

# BULLETIN

## The Connecticut Association of Schools The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference



Affiliated with the National Association of Secondary School Principals ♦ Member National Federation of State High School Associations ♦ Member National Middle School Association

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### CAS MIDDLE LEVEL DIVISION ADOPTS CERTIFICATION POSITION

By Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

As a result of the recent New England Middle Level Symposium, and in response to Commissioner Sternberg's "Education Continuum for Attracting and Retaining Highly Qualified Teachers," the Middle Level Division of CAS has adopted a position statement on middle level certification. While Connecticut middle level certification regulations are among the strongest in the nation, requiring 24 credits in a major content area and 30 hours of specialized middle level training, there are factors that limit their effectiveness and discourage middle level teacher preparation programs.

The most important limiting factor is overlapping certifications. Because middle level teachers can earn a K-6 generalist certificate or a 7-12 subject specific certificate, there is little incentive for prospective teachers to pursue a 4-8 middle grades certificate. To exacerbate the problem, those with 7-12 certificates can teach down to grade five in departmentalized situations. Consequently, once strong university programs are turning out fewer and fewer highly trained middle level teachers. Moreover, teachers with elementary or secondary certificates can arrive in middle level classrooms without ever having a middle level pedagogy, philosophy, organization or adolescent development course, or middle level student teaching experience. According to Connecticut Department of Education documents, many do! Connecticut higher education institutions graduated 8,002 prospective teachers in the areas of English/language arts, history/geography, math and science between 2001 and 2005. Of these, 2,954 received secondary certificates, 4,591 received elementary certificates and only 457 received middle level certificates.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that without some changes, middle schools will increasingly be staffed by teachers without specialized middle level preparation.

A second factor is the disincentive for certification in more than one content area. Middle level organization and philosophy is built on the notion of small communities of learners, and the research is clear that teams of two or three teachers are generally more effective than teams of five or six teachers. Given this imperative, preparation programs should require two or more content proficiencies at the middle level. Most do not.

Given quirks in the certification regulations that encourage the majority of middle level teachers to come into the ranks without specialized middle level training or experiences, it is amazing that middle school students do as well as they do; yet the evidence shows they

*continued on page 8*

### MORE THAN A FEW GOOD MENTORS WANTED

by Mike Buckley, Director, CT Principals' Center

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) wants you to consider being part of the solution to the vexing problem of administrator turn-over currently facing the state's schools and districts. It is anticipated that close to forty percent of today's school leaders are scheduled to retire within the next five years creating both opportunities and needs for new and veteran administrators alike. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has responded by recently adding the 092 certification to the department's shortage list, enabling districts to more readily utilize retired administrators. CAS has responded by developing its **Mentor-Mentee Program**, a two-year new administrator induction process, and by affiliating with the University of Connecticut to conduct the internship portion of **UCAPP**, the university's administrator preparation program. You, too, may respond by volunteering to become a mentor in one or both of these programs.

*continued on page 5*

### EARLE BIDWELL HONORED BY NELMS

CAS Assistant Executive Director Earle G. Bidwell was honored by the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) as the recipient of the **2006 James P. Garvin Distinguished Service Award**. This prestigious award is presented to an outstanding New England educator who has demonstrated the following:



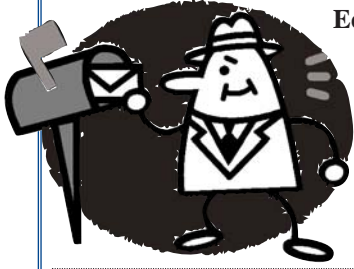
*From left: Mystic M.S. Principal Susan Dumas, Earle Bidwell, NELMS Executive Director Bob Spear, and Bennet M.S. Principal Ann Richardson*

1. a record of service that reflects a high level of dedication and commitment to the cause of quality education for early adolescents;
2. a life that models the human qualities which, one day, we would want early adolescents to emulate;
3. a record of scholarship invested in helping others to better understand the unique needs of early adolescents;
4. a record of activities that clearly demonstrates a concern for those less fortunate or in need of special leadership; and,
5. a record of leadership in organizing and directing others to excellence in middle level education.

The distinguished service award was presented at the NELMS 26th Annual Conference held last month in Providence, RI. Earle was nominated for the award by Elisabeth Bennet Middle School Principal Ann Richardson and Mystic Middle School Principal Susan Dumas. As a recipient of the distinguished service award, Earle is counted among a group of highly acclaimed middle level leaders. Past recipients of the award include John Lounsbury, J. Howard Johnston, Nancy Doda, Chris Stevenson, Preston Shaw, and Neila Connors.

# LEGAL MAILBAG

By Attorney Thomas B. Mooney, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut



**Editor's Note:** *Legal Mailbag* is a regular feature in the CAS BULLETIN. We invite readers to submit short, law-related questions of practical concern to school administrators. Each month we will select questions and publish answers. While these answers cannot be considered formal legal advice, they may be of help to you and your colleagues. We may edit your questions, and we will not identify the authors. Please submit your questions to:

[<legalmailbag@casciac.org>](mailto:legalmailbag@casciac.org)

**Q. Dear Mailbag:** I have noticed many high school gymnasiums with bleachers partially pulled out, which gives local fans and children an opportunity to climb to the top to watch the game. Some of the side rails are missing, which allows fans to jump off the side to leave, but could also permit them to fall. If the gymnasium was designed to have the bleachers fully extended and the rails deployed, is this OK?

- *Waiting and Wondering*

**A. Dear Waiting:** On the facts that you provide, this practice is not OK. You can climb a tree and fall out of it, and any injury would not give rise to a liability concern. However, trees do not have rails for safety. Since these bleachers do, the failure to assure that the rails are deployed appropriately would likely be considered unreasonable. If a student falls from the side of the bleachers and can reasonably argue that the railing would have prevented the fall and the injury, liability may be imposed.

**Q. Dear Mailbag:** A parent recently complained about how I informed the teachers in my school that her son was suspended out-of-school for five school days. As part of our day-to-day procedures, we distribute a daily attendance bulletin to all teachers, on which we post the names of all students who are reported absent. We designate students who have been suspended by an "S," though we do not otherwise inform teachers of the issues and actions which led to the suspension. The parent claims I am violating her son's privacy under FERPA. Am I on sound legal ground here?

- *Getting the Word Out*

**A. Dear Getting:** I believe that a notation "S" on the attendance bulletin distributed to all staff members is not a violation of FERPA. It is permissible to disclose confidential student information to school officials with a legitimate need for such information. Accordingly, you may reasonably argue that all staff members should be aware of a student's suspended

status so that they can keep an eye out. Moreover, your practice of not sharing more specific information is wise, because staff members generally do not need the details. However, if the daily attendance list is disclosed to students, you may have a problem because the other students who may see the information cannot be considered "school officials" with a legitimate educational interest in the information.

**Q. Dear Legal Mailbag:** I recently received a report from a parent that her daughter was assaulted by another student. The assault occurred off school grounds and did not involve a weapon. The parent is demanding that I suspend the student who assaulted her daughter. Under what circumstances can I seek suspension or expulsion for an assault that occurred off campus and not during a school-sponsored event? Is there an assumption of innocence? When do I proceed with my investigation? Upon report? Arrest? Conviction? Please advise.

- *Under Pressure*

**A. Dear Pressure:** There are two situations in which you can take disciplinary action here. First, if the conduct triggers the mandatory expulsion statute, you must move for expulsion. However, this requirement applies to an off-campus assault only if the perpetrator used a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon in committing the crime of assault. Otherwise, you will have to show that the assault violated school rules (no problem) and that it was seriously disruptive of the educational process (potential big problem). The Connecticut Supreme Court has held that for behavior off-campus to be "seriously disruptive of the educational process," it must seriously impede the day-to-day operation of the school. In any event, the presumption of innocence applies in criminal proceedings and is not relevant here. Rather, in an expulsion hearing you would have the burden simply of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the alleged conduct occurred. If you think that the perpetrator's conduct has affected the day-to-day the operation of your school, you can investigate and take action, and you do not have to wait for any related criminal proceedings to conclude.

## ct news & notes

■ Since 2000, Connecticut has had the nation's fourth fastest-growing rate of participation in AP classes, according to a recent report by the College Board. About 19% of Connecticut's public school students passed at least one AP exam in 2000. By 2005, that number was up to 26%. Nationwide, about 60% of school districts offer AP courses. In Connecticut, that number is about 94%. The increase in enrollment is in part due to the availability of state grants to help urban districts bolster their AP offerings. With support from a state grant, Hartford was able to increase its AP enrollment almost fivefold in one year, from 82 students last year to 390 this year.

■ In response to the increasing number of hours that children spend watching TV, playing video and computers games, the commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protections is starting a program called *No Child Left Inside*. The agency is working with state parks, forests and other state departments to help develop and market activities and events to encourage families to go outside and play. For more information, visit <http://www.nochildleftinside.org/>.

■ A new Quinnipiac University poll found that more than two-thirds of Connecticut voters support banning the sale of soda in schools. Overall, 68% of voters support and 25% oppose banning soda in schools. The supporters are divided evenly among Democrats and Republicans. Only 20% of voters said that banning the sale of soda in public schools would do a lot to reduce obesity among children. The survey was in response to a new "healthy schools bill" that has been introduced into legislation. The bill would ban the sale of soda and other sugary drinks in schools and only allow milk or 100% fruit and vegetable juices to be sold. The bill would also offer financial incentives to schools that offer nutritious foods in their cafeterias. The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents and the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut have both written letters of support for the bill.



## ... more ct news &amp; notes

**WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR MAKING SCHOOL RULES?**

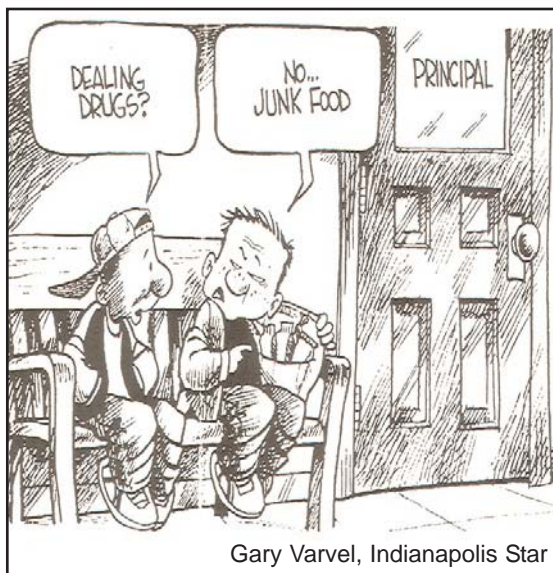
School administrators and board of education members must make rules for the safe and effective operation of the schools. *What Are the Rules for Making School Rules?*, by Attorney Thomas Mooney of the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education, offers educators a better understanding of the legal issues that arise in the creation and enforcement of school rules. Download the document at [http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/Making\\_School\\_Rules.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/Making_School_Rules.pdf).

## ★ REGISTER NOW ★

The Connecticut Association of Schools'

**54th ANNUAL MEETING****May 11, 2006**St. Clements Castle, Portland  
8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.Register online at  
[www.casciac.org/amregister](http://www.casciac.org/amregister)

## ★ REGISTER NOW ★



Gary Varvel, Indianapolis Star

## national news &amp; notes

■ A recent study examined the trend of increased consumption of sodas and fruit drinks among adolescents in the United States. The study tracked the beverage intake of young African American and white girls from the time they were nine through age 19. The researchers found that, for both groups, milk consumption decreased by over 25% during the course of the study while soda intake, on average, nearly tripled, becoming the number one beverage consumed by older girls. There was also an increase in the consumption of fruit drinks among African-American girls. Girls who consumed the most soda tended to be heavier than girls with lower soda intake. Complete findings of the study appear in the February 2006 issue of *The Journal of Pediatrics*.

■ Jim Collins, author of one of the most widely read books among educators, *Good to Great*, has released a new monograph, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Why Business Thinking is Not the Answer*. In this follow up to his book, Collins shares that *Good to Great's* key principles look different when applied to schools, non-profits and other non-business organizations which operate under a different set of rules than those of corporations. Such differences are: performance measures other than profit; hiring and firing constraints; and diffuse power structures in which chief executives lack the authority to enact many changes themselves. While there are differences, Collins believes his research on social sectors supports the books underlying theories about success and holds true for all organizations.

■ FairTest is a small nonprofit group out of Massachusetts that has long been an opponent of standardized tests. In 1987, when FairTest began publishing a list of colleges that did not require applicants to submit SAT scores, there were 51 higher education institutions on that list. Today, there are 730, including Holy Cross, Bowdoin, Bates, and Mount Holyoke.

■ According to a study commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, most students who drop out of high school in the U.S. admit they made a mistake by quitting. Researchers said they were surprised to find that a majority of the 467 dropouts they interviewed were not what most people would consider underachieving troublemakers or losers. One third said they were failing in school; but, more than 6 out of 10 were maintaining C averages or better when they quit. Three out of four said that if they could turn back the clock they would choose to stay; and eight out of ten said they now recognize that a high school diploma is important to succeed in life.

■ Scientists for the Food and Drug Administration have released detailed findings of a 2004 study that led them to require a suicide warning on the labels of antidepressants such as Prozac, Zoloft and Effexor. The study of 4,582 patients in 24 drug trials revealed that antidepressant drugs raise a small risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior in depressed children and adolescents. According to the study, about four children of every 100 who took the drugs reported suicidal thoughts or behavior, twice the number among those who took dummy pills. Experts predict that the study is not likely to alter the debate about the relative risks and benefits of antidepressant treatment. No one in the trials actually committed suicide, and the suicide rate among adolescents has dropped significantly since doctors began prescribing the drugs to minors in the early 1990s.

■ In February, Former President Bill Clinton and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation announced an \$8 million initiative to fight childhood obesity by promoting healthier food and more exercise in schools. Two hundred eighty-five schools from thirteen states have been selected for the pilot phase of the program, set to begin in the fall, and additional schools will be able to apply. The schools will get help in improving the nutritional value of the food served in cafeterias and vending machines, increasing physical activity, providing health lessons, and promoting staff wellness. The effort is part of a campaign undertaken last year by Mr. Clinton's foundation and the American Heart Association. (Source: *Associated Press*)

■ Writing instructors have long valued clarity over complexity. As E.B. White once wrote in his revision to *The Elements of Style*, "Rich, ornate prose is hard to digest, generally unwholesome, and sometimes nauseating." While students may not take those words to heart, readers do, according to a recent study by Daniel Oppenheimer, as assistant professor of psychology and public affairs at Princeton University. With help from a thesaurus, Oppenheimer created similar versions of a text with each version having a varying degree of complexity. He then asked Stanford undergraduates to read the texts and assess the author's intelligence. He found that authors of concise statements with shorter words were judged as more intelligent and authors of papers with longer, more complex words were rated as less intelligent. Oppenheimer titled his paper "Consequences of Erudite Vernacular Utilized Irrespective of Necessity: Problems with Using Words Needlessly." (Source: *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, 1/25/06)

## ... more national news & notes

■ A Massachusetts high school is considering a ban on the wearing of fragrances. The Upper Cape Cod Regional Technical School Committee met to discuss Superintendent Barry J. Motta's proposal to prohibit school staff and students from wearing colognes, perfumes, scented deodorants, and body sprays. The superintendent expects the proposed policy to be sent to a subcommittee for review before becoming part of the student handbook. Strong fragrances are an irritant for asthmatics and can trigger headaches and cause respiratory and neurological symptoms. Superintendent Motta says he is not aware of another school in Massachusetts with a fragrance-free policy. School nurse Lisa Schmitt reports that most staff members, students, and parents have reacted favorably to the proposal.

## Teens Pay Price For Lack Of Sleep

Only 20 percent of teens get the recommended nine hours of shuteye on school nights, and more than one in four report sleeping in class, according to a poll by the National Sleep Foundation released last month. What's more, the poll finds that parents are mostly in the dark about their adolescents' sleep habits. While most students know they're not getting the sleep they need, 90 percent of parents polled believe their adolescents are getting enough sleep on school nights. The Sleep Foundation's poll found that sixth-graders were sleeping an average of 8.4 hours on school nights, while 12th-graders sleep just 6.9 hours, two hours less than recommended.

The Sleep Foundation poll interviewed 1,602 adult caregivers and their children aged 11 to 17. It had a margin of error of 2.4 percentage points. Among the findings:

- Some 28 percent of high school students said they fell asleep in class at least once a week. In addition, 22 percent dozed off while doing homework, and 14 percent arrive late or miss school because they oversleep.
- More than half of adolescent drivers (51 percent) have driven while drowsy in the past year.
- Eighty percent of students who get the recommended amount of sleep are achieving As and Bs in school, while those who get less sleep are more likely to get lower grades.
- More than one-quarter (28 percent) of adolescents say they're too tired to exercise.
- Just 20 percent said they get nine hours of sleep on school nights; 45 percent reported sleeping less than eight hours.

Nearly all youngsters (97 percent) have at least one electronic item, such as a television, computer, phone or music device, in their bedrooms. Adolescents with four or more such items in their bedrooms are much more likely than their peers to get an insufficient amount of sleep at night. They are also almost twice as likely to fall asleep in school and while doing homework, the Foundation reported.

Without enough sleep, a person has trouble focusing and responding quickly, according to the NIH. The agency also said there is growing evidence linking a chronic lack of sleep with an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and infections. And, warn experts, there is also the issue of moodiness and depression. (Source: *cbsnews.com*, March 28, 2006)

## legal news & notes

■ A Kentucky federal district court has ruled that a school district's mandatory diversity training program, which was implemented as part of a settlement of an earlier lawsuit brought on behalf of students seeking to form a Gay Straight Alliance club, does not violate the free speech, equal protection, or free exercise of religion rights of students and parents who object to the training despite the fact that it calls for tolerance of homosexuality. The students alleged that they are being forced to participate in training that offends their religious beliefs. Specifically, they argued that they are told in the video training that homosexuality is not a matter of choice and that they are prohibited from telling gays that those who engage in destructive lifestyles like homosexuality are wrong. Addressing the free speech issue, the court concluded, after reviewing the training materials, that they were viewpoint neutral and neither favored any particular viewpoint nor elevated one opinion over the other. In addition, students were given the opportunity to comment on the training without parameters or threat of punishment. The restrictions placed on student speech were on harassing speech that is disruptive of the educational process. Turning to the free exercise of religion claim, the court rejected the students' argument that the training sought to change their religious and ideological views on homosexuality. Even though the training offended their religious beliefs, the court found, it failed to place a burden upon the exercise of their religion. The court pointed out that there was no evidence that any student was compelled to renounce his or her religious beliefs.

■ The federal government agreed to stop funding a nationwide program that promotes teen abstinence to settle a lawsuit alleging the money was used for Christian proselytizing. The agreement was reached last month between the Department of Health and Human Services and the American Civil Liberties Union. Under the deal, the Silver Ring Thing program won't be eligible for more funding unless it ensures the money won't be used for religious purposes. The Silver Ring Thing program, related to a Christian ministry based in the Pittsburgh suburbs, has received more than \$1 million in federal funding during the past three years. The program puts on shows at churches that include comedy skits, music videos and a message of abstinence. Young people are given a silver ring and decide whether they want to pledge to abstain from sex.

In its federal lawsuit filed in May, the ACLU complained that the ring was inscribed with a Biblical verse exhorting Christians to remain holy and refrain from sexual sin. It also alleged that group members testified how accepting Jesus improved their lives.

■ A New York state court has found that a school district surveillance tape is not an "educational record" within the meaning of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and, therefore, is subject to disclosure. Mark Grifasi, a student at Rome Academy in Rome City School District (RCS), was involved in an altercation that was captured on school videotape. A hearing officer, who stated that he did not view the tape, recommended based on other evidence that Mark be suspended. Mark appealed his suspension to state court and filed a motion for disclosure of the tape. RCS opposed the motion, arguing that the tape is an educational record within the meaning of FERPA, which the district is prohibited from disclosing. Mark disputed this assertion and noted that in any event the tape already had been disclosed to several entities, including the police. The court concluded that the videotape is not an educational record as defined by FERPA because "education records do not include records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the educational agency or institution that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement." FERPA is "intended to protect records relating to an individual student's performance," but, the court asserted, does not "apply to records, such as the videotape in question which was recorded to maintain the physical security and safety of the school building and which does not pertain to the educational performance of the students captured on this tape." Although the federal Family Policy Compliance Office had opined in a letter that a student has no right to inspect a portion of a videotape in which other students appear, the court found that in such a case it must balance the respective rights of the parties and determined that Mark's due process rights outweighed RCS's interest in protecting any claimed confidentiality. RCS's concern that it could lose federal funding if it released the tape was without merit, the court determined, because the release would be by way of judicial order rather than voluntary disclosure. (Source: *NSBA Legal Clips*, March 16, 2006)





# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Series: 2005-2006

Circular Letter: C-10

TO: Superintendents of Schools and Principals of Schools

FROM: Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner

DATE: March 9, 2006

SUBJECT: Teacher Shortage Areas, 2006-07 School Year

Based on data collected in October 2005, the following endorsement areas will be designated as teacher shortage areas for the 2006-07 school year:

### Certification Endorsements

- Bilingual Education, PK-12
- Comprehensive Special Education, 1-12
- English, 7-12
- Intermediate Administrator
- Mathematics, 7-12
- Music, PK-12
- Remedial Reading, 1-12
- Science, 7-12
- Speech and Language Pathology
- World Languages, 7-12

Teachers who teach in one of the shortage areas can benefit from the following state programs:

#### ■ **Teachers' Mortgage Assistance Program**

Section 8-265pp of the General Statutes established a Teachers' Mortgage Assistance Program for certified public school teachers who are employed by, and purchase a first-time home as their primary residence in, a priority or transitional school district. Section 57 of Public Act 01-173 amended this statute to include in the program certified teachers who are employed by technical high schools located in priority or transitional school districts. Additionally, the program is available to certified public school teachers who hold the endorsement and teach in the 2006-07 state-identified certification endorsement shortage areas.

In the case of certified public school teachers employed by a priority or transitional school district or by a technical high school in a priority or transitional school district, the dwelling must be located in that district. Teachers who hold the endorsement and teach in a state-identified certification endorsement shortage area will be able to purchase statewide.

This Teachers' Mortgage Assistance Program is an important incentive to have educators live in the community in which they teach, as well as to address shortage area needs. The program is administered by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) through their participating lenders.

All eligible teachers seeking a mortgage through this program will be required to have a Statement of Eligibility signed by the Superintendent of Schools. Attached is the Statement of Eligibility that you may copy and distribute to eligible teachers. This signed Statement will be required by the mortgage lender for proof of eligibility.

Any questions or concerns regarding the Teachers' Mortgage Assistance Program may be directed to the Single Family Underwriting Unit at CHFA, at 860.571.3502.

#### ■ **Rehiring of Retired Teachers**

Retired teachers may be reemployed without being subject to the earnings limit if they teach in a subject shortage area for the school year in which they are being employed. This employment may be for up to one full school year and may, with prior approval of the Teachers' Retirement Board, be extended for an additional year. If you have questions about this program, please contact Darlene Perez at the Teachers' Retirement Board at (860) 241-8401.

Questions concerning the designation of teacher shortage areas may be directed to Sarah Ellsworth via email at [sarah.ellsworth@ct.gov](mailto:sarah.ellsworth@ct.gov) or phone at 860.713.6872.

### **Mentors Needed, continued from page 1**

The **Mentor-Mentee Program** recognizes the important need to provide as much support as possible to the beginning administrator. The mentor provides modeling, support, advice, feedback, ideas, and guidance; he/she essentially serves to listen and encourage growth. Isolation can be reduced and collegial relationships developed. Shared professional development programs expand the opportunities for these benefits and sharpen the skill sets of both the mentor and the mentee. These programs include direction and assistance to the mentors and mentees in how best to develop a meaningful professional relationship. The commitment is for two years and involves regular contact between mentor and mentee by phone and/or email, occasional visits, and attendance each year at four of the five professional development programs designed for the mentor and mentee to attend together.

CAS and the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education (NSOE) have entered into a partnership through which together they aim to address the increasing shortage of qualified administrators to fill positions of leadership within Connecticut's schools. CAS has specific responsibilities for conducting the clinical component of the University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program (**UCAPP**), a nationally recognized series of courses and internships that prepares candidates for the 092 intermediate administrator certification and leadership positions primarily at the school building and central office levels. As an active partner in this program, CAS brings the resources of its Principals' Center, administrator induction program, statewide network of seasoned mentors, and well-established relationships with schools throughout the state. The **UCAPP** commitment is also for two years during which the intern serves as a member of the mentor's administrative team contributing approximately 350 hours to the mentor's school and district. Three meetings (triads) involving the mentor, the intern and a UCAPP clinical supervisor occur each year for the purpose of developing and monitoring the intern's leadership plan.

How great is our need for mentors? This year in the **Mentor-Mentee Program**, CAS had requests from 75 new administrators and was able to provide 68 of them with mentors. Assuming existing matches will carry through year two of the program, CAS estimates the need for approximately seventy-five new mentors for the 2006-2007 school year. This year in **UCAPP**, CAS was responsible for matching 45 students in three cohorts with mentors who will continue through the 2006-2007 school year. Next year CAS will add approximately 60 students in four cohorts and each will need to a mentor.

One of the nice things that CAS consistently hears from mentors, in addition to the gratification associated with helping to bring along the next generation of school leaders, is that they get back from the process of helping as much as they give. This parallels what many of your students are experiencing through participation in the community service options you encourage them to take part in. If you've mentored for CAS in the past, your continued participation is welcomed; if you haven't mentored for CAS previously, please consider signing up for one of the two options outlined above. All that's required is a brief application which can be completed on line at [www.casciac.org](http://www.casciac.org).

## High School Students More Likely to Experience Hearing Loss than Adults

More than half of high school students surveyed report at least one symptom of hearing loss, according to a poll commissioned by the American Speech-Language-Hearing-Association (ASHA).

The poll looked at the usage habits of high school students and adults with respect to some popular technology that provides audio through ear buds or earphones—devices like Apple's iPod, other MP3 players, and portable DVD players.

The polling found that high school students are more likely than adults to say they have experienced three of the four symptoms of hearing loss: turning up the volume on their TV or radio (28% students vs. 26% adults); saying "what" or "huh" during normal conversation (29% students, 21% adults); and, having tinnitus or ringing in the ears (17% students, 12% adults).

More disturbing is that less than half of high school students (49%) say they have experienced none of the symptoms, compared to 63% of adults who say this.

It is not clear from the poll what is causing the symptoms, though it found usage habits among both students and adults that are potentially detrimental to hearing health.

For example, two-fifths of students and adults set the volume at loud on their Apple iPods, with students twice as likely as adults to play it very loud (13% vs. 6%). Meanwhile, adults are more likely than students to use their MP3 players for longer periods of time. Combined, more than half of adults use them 1-4 hours (43%) or longer (9%) compared to fewer than one-third of students—a disparity that may reflect the time adults spend commuting to and from work.

"Our poll tells us that we should take a close look at the potential impact of some popular technology on hearing health," according to ASHA President Alex Johnson.

ASHA advises consumers to lower volume levels, limit listening time, and use earphones that—unlike ear buds which come with products like the iPod—block out unwanted sound that can prompt users to increase volume levels. (Source: *Child Development Research*)

## Plight Deepens for Black Men, Studies Warn

A flurry of new scholarly studies warns that the plight of black men in the United States has worsened in recent years even as an economic boom and a welfare overhaul have brought gains to black women and other groups. Focusing more closely than ever on the life patterns of young black men, the new studies, by experts at Columbia, Princeton, Harvard and other institutions, show that the huge pool of poorly educated black men is becoming ever more disconnected from the mainstream of society, and to a far greater degree than comparable white or Hispanic men. These were among the recent findings:

- The share of young black men without jobs has climbed relentlessly, with only a slight pause during the economic peak of the late 1990's. In 2000, 65 percent of black male high school dropouts in their 20's were jobless -- that is, unable to find work, not seeking it or incarcerated. By 2004, the share had grown to 72 percent, compared with 34 percent of white and 19 percent of Hispanic dropouts. Even when high school graduates were included, half of black men in their 20's were jobless in 2004, up from 46 percent in 2000.
- Incarceration rates climbed in the 1990's and reached historic highs in the past few years. In 1995, 16 percent of black men in their 20's who did not attend college were in jail or prison; by 2004, 21 percent were incarcerated. By their mid-30's, 6 in 10 black men who had dropped out of school had spent time in prison.
- In the inner cities, more than half of all black men do not finish high school.

With the shift from factory jobs, unskilled workers of all races have lost ground, but none more so than blacks. By 2004, 50 percent of black men in their 20's who lacked a college education were jobless, as were 72 percent of high school dropouts, according to data compiled by Bruce Western, a sociologist at Princeton and author of the forthcoming book "Punishment and Inequality in America" ( Russell Sage Press ). These are more than double the rates for white and Hispanic men. (Source: *New York Times*, March 20, 2006)

## TECHNO-BYTES

In 1997, the nation's schools reported 21 students per instructional computer. In 2004, schools reported 3.8 students per instructional computer.

In 2004, virtually all public schools in the U.S. had Internet access, up from 35% in 1994.

Seventy-seven percent of U.S. children ages 7-17 lived in households with personal computers in 2003, up from 36% in 1994.

Schools spent an average of \$103 per pupil for education technology in 2005. In a "huge shift," the focus of technology spending is moving away from instructional technologies and toward data-management technologies to meet the reporting requirements of *No Child Left Behind*.

Fifty-seven percent of U.S. children ages 7-17 use a home computer to complete school assignments.

Source: Educational Leadership, Dec 05/Jan 06

### CAS OFFICERS: 2005-2006

President: Donald W. Gates, Portland High School  
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### THE BULLETIN

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## 2006 GOVERNORS SCHOLAR'S ANNOUNCED

By Dennis Carrithers, Ph.D., Assistant Executive Director

Under the direction of Education Commissioner, Dr. Betty Sternberg, the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) and Big Y World Class Markets have again collaborated to sponsor the Governor's Scholars Program. Now in its tenth year, the purpose of the program is to recognize academically talented high school students in schools throughout the state.



All principals of CAS member high schools are given the opportunity to nominate one junior ranked in the top four percent of his/her class. An essay on an assigned topic has to be completed. Members of the Governor's Scholars Committee, professional educators from throughout Connecticut, judge the completed applications and assign a composite score to each based on rank in class, PSAT or SAT scores, CAPT scores, and the student essay. Laura Ferrante Fernandes, chair of the Governor's Scholars Committee, is pleased to announce the thirty finalists in this year's competition and, on behalf of the CT State Department of Education, CAS, and Big Y, extend congratulations to:

- Juliet Armstrong, Portland High School
- Chad Belanger, Thomaston High School
- Hallie Biejewski, Plainville High School
- Daniell Breakell, Wamago Regional H.S. in Litchfield
- Caitlin Callahan, Valley Regional H.S. in Deep River
- Christopher Caporaso, J.F. Kennedy H.S. in Waterbury
- David Clyde, Daniel Hand High School in Madison
- Michael DiStefano, South Windsor High School
- Jared Dworken, Joel Barlow High School in Redding
- Julianne Fenn, Masuk High School in Monroe
- Benjamin Fine, Weston High School
- Meredith Gray, Oliver Wolcott Technical H.S., Torrington
- Elizabeth Hocking, Somers High School
- Irene Jia, Lyman Hall High School in Wallingford
- Neena Kamath, Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk
- Jane Kelly, East Hartford High School
- Lindsay King, Ellington High School
- Erin Larson, Fitch Senior High School in Groton
- Zebulon Levine, Woodstock Academy
- Maureen Malley, Holy Cross High School in Waterbury
- Anthony Notaro, Eli Whitney Technical H.S. in Hamden
- Daniel Prendergast, Old Saybrook High School
- Zachary Slepian, Fairfield Warde High School
- Ryan Smith, Suffield High School
- Jeanne Snow, Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden
- Kathleen Stewart, New Milford High School
- Melissa Sulewski, New Britain High School
- Mansur Tokmouline, New Fairfield High School
- Alexandra Turley, Coginchaug Regional H.S. in Durham
- Eric Walton, Cromwell High School

All of the distinguished nominees will be recognized at the Governor's Scholars Luncheon at The Aqua Turf Club in Southington on May 25, 2006.

Big Y has been a dedicated corporate partner of CAS since 1997.

## The Connecticut Association of Schools Elementary Division

*is proud to present a K -12 conference featuring*

Tony Flach of the Center for Performance Assessment

### "Making Data Work For Student Achievement"



*Facilitated by Jonathan Costa, Educational Specialist at ACES*

**May 1 ■ 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. ■ Rocky Hill Marriott**

This workshop has been specifically developed to provide school participants/teams with information on using data to increase student achievement. Tony Flach will work with school participants/teams in analyzing their data and developing goals. Jonathan Costa will also work with the groups in developing a concrete plan towards that goal. Each participant/team is asked to select one area and to bring data or school information as appropriate. Participants will leave with a set of steps in making decisions with data. The luncheon speaker will be Dr. Betty Sternberg, Commissioner of Education.

**Conference information and registration is available online at: [www.casciac.org](http://www.casciac.org)**



**Tony Flach**  
Keynote Speaker



**Dr. Betty Sternberg**  
Luncheon Speaker



**Jonathan Costa**  
Facilitator

## RED CROSS/CAS PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

In September 2006, CAS, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, will host its 2nd annual recognition luncheon to honor those Connecticut high schools that have been actively involved in blood collection efforts. The first such event, held in May 2005, was a resounding success. There are three recognition categories: 1. most improved school; 2. schools that hold 3 blood drives per year; and 3. schools that rank in the top 5% of schools based on collections compared to their senior population.

Nonnewaug High School and RHAM High School have secured their place by completing three

blood drives each this year. Other schools will join them as they complete their drives in the next few months.

Bolton High, Cheney Tech, East Hampton High & Granby High are some of the early leaders in category 3, but it's not too late to run another blood drive prior to the end of the school year. The American Red Cross still has available dates.

This is your opportunity to be part of a fun competition and to be recognized for performing a life saving community service. Please contact your Red Cross Account Manager or Adrienne Henning at 203-464-2060 if you have any questions.



## Certification,

*continued from page 1*

succeed at very high rates. According to figures released by The Education Trust, academic growth nationally in grades 5-8 outstrips academic growth in grades 9-12 in reading, writing and math by a considerable margin.<sup>2</sup> Closer to home, Connecticut students continue to show improvement on CMT scores making gains in the same three subjects in both grade six and grade eight over the last four years.<sup>3</sup> These results are more impressive given the level of teacher preparation and readiness to teach this age group. The fact is, most middle level teachers are well trained, but receive almost all of their training on-the-job. This places an inordinate amount of responsibility for their success on building principals and veteran teachers, many of whom have little specialized training themselves. Imagine how good the results could be if teachers came to the middle level having had specialized training and experience in their pre-service education!

While applauding and supporting aspects of the current certification that require robust content preparation, the CAS Middle Level Division urges adjustment that will promote strong middle level teacher preparation programs and provide a large pool of middle school teachers who are highly qualified when they enter the middle level. Middle school students deserve highly qualified teachers as much as do elementary and high school students. Adoption of the recommendations outlined in the Position Statement on Middle Level Certification will go a long way towards attracting and retaining highly qualified middle school teachers in the future.

1 Connecticut Department of Education, Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment; Connecticut Recommending Institutions (2001-2005)

2 Improving Achievement and Closing Gaps Between Groups; Education Trust presentation to CT Board of Education 2005  
[http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/0B0D3312-5429-466D-935F-68637E05F740/0/ct\\_state-board\\_2005.ppt#1](http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/0B0D3312-5429-466D-935F-68637E05F740/0/ct_state-board_2005.ppt#1)

3The Condition of Education, Connecticut State Department of Education, August 2005



## Position Statement on Middle Level Teacher Certification

The Middle Level Division of Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) believes that the adoption of a consistently recognized middle level teacher's certification is critically important for the proper education of young adolescents. We also believe that students aged ten to fourteen present educators with a unique set of challenges not found at other age levels. To address these needs, middle level teachers should receive appropriate preparation as well as certification and licensure reflecting this comprehensive preparation.

Ten to fourteen year olds comprise fully one third of the entire K-12 student population. These years comprise a time of tremendous social-emotional, physical, and intellectual development. CAS believes that educators working with this unique population should receive preparation specifically designed to address age appropriate needs and therefore earn certification that denotes this unique preparation.

Connecticut has teacher certification specifically designed for high, middle and the elementary levels of schooling. Furthermore, there are specific preparation requirements for early childhood education as well as a wide array of other special areas. While there is a middle grades certificate, due to overlapping grade level certificates, it is not generally advantageous for teachers to pursue it.

With over thirty-five years of professional research, literature, and discussion relative to the needs of early adolescent students, certification should be informed by such research and by recognized best educational practices. While contrary to both research and best practices, political pressures have maintained the current overlapping certifications.

The Middle Level Division of the Connecticut Association of Schools endorses and supports the position statements of the National Middle School Association, the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform and the New England League of Middle Schools. All three statements represent the current research and best practices upon which CAS believes middle level certification should be based.\*

The CAS Middle Level Division believes that Connecticut should have teacher certification that:

- is specifically required for educators who work with ten to fourteen year olds in any grade five, six, seven, or eight school configuration;
- includes preparation that focuses on the nature of young adolescent development, curricular planning, collaborative teaching, learning and assessment, and middle level concepts, philosophy, and organization;
- is comprehensive, separate, and distinct with no "overlapping" of grades with other levels;
- includes at least twelve weeks of successful student teaching experience educating young adolescents;
- encompasses two or more standards based content areas of mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, interdisciplinary/integrative curriculum and pedagogy within course requirements associated with a teaching degree;
- requires those teaching in k-12 areas, such as physical education, art, health, music, family and consumer science, technology education library/media and world languages. or special education areas, to successfully complete at least one university level course (Nature and Needs of Young Adolescents) as well as one successful field experience at the middle level;
- incorporates the concepts and ideas contained in this position statement as the basis for certificate renewal.

We further believe that this clear statement will assist Connecticut to better define and develop middle level teacher certification inevitably leading to improved teaching and learning for the ten to fourteen year old students in our schools.

This position statement is the result of a joint effort by members of the Middle Level Division of the Connecticut Association of Schools and the New England League of Middle Schools with assistance and consultation from the Connecticut State Department of Education.

(\* The New England League of Middle Schools, The National Middle School Association and the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform statements are available on line at [nelms.org](http://nelms.org).)



**... more middle school news**

**MIDDLE LEVEL ACTIVE ACHIEVERS**

By Earle G. Bidwell,  
Assistant Executive Director

Over thirty teachers, administrators and food service directors attended a CAS workshop presented by registered dietitian and nutritionist Polly Obremski on teaching students to make balanced nutrition choices and develop interest in being active and staying healthy. Participants learned about:


- .. what to look for in food labels;
- .. eating for optimal health;
- .. things to stay on top of;
- .. nutrition facts, myths and challenges.

Ms. Obremski led the group through a series of exercises designed to heighten awareness of the new food pyramid, identify foods that provide a balance among the food groups and to chart food intake. She then presented a series of student lessons that focused on energy and calories, food choices, vitamins and minerals, and the importance of water in diet.

Active Achievers is a public/private partnership developed by McDonald's owner/operators from Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. The partnership includes the Connecticut State Department of Education, which recently released an Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity, CAS/CIAC and other civic-minded organizations.

Ms. Obremski is available to help bring the Active Achievers program into CAS middle schools through interactive assembly programs. She is prepared to discuss how and where nutrition fits into students' lifestyles, how to eat to look and feel their best, as well as how to avoid fads, dispel myths and determine what makes sense for them. For more information, call (860) 659-0514, Ext. 222, visit [www.mcconnecticut.com](http://www.mcconnecticut.com) or call your local McDonald's owner/operator.

**NOTE: The April CEU workshops sponsored by CAS and eesmarts have been postponed. Look for the new dates in an upcoming issue of the BULLETIN.**



**elementary school news**

**CELEBRATION OF CONNECTICUT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' SUCCESS**

By Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

*13th Annual Elementary Program Recognition Banquet - May 4, 2006 at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, Connecticut*

The Connecticut Association of Schools, Elementary Division, and Teachers' Insurance Plan take great pleasure in announcing the 13th Annual Elementary School Program Recognition Banquet, "Celebration of Connecticut Elementary Schools' Success." The banquet will be held on May 4, 2006, at the Aqua Turf Club, Southington, at 6:00 p.m. This event provides an excellent opportunity for schools to celebrate programs and staff that have brought about significant school improvement. We encourage all principals to support and participate in this special recognition. This program is intended to provide CAS elementary schools the opportunity to recognize and celebrate their school successes. These may include a program or staff achievement of a school goal promoting school success or a program or staff achievement that has had a positive impact on the school culture. CAS will provide all member schools with a souvenir booklet of the programs honored at this event, and each school will also receive a plaque of recognition.

We expect that the vast majority of our elementary schools will participate. An early response will guarantee your school's reservation to this popular event. CAS looks forward to receiving your entries and reservations, and to greeting you on May 4, 2006 at the Aqua Turf. We must receive your reservations by APRIL 13, 2006. If you have any questions or would like to receive a registration form, please contact Barbara O'Connor at [boconnor@casciac.org](mailto:boconnor@casciac.org) or 203-250-1111.

**THE 6TH ANNUAL ELEMENTARY PARENT/VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION BANQUET**

By Regina S. Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

The 6th Annual Connecticut Association of Schools' Elementary Division Parent/Volunteer Recognition Banquet on March 22, 2006 drew over 640 participants to the Aqua Turf Club in Southington.

Gina Vance, vice principal of Gideon Wells Elementary School in Glastonbury and chairman of the elementary division of CAS, served as mistress of ceremonies. Dr. Gary Rosato, principal of Mill Hill School in Southport, and a member of the CAS Board of Directors welcomed the honorees; and Fran Rabinowitz, associate commissioner for teaching, learning and assessment, Connecticut State Department of Education, stressed the importance of parents and volunteers in providing the needed extra hands and resources that help provide quality programs for our schools.

Edward Handi, principal of Green Acres School in North Haven and National Distinguished Principal for 2005-2006, addressed the group, sharing the important role that volunteers serve in our schools. Mark Proffitt, committee chair and principal of Spencer School in Middletown, shared concluding remarks as the awards were presented to the parents and volunteers by their respective school principal.

The Connecticut Association of Schools proudly celebrates this annual event and publicly acknowledges the work of parents and other volunteers for the



Associate Commissioner of Education  
Fran Rabinowitz

## ... more elementary news

### Volunteer Recognition, *continued from page 9*

contributions they have made to our schools across the state. CAS thanks all of the parents and volunteers for sharing their time, talents and commitment to quality education in their communities.

The banquet was made possible by The Connecticut Association of Schools and the generosity of the Arbella Insurance Group. Kevin Cerny, assistant vice president of Arbella Insurance Group, congratulated the parents and volunteers, thanking them for all they were doing for Connecticut Kids. As a special memento, each attendee received an Arbella coffee mug with the inscription, "Thank you for helping Connecticut's kids!"

Grynn and Barrett Studios, a CAS corporate sponsor, took pictures of each school principal with his/her parents and volunteers. A commemorative picture is being sent to each school.

Many thanks to the committee members Mark Proffitt, principal of Spencer School in Middletown, committee chair; Lou Pear, principal of Myrtle H. Stevens School in Rocky Hill; Gina Vance, vice principal of Gideon Wells School in Glastonbury, and Renata Lantos, principal of Bielefield School in Middletown.



Glastonbury's six elementary schools were well represented as shown in this group photo.

### The Impact of Retaining Kindergartners

A recent study in kindergarten retention policies shows that principals in schools that retained children:

- had spent more years teaching preschool and kindergarten and fewer years teaching higher grades
- had taken more early childhood education courses and less in administration
- were less likely to correlate their performance with their students' performance. The children in schools that retained students showed lower achievement on all types of assessment and were rated as having more emotional and behavioral problems. At the end of first grade, the children who were retained were further behind their promoted peers than they were at the end of the first year of kindergarten. The researchers concluded that, overall, kindergarten retention impedes children's cognitive development over the repetition year and leaves most retainees even further behind. Researchers also found no evidence to support the argument that retaining some students may benefit those students who were promoted because they will form a more homogeneous group and make instruction easier for the next year's teacher. (Source: "Struggling in kindergarten" by Gerald Bracey, Phi Delta Kappan, January 2006)

## ciac news

■ In an effort to minimize risk of injury to high school cheerleaders, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has stated that basket tosses and other similar multi-base tosses may only be performed on appropriate mats, grass, rubberized and soft-yielding surfaces, effective with the 2006-07 season. The NFHS Spirit Rules Committee made this addition to Rule 2-10 as a follow-up to its earlier rules changes this year. "The most visible change that will occur next year is that basket tosses no longer will be permitted on a basketball court, unless the stunt is done on an appropriate mat," said Susan Loomis, NFHS spirit rules liaison. "Basket tosses will still be permitted, but only on grass or soft surfaces."

■ The following resources have recently been updated on the National Federation Web site: *Heat Stress and Athletic Participation, Reducing Brain and Spinal Injuries, and Recommendations For Hydration To Prevent Heat Illness*. To take advantage of these helpful resources, visit [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) and click on the "Sports Medicine" link.

■ Concussions are a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a blow or jolt to the head that can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. More than 300,000 people sustain sports- and recreation-related TBIs every year in this country. Coaches, athletic directors and trainers play a key role in helping to prevent concussion and in managing it properly if it occurs. To reduce the incidence of this type of injury, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with the support of partners and experts in the field, have developed a tool kit for coaches titled, "Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports." This kit contains practical, easy-to-use information including a video and DVD featuring a young athlete disabled by concussion, a guide, wallet card and clip board sticker for coaches, posters, fact sheets for parents and athletes in English and Spanish, and additional concussion-related resources. The toolkit can be accessed free at [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/coaches\\_tool\\_kit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/coaches_tool_kit.htm).

■ A study released last month shows that the number of overweight children worldwide will increase significantly by the end of the decade, and scientists expect profound effects on everything from public health care to economics. The study, published by the International Journal of Pediatric Obesity, suggests that nearly half of all the children in North and South America will be overweight by 2010, up from what recent studies say is about one-third. In the European Union, about 38% of all children will be overweight if present trends continue – up from about 25% in recent surveys. The percentages of overweight children are also expected to increase significantly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. And, it is estimated that one in five children in China will be overweight by 2010. Researchers concluded that the prevalence of childhood obesity increased in almost all the countries for which data were available, a trend fueled by more sedentary lives and the increasing availability of junk food, among other factors.

■ High school football players wearing a state-of-the-art helmet were 31 percent less likely to suffer a concussion during a game, a manufacturer-funded study has found. In a three-year effort that evaluated 2,000 high school players, a team from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center found that 5.4 percent of players wearing a helmet first introduced in 2002 incurred a concussion during a game. That compares with 7.6 percent of athletes wearing helmets designed before the 2002 model. The peer-reviewed study, which was financed by Riddell, the manufacturer of the new helmet, was published in the February 2006 edition of *Neurosurgery*. (Source: *Education Week*, February 22, 2006)



## ... more ciac news

■ The benefits of sport are being used for larger, global objectives. On April 4, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged governments to use athletics as a "tool for development and peace." The task, he observed, is to "make sport an essential component of efforts to reach the world's development goals." "Sport is a vital tool to make a better world," said Adolf Ogi, the Secretary-General's special representative. "We want healthy, educated citizens on every continent. We want development. And we want peace. We can achieve these goals through sport. The fundamentals are there, the momentum is there." (Source: *April CC! Sports e-newsletter*)

■ Recognizing that vacation time isn't down time for student-athletes preparing for next season, the NCAA is planning to conduct drug testing during summer months beginning this year. Acting on authority granted in Bylaws 18.4.1.5.2 and 21.2.2.2, the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports has authorized summer testing at Division I institutions, focusing this year on football and baseball. The National Center for Drug Free Sport, Inc., which conducts testing for the Association, will advise institutions in an April memorandum on how to prepare for the summer initiative. Institutions will be instructed to designate a staff member to serve as a site coordinator for summer testing. Site coordinators will be responsible for contacting and notifying randomly selected student-athletes of their selection for testing, and for assisting Drug Free Sport in arranging collections. Testing likely will include student-athletes who are not physically present on campuses, though the program will adhere in all other respects to the protocol used in the NCAA's year-round testing program (Source: *NCAA News*)

## Emerging Sports Outpace Traditional Team Sports

High school athletes in Ontario are trading baseball bats for rock-climbing ropes. A recent survey of interscholastic sports in the Canadian province found rapid growth in participation in emerging sports—such as mountain biking, archery, and ultimate Frisbee—compared with slower growth in traditional team sports, such as football, baseball, and basketball.

The shift has been happening slowly in the past decade but is starting to accelerate, according to Steve D. Sevor, an assistant director of the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations, the governing body representing regional interscholastic associations. "Nowadays, we have such a wide variety of different sports and interests," he said.

In the 1990s, schools starting adding new sports such as cricket, rock climbing, and snowboarding, Mr. Sevor said. The student-athletes who took part in those sports at their start are now old enough to be high school coaches and promote the activities, he said.

The federation's survey in the 2004-05 school year showed that participation in interscholastic sports increased by 23% over the previous school year. A total of 266,470 students—about 39% of the province's high school enrollment—played on a high school team.

Some of the biggest increases in participation among boys were in indoor soccer, archery, and rock climbing. Among girls, the federation found dramatic gains in indoor soccer, synchronized swimming, and snowboarding.

While traditional sports—such as football, basketball, hockey, and baseball for boys, and basketball, golf, gymnastics, and hockey for girls—showed increases in the number of students taking part, those boosts were at or below the overall average increases in participation.

(Source: *Education Week*, February 22, 2006)

## CIAC 14TH ANNUAL GOLF BENEFIT

By J. Robert Ford, Director of Development

The annual CIAC golf benefit will be held on June 19 at the Chippannee Golf Club in Bristol. We are pleased to announce that our honorary co-chairs will be David Doebler, president and general manager of our media partner, NBC-30, and Tom Moore, associate head coach of the UConn men's basketball team.

David Doebler came to NBC-owned WVIT-30 in March 2005 from his former position as president and general manager of NBC-13 in Birmingham, Alabama. Doebler, a Philadelphia native has received several philanthropic awards over the course of his career. More recently, he has been the recipient of the Governor's award for "outstanding community service," the "Positive Press Award" from the National Association of Mental Illness and the "Outstanding Corporate Citizen Award" by the National Philanthropy Day Foundation. He currently serves as a member of the Hartford Science Center Board of Directors.

Tom Moore is in his 12th season as a member of the UConn basketball staff. He has earned a national reputation as a superb recruiter and evaluator of talent. A Boston University graduate, Tom is looked upon as one of the rising head coaching talents in the USA.

Golfers interested in participating in this year's event should contact Judy Sylvester at the CIAC office.

## Wrestling Referee's Call Stands Up in Court

High school wrestler Frank Rodriguez got his day in court, but the decision of a New York State Supreme Court justice was the same as that of a referee.

Rodriguez's bid to have the court overturn his loss in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) state tournament was denied by Justice Thomas Spargo. In a verdict favoring the NYSPHSAA, Spargo said having the court changing a referee's call "would cause unending confusion in the interscholastic athletic system."

In the 135-pound state championship match, Rodriguez defeated Paul Florio, 7-6. After time expired but before the mandatory post-match handshake, Rodriguez jubilantly flung his headgear into the air. After Rodriguez's hand was raised, an assistant referee informed the match referee of the act, which is proper protocol.

State rules interpreter Steven Dalberth, who was observing the match, was consulted. The referee asked Dalberth whether throwing headgear is unsportsmanlike conduct if it is thrown in celebration. Dalberth told the referee that the rule did not distinguish between throwing headgear in jubilation or anger. The referee then asked Dalberth whether the penalty points should be assessed as match points or team points. Dalberth stated that the penalty points were match points because the unsportsmanlike conduct occurred prior to the end-of match procedure, which under state rules includes the handshake.

The referee brought both wrestlers back to the center of the mat and penalized Rodriguez two points for unsportsmanlike conduct, making the score 8-7 in favor of Florio. The referee then declared Florio the winner.

Rodriguez took his case to the NYSPHSAA protest committee but was turned down. That led to the court case.

Spargo also rejected Rodriguez's notion to declare co-champions. "To do so would be an abuse of judicial discretion," Spargo said. "This court could no more declare Rodriguez and Florio to be co-champions than it could declare any other defeated finalist a co-champion."

(Source: *Referee*, March 2006 / Contributing source: *New York Law Journal*)



## GUEST EDITORIAL

By Jeff Mathieu, Principal, Bacon Academy

*Reprinted from the Bacon Academy Newsletter, March 2006*

Hero: a term overused? Maybe not.

We use the term hero loosely these days in countless situations and for a variety of reasons. On February 21, I was in the company of many heroes and champions: fearless, brave and courageous people.

On that night I traveled to Bryant University along with Superintendent Karen Loiselle, Assistant Principal Dale McCubrey, coaches Dave Shea, Rich Zalusky and Izzy Chisholm, current and past Bacon girls' basketball players and Bacon faculty to witness and cheer on past Bacon Academy all-star Pam Malcolm's college basketball senior night.

While at Bacon Academy, Pam was an all-star basketball and track and field athlete. Pam was the Bobcats' MVP and holds the Connecticut state record of 563 blocks, a record which also ranks her third all-time nationally for blocks. She was a McDonald's All-American nominee, Blue Chip 100th by Street & Smith Basketball Magazine and two-time all-area and all-state selection. Pam was also a state champion in high jump for Bacon.

On Pam's 18th birthday during the spring of her senior year, she was involved in a car accident in Colchester that paralyzed her. Pam's dream of becoming a college block leader and college star quickly changed. Her focus became attending Bacon's graduation in her wheelchair under her own power. She endured many hours of therapy and surgeries to achieve this first goal.

While Pam lay in Gaylord Hospital, head coach Mary Burke of Bryant University came to visit her with a number 34 Bryant basketball uniform in hand. She hung the uniform in Pam's room and told her that Bryant University would honor her full scholarship. She also said that Bryant would be sending the athletic trainers to receive specialized training on spinal cord injuries so they could help Pam with her therapy. I have never met Coach Burke but she clearly is a person of high morals. To honor Pam's scholarship, when the program only has a limited number to give, is truly a testament to the program and the University. I would call Coach Burke and Bryant University heroes for this gesture.

Another outstanding person and hero in Pam's life is Lauren Glenney, a former AAU and basketball stand-out teammate from NFA. Lauren has been Pam's roommate, teammate and friend during the past four years. Pam's mom, Joyce, has been quoted as saying, "Lauren is a terrific human."

Pam's senior night was truly magical. All of the Bryant athletes from all of the sports wore gray Bryant sweatshirts and surrounded the court. They cheered all the seniors on and shared in this special moment for Pam. There were fans dressed in shirts with, "I am a Pam fan," written on them. After the starting line-up was introduced, Pam walked onto the court with crutches and positioned herself under the far basket. She wore the same Bryant uniform, number 34, that Coach Mary Burke had hung in her hospital room years before as she played her first minutes. Merrimack College won the opening tip and scored a lay-up (a pre-arranged play). Bryant's Lauren Glenney dribbled down the court and handed the ball to Pam. Like she did so many times before, wearing a number 34 Bacon uniform, Pam banked the ball off the backboard for two points; her first two points in a Bryant uniform. Bryant called a timeout and all the Bryant and Merrimack players gave her a hug.

Pam will graduate this spring from Bryant in just 3-1/2 years! She has overcome enormous obstacles and has made us proud here at the Academy. As part of the pre-game ceremonies, Bacon presented Pam with her high school number 34 uniform shirt framed. This number has been retired in honor of all Pam's accomplishments. This night is one that I will never forget. Everyone in that gym on February 21 cried with joy watching Pam.

Pam Malcolm is truly a HERO!!

## Teens' Grades, Well-Being Suffer Along with Body Image

Teens who consider themselves overweight may have a greater risk for depression and school-related stress.

A new study of nearly 7,000 Chinese adolescents found that boys and girls who felt they were fat were more likely to report being overwhelmed by schoolwork and less likely to shake off sad feelings. Those feelings of stress and depression also held true for children who were actually normal weight or underweight.

"Weight perception may actually transcend actual body weight as a predictor of negative psychological effects," said lead researcher Bin Xie, M.D.

Xie, an assistant research professor at the school of social work at the University of Southern California, said the study underscores the need to incorporate body-image education in efforts to prevent teenage obesity.

Overweight perception — correct or incorrect — was also associated with poorer academic performance among girls. Girls who said they were overweight reported an overall grade point average of 3.06 versus 3.20 for other girls.

The study, which appears in the February 2006 edition of *American Journal of Health Behavior*, includes 6,863 middle- and high-school students in seven Chinese cities. Researchers used questionnaires to collect information on the children's academic performance, stress levels and feelings of depression and hostility. The researchers also measured each child's weight and height to calculate body mass index, a tool for assessing risk for obesity.

Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, a professor at the school of public health at the University of Minnesota, said cultivating positive body image may help teens sidestep destructive behavior.

"Many teenagers, particularly girls, but also boys, feel dissatisfied with their bodies and then they engage in unhealthy weight-control behaviors in order to lose the weight quickly," she said.

Neumark-Sztainer, who was not involved in the University of Southern California study, said that overweight teens don't automatically have poor body image; instead, self-image is often tied to whether or not a teen's family accepts him or her.

Excess pounds were once prized as signs of affluence and stature in China, Xie said, but the norms for body image are evolving. "Those beauty standards have shifted and changed, and it's happened in both girls and boys," he said.

Xie said that increased affluence and media exposure to Western lifestyle have ushered in new nutrition and physical activity habits that come with higher rates of death and illness from chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes and coronary heart disease.

*(Source: Child Development Research)*

## WESTBROOK HIGH SCHOOL

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ROBERT G. HALE, JR., PRINCIPAL

Dr. Jerome Auclair, Chair  
 CAS Awards and Recognition Committee  
 The Connecticut Association of Schools  
 30 Realty Drive  
 Cheshire, CT 06410

February 14, 2006

Dear Jerry and members of the committee,

To say that I was surprised to get your call last Thursday would be a gross understatement. I was honored to be nominated for the *Principal of the Year* program and it was actually quite a rewarding process to complete the application package. I told the young woman who wrote a letter of recommendation for me from the student point of view that I thought her comments were as good as getting the award. Imagine my surprise when I found out I was selected for this honor.

Connecticut is lucky to have so many skillful and inspirational principals in its schools. It has been my pleasure to work with many of them through my associations with CAS and through other interschool initiatives and professional development opportunities. I am both honored and humbled to represent them for 2006.

Please extend my thanks to all involved in this process. I am most appreciative of this awesome honor and am acutely aware of the responsibilities that accompany it. I will do my utmost to build upon the reputation of excellence that Connecticut principals, administrators, teachers, students, parents and communities have worked so hard to achieve.

 Sincerely,  
 Robert Hale

## Unified Sports™ News

By Ann Malafronte, Director of Unified Sports™



■ **Follow West Haven's Lead!** West Haven High School started a Unified Sports™ basketball team one year ago and thoroughly enjoyed the experience! Coach Bill McDermott introduced his athletes and partners to track last spring and another great experience was had by all. When the fall season started, WHHS tried indoor soccer and loved that as well. In February, West Haven offered to host a one-day Unified Sports™ bowling invitational for Unified Sports™ high school teams. Over 100 participated at the Woodlawn Bowling alley (which is adjacent to the school and donated its facility) and enjoyed a pizza party after competition concluded. Now Coach McDermott and Athletic Director Jon Capone promise a yearly event! Your school could follow the lead that West Haven has given us and host an invitational in any sport that you feel your athletes and partners would enjoy! South Windsor has done this in softball and Simsbury has hosted in kickball. The goal is socialization and a good time. Follow the lead!

■ **Unified Sports™ "March Madness":** Over eleven hundred middle and high school special athletes and partners participated in Unified Sports™ basketball tournaments during our own version of "March Madness." The program is growing and the athletes are flourishing! We welcomed Amity High from Woodbridge, Branford High and North Branford High as well as Ansonia Middle School and JF Kennedy of Southington to our increasing list of participating schools. The addition of Simsbury High and Chippens Hill Middle School in Bristol as a host sites brought us to nine Unified Sports basketball sites in March! TEAM ESPN and volunteers from Bob's Stores were a welcome addition to our fun-filled competitions. The schedule for all of the events can be found on the CIAC website. Come see Unified Sports™ in action!

**Get your school involved!** For additional information, contact Ann Malafronte at (203)250-1111, ext. 3017, or e-mail at [amalafonte@casciac.org](mailto:amalafonte@casciac.org).

## Study Shows Effects of Steroid Use Last Into Adulthood

A new study reveals that anabolic steroid use in teenagers may have a long-term impact on their brains, causing aggression to last for years after quitting the drugs. Professor Richard Melloni, Jr., Ph.D. and his colleagues at Northeastern University studied the behavior of hamsters while on steroids and then after withdrawal. The findings are published in the March 2006 issue of *Behavioral Neuroscience*, a journal of the American Psychological Association.

Melloni and two of his graduate students discovered that hamsters showing levels of tame play-fighting similar to human teenagers became aggressive when injected with commonly used steroids. The full-blown aggression lasted for long periods during the hamsters' adult life, leaving the team to estimate that teens who use steroids may become adults with behavioral problems. Autopsies performed on the hamsters that went through withdrawal revealed inner changes in their brains that correlated with outward aggressiveness.

"Steroids step on the gas for aggression by enhancing the activity of brain areas that induce aggression," says Melloni. "Some of the effects may wear off after withdrawal, but aggressive behavior won't stop immediately, leaving them to be a danger to themselves and others."

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), an estimated half a million teenagers (eighth- 10th- and 12th-graders) abuse anabolic-androgenic steroids (AASs), annually. Neuroscientists say that steroid use at that stage of a teenager's life can lead to heavier use later, not to mention the likelihood of offensive aggression and other psychiatric problems.

"We hope teenagers realize that achieving excessive muscle mass and unrealistic athletic achievements are not worth the damage steroids can cause," says Melloni.

Melloni is hopeful that these findings will be helpful in treating aggressive and offensive behavior with or without drug use.

Additional findings point to permanent changes in the brain caused by drug use during a specific time in a young person's life. These release of these findings are forthcoming.

"There is a critical developmental period for the brain during teenage life, when drug use can result in permanent damage," says Melloni. "We're finding for instance, that serotonin levels, which play a part in depression, may be altered forever."

(Source: *Child Development Research*)

# WINTER 2005-06 CIAC SPORTS CHAMPIONS

## ■ GIRLS' BASKETBALL

### Champion

Class LL: New Britain

Class L: Bulkeley

Class M: Stonington

Class S: Trinity Catholic

### Runner-up

Mercy

Farmington

Holy Cross

Kolbe Cathedral

## ■ BOYS' BASKETBALL

### Champion

Div I: Hillhouse

Div II: Torrington

Div III: Berlin

Div IV: Plainville

### Runner-up

East Catholic

Holy Cross

Wilby

Putnam

## ■ WRESTLING

### Champion

Open: Danbury

Class LL: Danbury

Class L: Fairfield Warde

Class M: Windham

Class S: Griswold

### Runner-up

New Milford

New Milford

Bristol Central

Montville

Avon

## ■ BOYS' SWIMMING

### Champion

Open: Greenwich

Class LL: Greenwich

Class L: Cheshire

Class M: New Canaan

Class S: New Fairfield

### Runner-up

New Canaan

Fairfield Prep

Xavier

Brookfield

Weston



Weaver High School, Girls' Class M Indoor Track Champions

## ■ GIRLS' GYMNASTICS

### Champion

Class L: Southington

Class M: Daniel Hand

Class S: Old Lyme

### Runner-up

Trumbull

Wethersfield

Lauralton Hall

## ■ GIRLS' INDOOR TRACK

### Champion

Class LL: Glastonbury

Class L: Hillhouse

Class M: Weaver

Class S: Bloomfield

Open: Weaver

### Runner-up

Amity

East Lyme

Darien

Weston

Hillhouse

## ■ ICE HOCKEY

### Champion

Div. I: Notre Dame, Fairfield

Div. II: Daniel Hand

Div. III: Cheshire

### Runner-up

Hamden

New Canaan

Newington

## ■ BOYS' INDOOR TRACK

### Champion

Class LL: Amity

Class L: Staples

Class M: Darien

Class S: Griswold

Open: Amity

### Runner-up

Norwich Free Acad

Wethersfield

New Canaan

Rocky Hill

Glastonbury

## ■ CHEERLEADING

### Champion

Coed: East Hartford

Class LL: Danbury

Class L: Berlin

Class M: Holy Cross

Class S: Sacred Heart, Wtby

### Runner-up

Wolcott

Greenwich

Bunnell

Seymour

Derby



Amity Regional High School, Woodbridge, Boys' Class LL Indoor Track Champions





## caad news

## THE MOST DANGEROUS SPORT IN SCHOOL

By Gretchen Voss

"DOWN IN FRONT! DOWN IN FRONT!" 88-year-old Josephine Miele screams at the fans blocking her view of Cassandra Dugas, her great-granddaughter and the tri-captain of the Mustangs, the all-girl cheerleading squad from Medford High School.

It's getting frantic. It's almost time. "Oh my God, you have no idea. I've been a nervous wreck for a week," says Cassandra's now hoarse mom, Debby Dugas, before she starts screaming, "Here we go, Medford, here we go!" She is fired up, as are five generations of the Dugas family, here to cheer on 17-year-old Cassandra as she competes in the North Regional Cheerleading Tournament at Burlington High School. Five generations, crammed onto the front-row bench in the gymnasium, surrounded by hundreds of pumped fans, families, and even football players who, in a sweet twist, are here supporting their supporters.

As the 22 Medford Mustangs - hair shellacked and held back in sparkly red scrunchies, makeup caked on, Tammy Faye Bakker-style, all practiced to perfection at last night's "curling party" - prance onto the big blue mat, Cassandra's grandmother, Marianne Dugas, leans over and whispers, "Now my heart bursts with pride."

And then it's an explosion. A blur of limbs and uniforms synched to the remixed beats of early-1980s disco numbers blasted on hyper-speed. Girls fly across the mat, tumbling and tucking and flipping. Girls are chucked high, higher, into the air. Girls shoot up in precarious pyramid formations. They pause to deliver a quaint cheer - almost an afterthought, it seems, since the gymnastic stunts garner big "oohs" from the crowd. When one girl falls, slipping out of the hands of her teammates, that gets an even bigger reaction.

It was a similarly unsuccessful stunt performed by this same squad last summer that renewed concern across the state, and the country, about the safety of cheerleading. One of the youngest members of the Mustangs, 14-year-old Ashley Burns, died from injuries she sustained during practice in August, before the season even began, and now it's not hard to imagine that the parents of the other cheerleaders are watching with a little more unease as their girls fly and spin in the air.

"I've always worried about it being dangerous", admits Cassandra's father, Phil Dugas, a former youth hockey player. "I didn't want her cheerleading at the beginning. You've got young girls catching young girls."

SOME WOULD SAY CHEERLEADING IS THE most dangerous sport, period. Recent statistics from the National Collegiate Athletic Association suggest that it may be even riskier than football, the sport it was created to support. Last year, the NCAA's Catastrophic Injury Insurance Program found that 25 percent of its claims for college student-athletes since 1998 have resulted from cheerleading. "[That is] second only to football players - about 12 to 100, estimates Sheely. That 25 percent figure is shocking."

During the 2003-2004 school year alone, six cheerleaders across the country sustained catastrophic injuries, according to Mueller's research center. Among high schoolers, one hit her head and was put in a medically induced coma to reduce the swelling of her brain. Another was struck in the back by a teammate's shoulder, sustaining a spinal cord contusion, and yet another was injured when her teammates failed to catch her. At the college level one fell headfirst into the ground and fractured a cervical vertebra and damaged her spinal cord, resulting in permanent disability, while another plummeted to the ground after being tossed in the air and was paralyzed.

CHEERLEADING IS SEEING A SURGE IN popularity. According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, 4.1 million people now participate in amateur cheerleading around the country. Since 1998, it's grown faster than football, faster than any team sport, including soccer and basketball and field hockey - no matter that the 1972 gender equity law Title IX opened up other sports to girls.

"Cheerleading has been increasing in popularity over the last 20 years, and it really is due to the increased level of athleticism," says Lisa Moskow, the regional safety certifier for the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors, a nationwide cheerleading safety organization. After many high

*continued on page 16*

## CAAD CELEBRATES ITS 22ND ANNUAL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE

The Rocky Hill Marriot was the new venue for this year's CAAD conference. The Marriot was a gracious host, offering more space and improved facilities. For two days, athletic directors from around the state enjoyed an informative and inspirational conference. The feedback the conference committee received from the evaluation form was overwhelmingly positive.

## CONFERENCE PROCEDURES/FORMAT:

1. CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (3.93)
2. CONFERENCE FORMAT (3.75)
3. CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION AND DETAILS (3.86)
4. HOTEL SERVICE (3.93)
5. HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS (3.97)
6. HOTEL MEALS: THURSDAY LUNCH (3.56)  
THURSDAY BANQUET (3.93)  
FRIDAY BREAKFAST (3.56)  
FRIDAY "Coca-Cola" LUNCHEON (3.63)

## THURSDAY SESSIONS:

7. C.I.A.C. WORKSHOP - Mike Savage (3.56)
8. C.A.A.D. ANNUAL MEETING (3.52)
9. GENERAL SESSION "Life Changing Insights" by Dr. Rob Gilbert (3.5)
10. WORKSHOP SESSION  
"Expanding the CIAC Website (3.9)  
"Anabolic Steroids: Is Drug Testing the Answer?" (3.9)  
"Retirement Planning/Know Your Options" (3.56)
11. AWARDS BANQUET (3.86)

## FRIDAY SESSIONS:

12. C.A.A.D. BREAKFAST MEETING "Sports Done Right" by Karen Brown (2.95)
13. STATEWIDE FACULTY WORKSHOP (3.59)
14. CLOSING GENERAL SESSION Cracker-barrel Topics (3.43)

Also at the 22nd Annual CAAD Conference, the NIAAA service awards were presented to the following Connecticut athletic directors.

**For 15 years of service:** Edward Lebo, The Master's School; Ceclia O'Doherty, Brookfield High School; Kathy Cromack, Ethel Walker

**For 25 years of service:** Tom Malin, East Catholic

**For 30 years of service:** Joe Tonelli, Notre Dame, West Haven

## ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET HONORS CAAD'S FINEST

Friday evening's award banquet was a memorable evening for five very special CAAD members.

Distinguished Service From Inside the Field of Athletic Administration  
◆ **Thomas Malin, East Catholic High School, Manchester** ◆

Distinguished Service From Outside the Field of Athletic Administration  
◆ **Matthew J. Fischer, CIAC** ◆

Robert Duncanson Meritorious Service Award

◆ **Patrick Spinola, Norwalk** ◆

NIAAA State Award of Merit

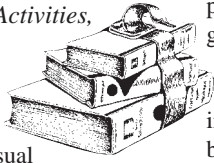
◆ **Robert Harris, Fairfield Prep. High School** ◆

NCSSAD "Athletic Director of the Year" Award  
(presented at Thursday's luncheon)

◆ **Candy Perez, Northwestern Regional High School** ◆

## C.A.A.D. BOOK BAG

By Jeff Sunblade, Director of Student Activities,  
Simsbury High School



I don't know about you, but this was certainly a long, difficult, (and times very trying) winter sports season. My usual consumption of books is always less during this time of the year, but this year it dwindled to "literally" nothing. I must have read the first page of one book every night for a week, always falling asleep before the second page. On Saturdays, my wife would get ready for our weekly trip to the town library and I'd be relegated to renewing what I had taken out. Finally, I just gave up going.

Well, spring vacation is just around the corner and I've got a bag full of books just waiting for that special beach somewhere warm. (I'd tell you where, but I'm afraid you'd tell one of my athlete's parents and they'd find me there.) So, if you're looking for a good read in the mean time, these come highly recommended (from various sources):

The World is Flat by Thomas L. Friedman. Last month's CAS BULLETIN has a piece by John Dodig that gives a snap shot view.

Uncommon Genius-How Great Ideas are Born by Denise Shekerjian. Who couldn't use a few more great ideas?

Last Dance: Behind The Scenes At The Final Four by John Feinstein. This could be the Holy Grail for basketball fans.

My Losing Season by Pat Conroy. The author of The Great Santini chronicles his senior hoop season at The Citadel in South Carolina.

Walking to Vermont by Christopher S. Wren. If Swimming to Antarctica wasn't for you, perhaps a nice walk in the woods will inspire you? Ray DeAngelis suggested this one after reading "Swimming."

Sea Change and School Days by Robert B. Parker. We all need a little diversion once in awhile. Spenser and Jesse Stone are at it again, fighting injustice and standing up for Everyman.

### Cheerleading, continued from page 16

schools across the country slashed their gymnastics programs in the 1980s for liability reasons, sidelined gymnasts joined the cheerleading squads, forcing the traditional cheerleaders to up their gymnastic skills just to make the team. "The injury rate in cheerleading went up so much from it being non-athletic, or barely athletic, to being athletic," says Jim Lord, the cheerleading association's executive director.

While the competition has raised cheerleading's popularity and transformed it from a seasonal pursuit to one requiring year-round, intensive training, it has also inspired some soul-searching. The 2004 report from the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research poses the question, what is the role of the cheerleader? "Is cheerleading an activity that leads the spectators in cheers or is it a sport? If the answer is to entertain the crowd and to be in competition with other cheerleading squads, then there must be safety guidelines initiated," the report concludes.

In Massachusetts, as in many states, high school cheerleading isn't regulated in any significant way. If it were governed by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) which regulates sports like football, golf, and swimming, cheerleading would have trained coaches, among other things. Instead, in 1997, cheerleading became the purview of the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Administrators Association, the professional organization for high school principals that oversees non-athletic clubs like debate team and student government and which treats cheerleading like a student activity, not a sport. "The MIAA's athletic director didn't want any part of it," says Jerry Silverman, assistant director of the principals' association, who's in charge of cheerleading. Before 1997, he says cheerleading was completely unregulated.

In the end, the bureaucratic mess puts cheerleaders at more of a risk than a three-person-high pyramid. "Cheerleading isn't dangerous on its own - it's dangerous in an environment that doesn't provide for safety," says Lord, of the coaches' association. "If we can make sure all the coaches are qualified, then the injuries that are coming from negligence now will mostly go away, and we'll be left with reality, which is there's risk involved in athletics."

*Excerpted from The Boston Globe Magazine, 1/8/06*

## INVESTORS IN CT YOUTH



- ★ Arbella Insurance Group ★
- ★ Baden Sports ★
- ★ Big Y Supermarkets ★
- ★ Bob's Discount Furniture ★
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- ★ CT Lighting Centers ★
- ★ CT Sun ★
- ★ Dove Soap ★
- ★ Grenier Studios ★
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- ★ IGA Supermarkets ★
- ★ Kaestle-Boos ★
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- ★ Spalding ★
- ★ Sports Image ★
- ★ Subway ★
- ★ Teachers' Insurance Plan ★
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- ★ Verizon Wireless ★
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