredia to develop personal proficiencies and learn from dual language education experts best practices for better serving the student population.

Deborah Montenegro | Valley Regional High School - Deep River *

Explore in the Galapagos Islands topics of eco-systems and evolution with Ecology Project International to foster student understanding of how local actions have global implications and emphasize the importance of cultural awareness and collaboration in addressing environmental challenges.

Stacey Noreika & Christina Scala | Fitch High School - Groton

Investigate accessibility options throughout five national parks in Utah and Wyoming to support enhancing and developing inclusive recreational activities in the local community with stakeholders of special education students, typical peers, parents, community members and local agencies.

Anne Nutt | American School for the Deaf – West Hartford

Explore horticultural concepts of sustainability, reciprocity, and permaculture via indigenous, regional, and cutting-edge technologies in the Netherlands and the United States, to effect the positive changes in students' experience as growers and lifelong learners whose means of communication is American Sign Language.

Melissa O'Donnell | Brien McMahon High School - Norwalk

Explore education systems and cultural institutions across Barcelona, Madrid and Seville to validate the lived experiences of Multi Language Learners immigrating from Spain and help them build stronger connections among peers and in their new school community.

Wendy Oakes | J. O. Goodwin Elementary School - East Hartford

Eric Weingarten | Franklin H Mayberry Elementary School - East Hartford

Study the art of storytelling in Scotland and Ireland by attending the Fringe Festival in Scotland and workshop classes in Dublin to cultivate students' creative writing and oral telling of personal stories, as well as their appreciation of, and discourse on, deeper connections to literary and cultural traditions.

Paloma Perez | Julian Curtiss School - Greenwich

Delve into the vibrant cultures in Osaka, Tokyo and Hiroshima, Japan, through independent tours and school visits, to learn about the values, traditions, and the educational systems that shaped the heritage of 38% of the school's special education multilingual learners.

Mary Ellen Pettit | Lyman Hall High School - Wallingford

Research Ireland's National Health Care System. including its effects on both patients and healthcare providers, to enlighten students with a global perspective on healthcare and motivate them to work toward a more productive and empathetic U.S. healthcare system.

Kristin Ponden | Unquowa School – Fairfield

Participate in the Kokrobitey Institute's Textile Waste Driven Design Workshop in Ghana to learn how fast fashion waste streams are affecting the environment and how art and design can divert textiles from landfills to craft lessons that creatively engage students in sustainable and artistic textile recycling.

Sheiree Powell & Demetria Walters | West Rocks Middle School - Norwalk

Become immersed in the cultural, historical, educational and ecological landscapes of Guatemala and Belize to enhance fluency and develop resources for students in a dual language program that prioritizes global citizenship.

Karina Ramos | Newington High School – Newington

Mario Ramos | Glastonbury High School - Glastonbury

Complete a language and cultural immersion experience through the Amuata School in Cusco, Peru, to form deeper connections with students of diverse cultures and enhance a Spanish curriculum with "The 5 C's (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities).

Kim Reilly | Ellington High School - Ellington

Attend the premier AI in Education Conference in Palermo, Italy, then attend related workshops at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands to learn strategies for streamlining the process of personalizing instruction and meet students' diverse needs more efficiently and meet these diverse needs more efficiently and meaningfully.

Emma Rotner & David Sabilia | Thames River Magnet School - Groton

Participate in marine science fieldwork and engage in on-the-water experiences with local experts in French Polynesia to deepen personal knowledge of tropical ecosystems and contribute to the sustainability of a magnet school's theme with students.

Hiba Sarfraz | Sunset Ridge Middle School – East Hartford

Research Singapore's innovative approaches to environmental conservation and urban planning supporting its Green Plan in 2030 to teach about the world's sustainability practices and what humans can do to protect our environment for future generations.

Katherine Soltys | John F. Kennedy Middle School – Plantsville

Join a wildlife expedition to Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe focused on monitoring and reducing human impacts on the environment and collecting data for analyzing the effects of climate change to inspire students to become environmental activists.

Christopher Sparks & Todd Szwed | East Hartford High School – East Hartford

Research across Cambodia the conditions that allowed genocide to unfold, its long-term effects on the economy, politics, and mental health, and how a culture can survive and flourish in the wake of such atrocity.

Carolyn Streets | Engineering Science & Math University Magnet – West Hartford

Attend workshops through DEOW Japan in Tokyo to learn the cultural phenomenon of manga-anime, a unique Japanese art form using comic and cartoon writing, to design a specialized graphic-based novel unit to add to the established literacy curriculum.

Elaine Surveski | Forbes – Torrington

Enroll in the Europass Teacher Academy courses: Hands-on Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education: From Sensory Education to First ICT (Information and Communications Technology) Uses and Art and Nature: A Sustainable Approach for All Teachers to develop tools for providing preschool students with real-life experiences that enhance their functional living skills, social-emotional development, and academic readiness while celebrating their diverse learning styles, interests, and neurodiverse needs.

Jill Swanson | Farmington High School – Farmington

Participate in the Fabled Writing Retreat in New Hope, PA, and the Retreats for You Micro-Memoir Retreat in Devon, England, to develop an engaging creative writing unit that deepens students' skills in writing, workshopping, and purposeful critique, while fostering a joyful, collaborative learning environment.

Jennifer Toledo | East Hartford High School - East Hartford *

Use Puerto Rico as a case study for how climate change is affecting regions such as the Caribbean, Central, and South America, to demonstrate for students (many of whom emigrated from these regions) the real-time impacts of climate change on places that they know.