

# FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Press Release

*Released by:* Farmington Board of Education/Kathleen C. Greider, Superintendent of Schools

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### **NOAH WALLACE SCHOOL AWARDED GRANT FROM NOAH WALLACE FUND ~ 2015**

Thanks to a generous grant from the Noah Wallace Fund, Noah Wallace School will have a digital media laboratory in 2015. "The Noah Wallace Fund, a generous bequest of Farmington native Noah Wallace, continues to provide opportunities for exploration and innovation in the Farmington Schools that would otherwise be out of our reach. We are excited to have the digital media laboratory funded for the upcoming school year; it will ignite learning in children and serve as a springboard to move this technology forward throughout the district," commented Mary Grace Reed, Chair of Farmington's Board of Education.

This space will allow Noah Wallace to provide virtual learning opportunities that will instill a deep curiosity in our students about the world and how it works. It will include both equipment and flexible seating for whole class or small group virtual learning, video recording, production, and video viewing. Before and after school, the space would be available for our EXCL (Extended Care and Learning) Program, Fourth Grade Chorus and Orchestra, and other groups, such as Math Club, Student Council and Green Team. The digital media lab will serve a number of purposes, including allowing a grade level, class, or small group to:

- Conduct cross-grade level classes with other schools in Farmington to share learning about a common topic
- Virtually engage with guest lecturers, experts, or students from other schools and countries
- View instructional videos (Virtual museum tour, archeological dig, concert, location, or lecture)
- Produce student-made or teacher-made informational videos
- Produce training videos of model lessons for teachers and staff

According to Noah Wallace Principal Kelly Sanders, the school is excited about the possibilities this new lab will afford the students, faculty, staff, and community. "We believe that in order to prepare our learners for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we need to help them develop dispositions and skills to communicate and collaborate in a variety of settings with many different audiences, not just with their grade level classmates." Art teacher Suzie Magnee added, "I wish I had this opportunity when I was in elementary school. This media center will show students that integrating technology into the learning process will help deepen understanding of content, and will give students real world audiences to share their knowledge. Using the new space to collaborate, share work and teach others will extend the learning process beyond the four walls of the classroom, preparing the students to become lifelong learners with a purpose."

The new digital media laboratory will be housed in Noah Wallace's current library. This is the first step in a long-term plan to transform the traditional library into an innovative learning commons. With technological advances changing the way students and teachers access information, the role of the library is shifting. It is no longer just a place to access or consume knowledge. The new learning commons will still have printed books to support learning, but will also have spaces and technology to support collaboration, creation, and inquiry. The NWS PTO has also earmarked funds for the development of a learning commons, for mobile book stacks and other furniture, with a plan for targeted fundraising over the next few years. This concept also supports and enhances Noah Wallace's SMARTE Space, which has now been replicated in all the elementary and upper elementary schools.

The digital media lab, maker space, and learning commons support the district's goals to design spaces for self-direction and collaboration, as well as leveraging technology as a tool for learning. Jessica Jusseume, Noah Wallace's Library Media Specialist, adds, "By providing time, space, access to technology, and resources for elementary students to integrate learning across content areas, we are preparing them to take on the rigorous standards set forth in the Connecticut Core Standards, as well as new national Science and Social Studies Standards." These kinds of learning opportunities will support the work they will encounter as they transition to our upper elementary, middle, high school, and beyond. According to Superintendent Kathy Greider, "The Noah Wallace Fund grant continues to provide a unique and exciting opportunity for the Farmington Public Schools to remain on the cutting-edge of innovation in education. The digital media laboratory at Noah Wallace will serve as a place for students and teachers to be pioneers in the areas of communication, global partnerships, instruction and training. We thank the Noah Wallace Fund grant funding committee for their commitment and dedication to the Farmington schools and we look forward to watching our students and teachers experience the digital media laboratory located at Noah Wallace Elementary School in the coming year."