
National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SINCE 1982

South Street Elementary School
Danbury, Connecticut

Video: 2020 Terrel H. Bell Awardee Carmen Vargas-Guevara

Hello. My name is Carmen Vargas-Guevara, and I'm the school principal of South Street Elementary School here in Danbury, Connecticut. I am here, very grateful and honored to receive the Terrel H. Bell Award. I want to thank the Department of Education, along with the National Blue Ribbon Schools Committee and its partners. In addition, I want to thank the South Street School community, the faculty, the parents, the families, the students, and of course, the administrative council along with Dr. Pascarella, our superintendent. It takes a village and it takes people to work with you, to be able to trust you, and to be able to fulfill this role successfully.

I have a great quote that kind of summarizes my own personal belief on leadership, and it says, "Great leaders don't set out to be a leader, they set out to make the difference. It is never about the role, always about the goal." I think that summarizes perfectly my own personal belief as a school principal. It's not about me, I cannot do this by myself, it's about the end goal. My goal from the beginning here in South Street, four years ago, was to set high expectations for all the students, and that created a vision for the staff. In addition to that, I think one of the greatest things that I can contribute to a school district, and to this one in particular, is my experience in teaching. Before I became a school leader, I was a teacher for many years, and today I'm able to support the staff, the teachers, and be able to give them instructional practices that they can apply the next day in their classroom. I want to thank everyone, and I'm very grateful and I'm very proud for the South Street community and for the Danbury public schools. Thank you.