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 - National Middle School Association
 - National Association of Elementary School Principals



DECEMBER 2009

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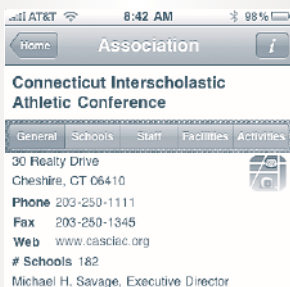
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CIAC? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

By Matt Fischer
Director of Information Services



SchoolZapp-Connecticut™ is the must-have app for anyone with an interest in Connecticut high school sports. Coach? Athletic director? Game official? Student-athlete? Parent? Media member? Fan? This app is for you!

The official iPhone app of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), SchoolZapp-Connecticut™ draws all of its information directly from the CIAC database, which means users have instant access to the most up-to-date info on CT high school sports.

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A Holiday Message

By John Dodig
Staples High School



Many years ago, I read a beautiful short story by Truman Capote titled: *A Christmas Memory*. I've remembered it for more than thirty years and asked my librarians if we had it. We do have it and I sat and read the thirty page story once again as a much older man. I have to say that this story is even more beautiful than I remembered and captures perfectly the spirit of giving that is an important part of Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza.

The story takes place decades ago in a rural village somewhere in the northern part of our country. A seven year old boy and his best friend, a sixty something year old mentally disabled woman live together sharing their poverty stricken lives with love and affection. They are each other's best friends. The story is about what happens when Christmas approaches and they have to deal with gift-giving. They have nothing, would give each other the world, but have to make do with things they can make and the love that goes into the making of the gifts.

I feel like Oprah at the moment as I strongly recommend this story to all of you. Although it is called *A Christmas Memory* it has nothing to do with religion and is very appropriate for all SHS families. In a moment of fantasy, I can see us getting a good old-fashioned northeaster, being stuck at home, and each family gathering around the fireplace or table and reading this short story aloud. I guarantee it will have a positive, heart-warming affect on all of you and will add joy to your holiday celebrations with family and friends.

Truman Capote captures the essence of these holidays. He describes true friendship, love and caring for others. He describes what gift-giving should really represent and how as human beings we require love and affection to be healthy. As you begin your holiday preparations, think about all the horrible things that have happened in the world in the past year and how, in comparison, we have much to be thankful for. Think about all the good in our lives - there is much of it.

Have a joyous Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanza with your family.

CAS EXECUTIVE COACHING PROGRAM

By Susan Kennedy, Assistant Executive Director
& Mike Buckley, Associate Executive Director

The CAS Executive Coaching Program was originally funded with a combination of state and federal funds through the Connecticut State Department of Education and continues to serve as one of the many components of the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI) offered by the CSDE. Under the current CALI contract, CAS has executive coaches in fifty-nine schools and twenty-two districts.

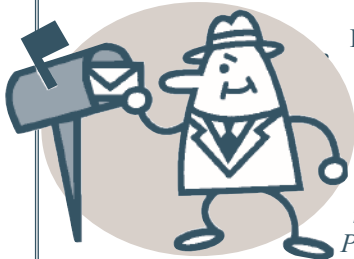
After the quality of the teacher, the most important variable determining student achievement is the quality of the school leader. The executive coaching program focuses on improving the instructional and organizational leadership capacity of principals in order to increase student achievement. Many of the principals who currently have executive coaches were identified by their districts as "strong leaders poised for success" who, with a little support and assistance, would be able to turn around their schools. On the 2009 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), all of the thirty CALI demonstration schools had statistically significant increases in CMT scores in some grades and subjects; and one-third of the larger group of fifty-nine schools with coaches reached safe harbor or made AYP. While not

continued on page 5



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: We have had a theft problem at our school, and I was suspicious of one of the custodians, who is sort of a shady character. After watching a TV show, I got a great idea. I called him to my office and asked him to sit down. I asked him about the thefts, and he denied knowing anything about them. Then I looked him hard in the eye, and asked, "What if I told you I have surveillance video showing you taking money?" Of course I didn't, but he is not the sharpest knife in the drawer. Pretty soon he was singing like a canary. Based on his confession, I immediately terminated his employment. However, now the union is claiming that I violated his rights by denying him union representation. They don't have a case, do they?

- Law and Order

A. DEAR LAW: Based on your story, I think you are OK. Employees have the right to union representation when being questioned if two conditions are met: (1) the employee must reasonably fear for his or her job security, and (2) the employee must ask for such representation. Here, the employee did not ask for representation, and you were not obligated to provide it. I must say, however, that the story of the surveillance tapes was a little sketchy. You weren't under oath and you didn't break any laws, but maybe you should watch the news rather than police procedurals.

Q. DEAR MAILBAG: At my school, we are all watching the health care debate with interest. But one of my teachers has gone off the deep end. She accosts her colleagues in the teachers' room to debate the issue, and some teachers even eat at their desks just to avoid her harangues. Now, I have received two parent complaints that she spent half the parent-teacher conference talking about the health care debate rather than their children's achievement. I think she is off-base, and I want her to knock it off. But she is quite aggressive, and I am worried that she won't take it well. Can she sue me for violating her free speech rights?

- Put a Sock in It

A. DEAR SOCK: Your teacher has significant free speech rights, and she can debate health care almost anywhere. Almost. But when she speaks as part of her job as a teacher, her speech is not protected by the First Amendment. Thus, she had no right to hijack the parent-teacher conference to express her views on health care. Her harangues in the teachers' room, however, stand on a different footing. Such speech is subject to First Amendment protections. However, time, manner and place restrictions on speech are permissible. If other teachers complain to you that they just want to be left in peace, you have the right to tell her to knock it off. Your directive would not be based on the content of her speech, which would be illegal, but rather on how she is bothering others in the workplace.

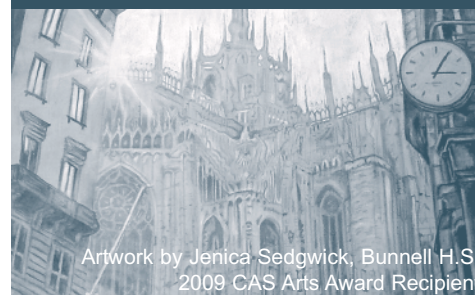
Q. DEAR MAILBAG: Illegal cell phone use at our school is getting worse and worse, and I have decided to do something about it. At the faculty meeting last week, I announced my new initiative - anytime we find a student using a cell phone in violation of school rules, we will confiscate the phone, and we will hold onto it until the end of each month, at which time we will return it to his/her parents. If these little texting addicts have to go cold turkey for several weeks, they may learn their lesson. Any concerns?

- Seize Em Danno

A. DEAR SEIZE: The problem with your plan is that it ignores the difference between confiscation (taking control of property) and expropriation (taking ownership of property). School officials have every right to confiscate property from students and hold it for their parents. But maintaining control over parent objection would interfere with the parent's ownership interest in the phone (and the monthly minutes). Besides, you are probably better off giving the phone back sooner than later. While it is under your control, you are responsible for its safe-keeping.

ct news & notes

IMPORTANT



Artwork by Jenica Sedgwick, Bunnell H.S.
2009 CAS Arts Award Recipient

The CAS High School Outstanding Arts Award Recognition Banquet has a change of date. Because of a conflict with the previously scheduled April 8th date, which is the same day as the CMEA All-State Concert Festival, the program will be held on April 27, 2010, at 6 :00 p.m., at the Aqua Turf Club. Information packets will be sent to high schools in January.

■ The Connecticut State Department of Education has been engaged in the ambitious task of preparing a major, statewide grant application for the highly competitive, federal "Race to the Top" (RTTT) fund. RTTT funds will be awarded to states to support reform in four priority policy areas: (1) promoting college and career-ready standards and assessments; (2) enhancing teacher and principal effectiveness; (3) longitudinal data systems; and (4) school turnaround. CAS representatives, along with other education leaders, local superintendents, university and business representatives, and teachers have collaborated with the state department to fashion Connecticut's proposal for public school reform. Executive Director Mike Savage chaired the committee which was charged with exploring how Connecticut could best respond to the grant's call for performance-based evaluations of teachers and principals. The state's application is due this month.

On a related note, at its meeting on December 3, the Connecticut State Board of Education was considering a legislative proposal that would lift the caps on charter school growth in Connecticut. The change is necessary if Connecticut is to be eligible for the federal RTTT grants, the requirements of which bar states from placing limits on charter school expansion and from restricting the use of student performance data to evaluate teachers.

... more ct news & notes



Pictured above are Executive Director Mike Savage (left) and CAS President Emeritus Chaplain William Charbonneau. Mike travelled to Washington, DC last month to attend Chaplain Charbonneau's retirement ceremony which was presided over by Senator Joseph Lieberman. As former president of East Catholic High School in Manchester, Colonel Charbonneau was an active member of CAS-CIAC, serving on numerous boards and committees before his appointment as president in 1995. He had been serving as a chaplain in the National Guard Bureau since 1996.

■ Graduates of Connecticut colleges and universities in the Class of 2008 had the third-highest student loan debt in the country, according to a report from the California-based Project on Student Debt. While nationally college seniors with loans graduated with an average of \$23,200 in loan debt in 2008, Connecticut graduates with loans carried an average of \$26,138. The only areas higher than Connecticut were the District of Columbia with an average of \$29,793 and Iowa with \$28,174. Five of the six New England states were ranked in the top 10 high-debt states; Massachusetts was sixteenth. New England college seniors were also more likely to graduate with debt than seniors elsewhere in the country. In Connecticut, 63 percent of graduating seniors in 2008 had debt; that percentage was 17th-highest in the country. Two Connecticut schools made it onto a list of private non-profit colleges in which students with loans carry a particularly high amount of debt: the University of Hartford, with an average student debt of \$38,852; and Quinnipiac University, with \$37,849.

See related item page 4.

AVERAGE DEBT OF 2008 GRADUATES OF CT SCHOOLS

University of Hartford: \$38,852	University of Connecticut: \$21,521
Quinnipiac University: \$37,849	Connecticut College: \$21,283
Fairfield University: \$32,857	Southern CT State University: \$19,007
Sacred Heart University: \$27,516	Trinity College: \$17,218
Wesleyan University: \$27,402	Yale University: \$12,297
Western CT State University: \$23,970	Central CT State University: \$10,500

Source: Article by Kathleen Megan, Hartford Courant, Dec. 5, 2009

legal news & notes

■ Just in time for the holiday season, a federal appeals court has upheld a New Jersey school district's restrictions on religious music at holiday performances in its schools. A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit, in Philadelphia, held that the policy of the South Orange-Maplewood School District (SOMSD) was not hostile to religion in violation of the First Amendment, nor did it violate the rights of students to receive information and ideas. In 2004, after complaints from community members about the religious content of musical selections being performed at school concerts, particularly religious songs celebrating holidays such as Christmas, the SOMSD school board implemented an interpretation of Policy 2270, "Religion in the Schools," that prohibited the performing of musical selections, both vocal and instrumental, that are celebratory holiday music. However, the interpretation still allowed for the teaching of such music and of religious music in general. The district's policy was challenged by Michael Stratechuk, a father of two students in the district, who contends the policy is hostile to religion and infringes on his children's right to learn about religious music. He lost in both a federal district court and the 3rd Circuit. "Certainly, those of us who were educated in the public schools remember holiday celebrations replete with Christmas carols, and possibly even Chanukah songs, to which no objection had been raised," says the opinion by U.S. Circuit Judge Dolores K. Sloviter in *Stratechuk v. Board of Education, South Orange-Maplewood School District*. "Since then, the governing principles have been examined and defined with more particularity. Many decisions about how to best create an inclusive environment in public schools, such as those at issue here, are left to the sound discretion of the school authorities." The opinion goes into some detail about the school district's policies and practices in recent years. The upshot is that the district encourages secular holiday selections such as "Winter Wonderland," "Frosty the Snowman," and "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer."

national news & notes

■ When kids sit in front of the TV watching snack food commercials along with their cartoons, they eat more junk than those who don't watch such ads, according to a Yale University study. The research shows that children watching television with food commercials can increase snacking by 45 percent, potentially contributing to the nationwide increase in child obesity and diseases such as diabetes. The research was published in the American Psychological Association's journal *Health Psychology* in July. The researchers conducted an experiment in which 108 children ages 7 to 11 watched cartoons. Half of the kids saw snack food commercials and half saw non-food commercials. A second experiment with adults showed similar results. "This research shows a direct and powerful link between television food advertising and calories consumed by adults and children," said Jennifer Harris, director of marketing initiatives at the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale and lead author of the study. "Food advertising triggers automatic eating, regardless of hunger, and is a significant contributor to the obesity epidemic. Reducing unhealthy food advertising to children is critical." The researchers estimated that a half-hour per day viewing television with food commercials could lead to gaining 10 pounds a year, without dieting or increased exercise.

... more national news & notes

■ According to a report released earlier this month by The Project on Student Debt, student loan debt of new college graduates continued to rise even as it got harder for recent graduates to find jobs. Nationwide, average debt for graduating seniors with loans rose from \$18,650 in 2004 to \$23,200 in 2008, or about six percent per year. State averages for student debt at graduation in 2008 ranged from highs near \$30,000 to a low of \$13,000. High-debt states are concentrated in the Northeast, while low-debt states are mostly in the West. Meanwhile, employment prospects for young college graduates have soured along with the economy. The unemployment rate for college graduates aged 20-24 was a challenging 7.6 percent in the third quarter of 2008, the highest third quarter rate since 2002; by the third quarter of 2009 it had risen to 10.6 percent, the highest on record. The report can be downloaded at <http://projectonstudentdebt.org/files/pub/classof2008.pdf>.

High Debt States	
District of Columbia	\$ 29,793
Iowa	\$ 28,174
Connecticut	\$ 26,138
New York	\$ 25,950
New Hampshire	\$ 25,785
Minnesota	\$ 25,558
Pennsylvania	\$ 25,219
Vermont	\$ 25,047
Rhode Island	\$ 24,973
Maine	\$ 24,916

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Maine	\$ 24,916

■ Two out of five of America's 4 million K-12 teachers appear disheartened and disappointed about their jobs, while others express a variety of reasons for contentment with teaching and their current school environments, new research by Public Agenda and Learning Point Associates shows. The nationwide study, "Teaching for a Living: How Teachers See the Profession Today," offers a comprehensive and nuanced look at how teachers differ in their perspectives on their profession, why they entered teaching, the atmosphere and leadership in their schools, the problems they face, their students and student outcomes, and ideas for reform. Taking a closer look at the nation's teacher corps based on educators' attitudes and motivations for teaching could provide some notable implications for how to identify, retain, and support the most effective teachers, according to the researchers. The report is based on a nationally representative survey of 890 teachers conducted between April and June 2009. Based on their individual characteristics and attitudes about the profession, teacher respondents naturally fell into three broad categories, which the researchers call the "Disheartened," "Contented," and "Idealists."

■ The Disheartened, who account for 40 percent of K-12 teachers in the United States, tend to have been teaching longer and be older than the Idealists. More than half teach in low-income schools. They are more likely to voice high levels of frustration about the school administration, disorder in the classroom, and an undue focus on testing. Only 14 percent rated their principals as "excellent" at supporting them as teachers, and 61 percent cited lack of support from administrators as a major drawback to teaching.

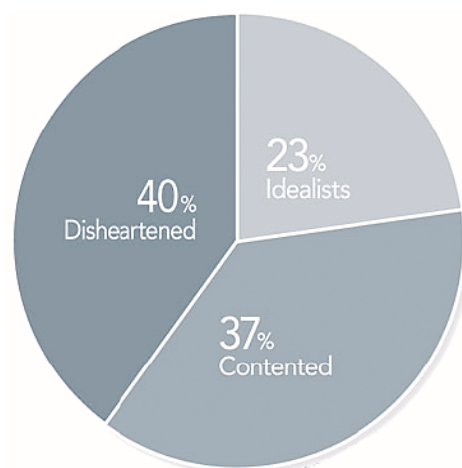
■ The Contented, which represent 37 percent of teachers overall, viewed teaching as a lifelong career. Most said their schools were "orderly, safe, and respectful," and were satisfied with their administrators. Sixty-three percent strongly agreed that "teaching is exactly what I wanted to do," and roughly three-fourths feel that they have sufficient time to craft good lesson plans. Those teachers tend to be veterans—94 percent have been in the classroom for more than 10 years, a majority have graduate degrees, and about two-thirds are teaching in middle-income or affluent schools.

■ The Idealists, who comprise 23 percent of teachers overall, voiced the strongest sense of mission about teaching. Nearly nine in 10 Idealists believe that "good teachers can lead all students to learn, even those from poor families or who have uninvolved parents." Idealists overwhelmingly said that helping underprivileged children improve their prospects motivated them to enter the profession. More than half are 32 or younger and teach in elementary schools, and 36 percent said that even though they intend to stay in education, they plan to leave classroom teaching for other jobs in the field. To access the report, visit <http://www.publicagenda.org/pages/teaching-for-a-living> (www.edweek.com), "State of Mind" by Andrew Yarrow, Oct. 19, 2009)

Degree of Confidence

The percent of teachers who strongly agree that all their students, with the right support, can go to college varies among the groups.

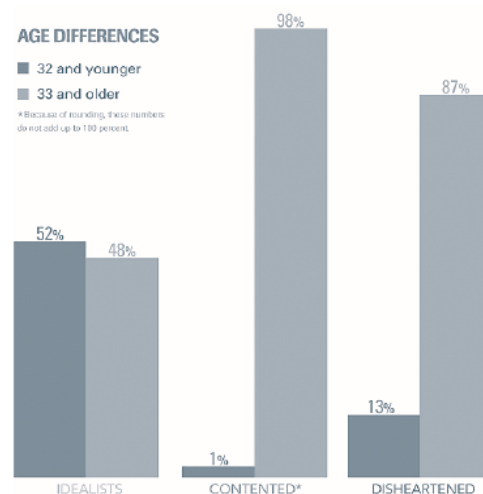
54% idealists
30% contented
39% disheartened



AGE DIFFERENCES

■ 32 and younger
■ 33 and older

*Because of rounding, these numbers do not add up to 100 percent.



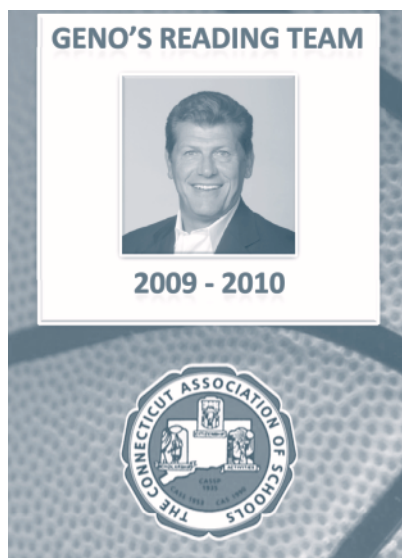
DATE SET FOR "GENO'S READING TEAM" PEP RALLY

By Dave Maloney, Assistant Executive Director

The Connecticut Association of Schools and "Geno's Reading Team" are pleased to announce that a pep rally will be held at Gampel Pavilion on Saturday morning, January 16, 2010, to celebrate reading in Connecticut's elementary schools. The rally will be held in conjunction with "Women's College Game Day" sponsored by ESPN.

CAS Assistant Director Dave Maloney noted, "We are thrilled to be part of this spirited event. We are going to set our alarm clocks early and get to Gampel by 9AM. I promise you that our elementary partners will bring their signs and posters and dress for this occasion! You'll hear us loud and clear cheering on the UCONN women's basketball team, that's for sure!"

This fall, CAS partnered with Coach Geno Auriemma's UCONN basketball team developing a reading incentive program which includes a syllabus of recommended books and a reading journal. Connecticut's elementary students have been reading at least 20 minutes a day for enjoyment along with the UCONN players. Each book in the syllabus has a theme that reflects the values that have made the UCONN players world class student-athletes, such as



perseverance, effort, and self-discipline. The UCONN players have been posting videos with their interpretations, responses and reactions to the books on the CAS website. (Go to <http://www.casciac.org/go?169> for more information.)

It is not too late to register for Geno's Reading Team! Over 60 schools have signed up for the program and many more schools are expected to register by January.

Inquiries about the program may be directed to assistant directors Dave Maloney or Regina Birdsell at 203-250-1111.

Executive Coaching, *continued from page 1*

making safe harbor or AYP, other principals who are new to their responsibilities have benefitted greatly from the vast experience and insight of an executive coach.

Perhaps the hallmark of the CAS Executive Coaching Program is the fact that CAS staff provides so much oversight for the coaching process. CAS recruits, trains, supervises, and evaluates executive coaches in order to support the principals and their leadership teams in improving student performance. Acknowledging that coaching and professional development are contextual, CAS provides on-going professional development to the executive coaches and, in some instances to the principals as well. Such contextualized professional development is designed to further build coaching, instructional and leadership skills. All of the CAS Executive Coaches are fully trained in data driven decision-making, common formative assessments, effective teaching strategies, prioritizing standards and are in the process of being fully trained in SRBI.

Three levels of executive coaching support are offered. Executive coaches can be engaged on any one of the three levels or coaching efforts can be customized.

Gold Support

- Geographic cohort designed to serve similar type districts in a defined area.
- Hourly on-site, phone and email coaching sessions.
- Often combines "group coaching," fostering the building of local support networks, with "individual coaching" to system and personal/professional goals.
- Rate negotiable depending upon location/travel and services.

Platinum Support

- 15 on-site coaching days, including observations as appropriate to goals.
- 5 off-site sessions with leadership team, superintendent, and/or grouped cohorts
- Limited phone and email access to coach.
- Individualized goals (system and personal/professional)

Diamond Support

- 30 on-site coaching days, including observations as appropriate to goals.
- 10 off-site sessions with leadership team, superintendent, and/or grouped cohorts
- Unlimited phone and email access to coach.
- Individualized goals (system and personal/professional)

*Rates vary depending on the level of support and include administration, executive coach salary, secretarial, mileage, materials, and CAS facility usage.

Districts interested in hiring executive coaches to support or enhance the skills of their principals and/or leadership teams should contact Mike Buckley or Susan Kennedy at CAS.

IMPORTANT REMINDER To Member School Principals

All member schools were required to update their school information in the online CAS membership database by **October 15th**. To date, only 49% of our members have done so. It is vital that we keep our membership data as current as possible. This allows member schools to take full advantage of the benefits of CAS membership and ensures that our online membership directory information is up-to-date. **Please keep in mind that if we don't have the correct e-mail address on file for the building principal, he/she will miss out on important news and announcements.**

Visiting the on-line membership database also provides principals with an opportunity to review and sign off on the CAS membership agreement for the 2009-2010 year. Acceptance of this agreement is a requirement of CAS membership.

All member school principals should have received an e-mail containing their school number and login ID for accessing the on-line membership database. Principals who did not receive this message should contact Karen Packtor at 203-250-1111, ext. 3910 or kpacttor@casciac.org.

Editor's Note: Ginger and Larry Katz lost their son in 1996 to a drug overdose. They subsequently founded "The Courage to Speak" Foundation to offer programs to schools and communities that seek to prevent drug use and abuse. For schools interested in riveting and thought-provoking presentations, the following is one principal's endorsement of how his school has had success with the Foundation's offerings.



Brookside School

382 Highland Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06854
(203) 899-2830

November 20, 2009

Dear Principals:

I, like Ginger and Larry with their son Ian, suffered a loss of a young man, my son Aaron, who could not overcome the power of his addiction. We as individuals must speak with a powerful voice to help prevent other sons and daughters from this tragedy. The "Courage To Speak" curriculum is a proven program that will help our students make better choices for their future.

There are dozens of drug prevention programs available to schools, but few are as compelling and effective as the one presented by the "Courage To Speak" Foundation. Brookside School has used and endorses their drug prevention program. We've used it in the health classes for the past four years.

Norwalk Connecticut parents Ginger and Larry Katz founded the "Courage to Speak" Foundation programs to help our children make good decisions on avoiding drug use and addiction.

The heart of Courage to Speak is the Presentation, which tells Ian's story with a prevention message for children and parents. The Foundation developed a curriculum with experts in prevention, based on Ms. Katz book *Sunny's Story* that is taught in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades in Norwalk, Bridgeport and Monroe and the book can be found in many school libraries.

Sunny's Story is narrated through the eyes, ears and mind of Sunny, the family beagle and provides moving ground on which to deliver an empowering prevention message to this age group. The Courage to Speak Middle School Curriculum is taught in 7th grade in Norwalk Public Schools. The newest program, *Courageous Parenting 101*, gives parents the knowledge and tools to keep their children safe.

Ms. Katz is available to speak at your elementary, middle or high school. Her number is 1-877-431-3295.

Please have the courage to speak up and be part of a program that will save lives. Visit www.couragetospeak.org.

Very truly yours,

David Hay
Principal, Brookside Elementary School

CAS OPENS NOMINATIONS FOR DISTINGUISHED FRIEND OF EDUCATION AWARDS

The Awards and Recognition Committee of CAS is soliciting nominations for the 2010 Distinguished Friend of Education Awards. Nominations for this award must be submitted electronically via the CAS-CIAC website. The Distinguished Friend of Education Awards, established in 1983, honor a person and an organization or corporation for outstanding service to education in Connecticut. If you wish to nominate an individual or an organization/corporation for these prestigious awards, please complete the nomination form on-line at http://www.casciac.org/nominate_dfe.shtml by January 8, 2010. Nominations must be submitted and/or endorsed by the building principal. There is a limit of one nomination per principal. For additional information, including award criteria, visit <http://casciac.org/go?211>.

TWENTY-THREE SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED FOR BLOOD COLLECTION EFFORTS

The 5th Annual Red Cross High School Recognition and Awards Banquet was held in Farmington on October 22, 2009. Twenty-three Connecticut schools were recognized for their support of blood drives in the state. Without the involvement of Connecticut high schools, there would be a dramatic shortage of life-supporting blood. The following schools were recognized for their outstanding participation.

FOUR OR MORE BLOOD DRIVES PER YEAR SPONSORS

<u>School</u>	<u>Lives Saved</u>
• Howell Cheney Technical H.S.	1,020
• Vinal Regional Technical H.S.	897
• Torrington High School	768
• Bristol Eastern High School	657
• Norwich Technical H.S.	549
• Nonnewaug High School	525

THREE BLOOD DRIVES PER YEAR SPONSORS

<u>School</u>	<u>Lives Saved</u>
• RHAM High School	699
• Danbury High School	573
• Valley Regional High School	519
• East Hartford High School	504
• New Milford High School	483
• Bristol Central High School	471
• Wolcott High School	450
• Berlin High School	447
• Masuk High School	435
• Windham Technical H.S.	432
• Windsor High School	429
• Bassick High School	345
• Plainfield High School	282

GREATEST INCREASE OF PRODUCTIVE UNITS

<u>School</u>	<u>Increase in Units</u>
• Vinal Regional Technical H.S.	143
• Torrington High School	77
• Enrico Fermi High School	75
• Northwest Catholic H.S.	51
• East Hampton High School	49
• Nathan Hale Ray H.S.	49



**American
Red Cross**

CSAC PARTNERS WITH UNIFIED THEATER™



"The Connecticut Student Activities Conference is thrilled to be partnering with Unified Theatre™. We look forward to sponsoring workshops to assist our member schools in launching this fantastic educational opportunity for students."

- Dave Maloney, CAS Assistant Executive Director

Lights dim. Students excitedly wait backstage. Music selected for the perfect "opening number" echoes through the auditorium. Actors step into the spotlight. They dance, laugh, sing, and act as one cohesive unit - one they've developed over the last six weeks of student-led rehearsal. This production is unique in that it equally features students of all abilities, interests, and backgrounds: the student with autism who loves to sing; the football team captain who has some trouble memorizing lines; the valedictorian who thought she was too shy to perform;

the girl with down syndrome who leads a dance number; the new student who didn't feel

welcome in other school groups; the young person who uses a wheelchair and says lines in sign language. The audience sees students genuinely want to be performing together. They've developed friendships that will last long after curtain call. In the closing number, the audience jumps to a standing ovation - smiling widely, many with tears on their cheeks.

This is Unified Theater™.



Photo by Michelle Gardella

At Unified Theater™, we work with schools to help them develop and sustain student-led theatrical groups equally featuring the talents of individuals with and without special needs. Productions are fully inclusive. They facilitate collaboration between students of different backgrounds, passions, and abilities join in a putting on a show that pushes them to shed inhibition, take risks, and challenge perceptions of ability together. Right now, we work with eight schools and three community agencies to support their Unified Theater™ groups and we'd like to work with your school too! We're a CAS approved activity that will challenge your students and school community to emphasize ability over disability, creativity over conformity, and collaboration over competition.

"Unified Theater™ is a group that challenges everyone that's involved to step out of their element and grow as a person."

- Ali, Unified Theater™ Alumnae

"In my experience, no program or activity reaches the elusive goal of inclusion as completely - or as joyously - as Unified Theater™."

- Tom Fiorentino, Parent
Former Chair, West Hartford
Board of Education

"I enjoy Unified Theater™ so much is because from all the troubles and stresses of the school day, you get two hours to have as much fun as you want while still being a great role model and friend to kids who don't have the abilities you have."

- Brady, Unified Theater™
Participant



Principal to Principal

"Unified Theater™ is, in my mind, the single most inspiring event that we have at Conard High School every year. I am never more proud of our students, nor our whole community, than when I watch students from all different backgrounds, and abilities, come together in a performance that lets everyone be a star. It really reminds me of the power education can have to lift up the spirits of children, and families, and it truly provides definition to the term "least restrictive environment". If I could choose one evening event for my entire staff to go to, it would be this, for it is the very embodiment of the possibilities of all students, and powerful evidence of the ability for all to learn when placed in the proper environment. Every year when the performance ends, not only am I speechless, but tears of joy are streaming down my face. Being a part of Unified Theater, and being able to support it at Conard H.S., is perhaps my greatest privilege as principal."

- Tom Moore, Principal
Conard High School, West Hartford

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE:

- ★ Visit www.unifiedtheater.org
- ★ Nominate a student leader in your school. Visit the "Start a Group" section of the website or send an email to contactus@unifiedtheater.org.
- ★ We'll be holding a student leader training on January 21st at CAS in Cheshire. Join us!!!



Left to right: Loretta Rubin, chair, CAS Elementary School of the Year Committee; Mona Goodman, principal, J. Milton Jeffrey Elem. School, and Harriet Feldlaufer, chief, CSDE Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction



The staff of J. Milton Jeffrey Elementary School, the 2009 CAS Elementary School of the Year!

CAS CELEBRATES ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' SUCCESS

By Stephanie Ford, Director of Marketing

The Connecticut Association of Schools' Elementary Division held its 16th Annual Program Recognition Banquet on November 23rd at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. Sponsored by Horace Mann Insurance, the theme for the evening was "Celebration of Connecticut Elementary Schools' Success." The evening publicly acknowledged exemplary programs and dedicated staff that have brought about significant school improvement, promoted school success or had a positive impact in their school.

Geoff Fox, Weather Center Director for Action News 8 served as emcee, providing live weather broadcasts with principals and teachers throughout the evening. Harriet Feldlaufer, Chief of Curriculum and Instruction for the Connecticut State Department of Education was the guest speaker for the event. She acknowledged the uniqueness of the exemplary programs being recognized and praised the dedication and commitment of the staff being honored.

Loretta Rubin, CAS Elementary School

of the Year Committee Chair, presented the Elementary School of the Year Award to J. Milton Jeffrey Elementary School in Madison. Mona Goodman, Principal of Jeffrey Elementary accepted the award in front of a large crowd of over 400. In her acceptance speech, Principal Goodman proudly stated, "What represents the core of our thinking at Jeffrey School is not concern for finding that something that is necessarily new, but rather the simple understanding that success lies in working together to get better at what we do. So with this commitment as a school community in place, we continue to work together at discovering what every one of us has to offer and what opportunities we can make a reality as we at Jeffrey School seek to attain some uncommon results."

Lauren Elias, Chairperson for the CAS Elementary Level Division, formally introduced two other educators being honored for their great achievements. Jill Pilon, a teacher from East Farms School in Farmington, was recognized as the CAS Exemplary Elementary Educator for 2009-

2010, and Marcia Elliott, Principal of West Stafford School in Stafford Springs, was recognized as Connecticut's National Distinguished Elementary School Principal for 2009-2010. The evening concluded with a wonderful multi media presentation which paid tribute to all of the schools and programs being honored. Each school also received a plaque of recognition.

Special thanks go to the committee for their thoughtful planning and arrangement of this special evening. Committee members: Lauren Elias, Principal of B.W Tinker School in Waterbury; Rosie O'Brien-Vojtek, Principal of Ivy Drive School in Bristol; Kent Hurlburt, Principal of Yalesville Elementary School; Renata Lantos, Principal of Bielefield School in Middletown; Jocelyn Poglitsch, Assistant Principal of John B. Sliney School in Branford; and Gina Vance, Assistant Principal of Gideon Wells School in Glastonbury. Next year's Elementary Program Recognition Banquet will be held on November 29, 2010. Save the date!

Attention Worrywarts – You Can Change

If you're human, you worry. And worrying has served a great purpose for humankind – the process has been an integral part of evolution and survival for thousands of years. Let's face it, compared to, say a T. rex, human beings were not the most likely creatures to survive long term – so what happened? We worried. Or in other words, we were able to exercise forethought – project the possibilities of what might happen in the future in our minds and then make decisions based on the "what if ..." scenario. And it helped.

If a caveman saw a friend eat a berry and then fall down dead, he would be able to think "Gee, my friend died after eating a purple berry." And weeks later when he found a bush full of purple berries that looked like the ones his friend ate, he would make the informed and rational decision to avoid putting one in his mouth. In essence, he worried about something before he did it – and he survived.

But like all good things, sometimes our evolutionary gold mines go awry and end up with negative consequences if they are allowed to run amok. And that, in essence, seems to be happening to a

lot of people today. People seem to be experiencing overwhelming levels of worry and the condition is being tagged as generalized anxiety disorder. Psychologists seem to think that people are experiencing GAD more often these days because modern life is full of so much stress. According to the American Institute of Cognitive Therapy, people react to this stress in different ways: Some people believe that if they worry they are somehow protecting and preparing themselves; some believe that they need certainty in order to relax; and some believe that worrying about worrying is going to drive them crazy.

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Gail Thibodeau (center) receives the Middle Level Exemplary Educator Award from Earle Bidwell, CAS Assistant Executive Director (left), and Judith Abrams, members of the CAS Middle Level Honors and Awards Committee.

GAIL THIBODEAU – MIDDLE LEVEL EXEMPLARY EDUCATOR

By Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

"There is no limit to Gail Thibodeau's motivation to provide each and every child in our school with the tools that they need to succeed. Each professional encounter makes me more aware of her dedication, passion, and knowledge of our profession. She not only educates her students, but makes the professionals around her better at their jobs." These remarks by Principal Rick Watson are but a sampling of the accolades bestowed upon Dr. Gail Thibodeau, the CAS Middle Level Exemplary Educator for 2009-2010.

A twenty-five year veteran, Gail is the language arts consultant at the Albert D. Griswold Middle School in Rocky Hill. Holding a doctorate in educational leadership, she remains in the classroom because every year presents new challenges. She states, "I always have the sense that I am still 'becoming' the educator that I will eventually be. I end each school year feeling that I have not quite finished what I set out to do."

As satisfying as is her work with children, her collaboration with other educators is even more fulfilling. As the language arts department chair, she works with other teachers to continually update and improve curriculum. As the language arts consultant she provides professional development for teachers in other disciplines to improve literacy instruction across the curriculum.

Gail Thibodeau's influence goes far beyond the walls of her school. She has worked with teachers at the high school level to expand her work on content literacy through collaborative study groups, has received a national learning and leadership grant and has been published in the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*.

In presenting the award to Dr. Thibodeau, Judith Abrams from the CAS Honors and Awards Committee quoted William James who once said, "Spend your life for things that outlast it." She went on to say, "Gail is doing just that. She works tirelessly and selflessly to better not only those with whom she works, but also herself. As she teaches, writes, and leads, she herself continues to learn and grow." She is an educator who is truly worthy of this award.

You're
Invited . . .



Elementary and Middle Level Schools Invited to Honor Volunteers on March 25th!

The Connecticut Association of Schools, Elementary and Middle Level Divisions, take great pleasure in announcing the Volunteer Recognition Banquet to be held on March 16, 2010, at the Aqua Turf Club, Southington, at 5:00 p.m. This program is intended to give public recognition to parents or other volunteers who have made major contributions to our schools. Contributions may include volunteering, service to the school, chairing committees, PTA/PTO officers, organizing events, fundraisers, etc. Our major purpose is to provide you with an opportunity to say "Thank you" in a very special way.

We expect that the vast majority of our elementary and middle level schools will participate. Your early response will determine your school's seating location. The Connecticut Association of Schools, Elementary and Middle Level Divisions look forward to receiving notification of your awardees and to greeting you on March 16, 2010, at the Aqua Turf.

Registration will be available starting the week of January 11, 2010 on the CAS website: www.casciac.org/register.

Worry, continued from page 8

So what's a worrywart to do? According to NetDoctor.co.uk, cognitive therapy can help those stricken with GAD. This involves analyzing your response to the world, and learning how to think and act in new ways. Physical exercise and deep breathing is also very helpful for most sufferers.

Dr. Robert Leahy, author of *The Worry Cure*, says there are ways to stop excessive worry, "It takes practice and patience," Leahy says, "but ultimately it boils down to readjusting how you think about the world, and really believing that tomorrow is more likely to bring you something humdrum or wonderful than something frightening."

DIRECT ASSESSMENT OF WRITING IS FLAWED

By Julie Hodgson, Teacher, Manchester Middle School

I am troubled that the Direct Assessment of Writing (DAW), Connecticut's primary assessment for measuring 7th and 8th grade students' progress in writing, encourages students to fabricate statistics, quotations, and other forms of inaccurate information. The Connecticut State Department of Education's anchor sets and model papers endorse such practices. This problem has bothered me for years, but it most recently became an issue last spring, when one of my highest-achieving students asked me, "But Ms. Hodgson, if we can't find a good statistic or something to back it up, can't we just make it up like we do on the CMT?" Consider the following examples from the Holistic Scoring Workshop CD, and note how the annotations not only identify but praise the use of inaccurate information:

- "A recent survey taken by the News said that 90% of environments that get dirtier have janitors that demand more pay . . . Lastly, test scores will fall. A study by the NY Institute of Education says that if it is harder for a student to study (carrying study materials) then that student 'won't bother trying.' . . . You might think that you are keeping the students of your school safe by eliminating the risk of a bomb in a backpack, but it is far easier, according to the CIA, to hide a bomb in your shoe. And if that doesn't convince you, the detectors in the school can see through 50 feet of concrete, let alone a backpack." (Grade 7 Samples: Persuasive Writing 1 - Paper #12)

Annotation: Score Point 6. The smooth presentation of three fully elaborated reasons (messy hallways, more expense, lowering of grades) culminates in a strong sense of closure that alludes to the introduction: "It is far easier, according to the CIA, to hide a bomb in your shoe." Precise word choice and varied sentence structure enhance fluency throughout this response.

- "In fact, 37% of adults in Anytown are unemployed. Don't you want to fix that? By doing research, I have found that the amusement park will need lots of employees, and they won't need to have very much experience, & anyone that is older and is competent to work would be able to be employed there." (Grade 8 Samples: Persuasive Writing 1 - Paper #9)

Annotation: Score Point 5. This writer cites statistics (37% of adults are unemployed) and the personal opinions of town citizens (Rich B. Gone said, 'I haven't had a job since I was fifteen. I need this amusement park so that I can support my family') to support this developed response in favor of an amusement park.

The CSDE provides the rubric, sample prompts, a CD titled "CMT Fourth Generation Holistic Scoring Workshop," and anchor sets to illustrate the various scores in order to help teachers better understand the holistic scoring process for the DAW and to inform their instruction accordingly. The anchor sets include sample papers for all levels of achievement, ranging from the weakest "1" to the highest "6." Any paper that earns two 4's for a total score of 8 indicates the student has achieved mastery on this particular test.

While this instrument is not intended to measure whether a student can regurgitate facts or apply editing skills, it is designed to assess students' ability to communicate ideas in writing in a timed setting. It is also clear that the test designers hope to "level the playing field" for all students by eliminating such variables when measuring the ability to write, and this is the reason most prompts do not depend on students' prior knowledge or experiences in other areas. Although there is a need to provide writing prompts about which all students can compose and communicate

ideas, there should not exist a need for the students to make up supporting information.

English Language Arts teachers must help students achieve in all aspects of reading, writing, and thinking, including instructing students so they develop a variety of skills and strategies to engage in meaningful research. Several expectations from The Connecticut Language Arts Frameworks support this:

- 3.2 d: Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.
- 3.2 e: Evaluate the validity and authenticity of primary and secondary sources of information.
- 2.2. b: Students will develop a critical stance and cite evidence to support the stance.

Encouraging students to include false "facts" for an important state assessment stands in stark contrast to our goals for adolescents to become critical consumers of information. The information explosion has occurred, and our students' access to it has grown exponentially. As a result, it is imperative that students learn how to discern fact from fiction and sort through a myriad of sources to know what information is reliable, accurate, or biased. In order for us to help students become critical and analytical thinkers, we must model this process ourselves and remain consistent with our instruction. Our teaching reflects a great deal of hypocrisy if in one class or unit we tell students, "If you don't have a fact, that's ok. Make it up!" and at other times we require students to be sure their information is accurate and from valid sources. Even worse, I wonder how we can in good conscience expect the behaviors we associate with good character, namely honesty and integrity, while simultaneously allow and even encourage students to make up facts and statistics. In fact, such practice defies the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers, in particular the professional educator's responsibility to "Engage students in the pursuit of truth, knowledge and wisdom and provide access to all points of view without deliberate distortion of subject matter."

Some educators disagree. They contend that students know this is a timed-test, and that writing offers opportunities to be creative, use the imagination, and fictionalize. I understand that point and do what I can to provide numerous opportunities for students to develop their imaginations and creativity in writing. However, I do not think all adolescents are mature enough to discern that in non-fiction, expository and persuasive writing, it is sometimes acceptable to create their own facts, and at other times it is not.

Teachers and students would benefit if the models and anchor sets did not endorse the use of artificial details. Perhaps the CSDE could offer materials to help students elaborate and support their ideas through strategies that do not involve making up facts. Attaching several specific -- and accurate! -- details with the prompt questions that the students could use in their written responses would be one alternative. We would be more consistent with our ideals to make students more responsible and improved evaluators of information if this portion of the assessment were amended.

Julie Hodgson is the Writing Center Teacher at Mansfield Middle School. She has served as "Teacher in Residence for Language Arts" at the Connecticut State Department of Education. She has also been recognized as a Milken Award winner and The Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut's "Outstanding School Educator." Mrs. Hodgson has also keynoted the Connecticut Association of Schools Scholar-Leader Banquet.

ciac news

INJURIES JUST ONE CONCERN WHEN WEIGHING NATURAL GRASS V. SYNTHETIC TURF

By Robert J. Romano, Esq.

High school athletic departments throughout the United States are debating the issue of natural grass versus synthetic turf when it comes to their athletic fields. In doing so, athletic departments need to compare and contrast natural grass playing fields with a new generation of synthetic turf, which consists of a fine-textured cover of polyethylene fibers (synthetic blades of grass) over a base of well-drained aggregate. The fibers are then topped with small granules of crushed rubber, or a combination of crushed rubber and sand. The different brands of synthetic turf on the market include: Sprinturf, SmartGrass, Sporturf, and industry leader, Field Turf. In deciding which playing surface to purchase for their athletic program, athletic departments, athletic directors and coaches need to be aware of the following.

Initial Costs

The cost of installing a synthetic turf field is approximately \$800,000.00; whereas the cost of installing a natural turf field has many different variables, but is estimated at approximately \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00. In addition to the installation cost, athletic departments need to consider and request bid proposals from manufacturers that include costs for field preparation, yearly maintenance and repair expenses, and for the costs associated with removal and disposal.

Maintenance

Athletic departments need to be aware of the fact that maintenance and maintenance costs vary greatly between natural and synthetic surfaces. A properly maintained natural grass field requires regular mowing, spraying for weeds, irrigation, chalking the lines, and daily trash and glass pick-ups. Grass fields also need to be closed for a period of time to allow the grass to rest.

Synthetic fields require additional infill, irrigation (due to unacceptably high temperatures on warm days) chemical disinfectants, sprays to reduce static cling and odors, drainage repair and maintenance, erasing and repainting temporary lines, and removing organic matter accumulation.

Specialized equipment such as sweepers, groomers, field magnets and rollers are needed for dragging and the redistribution of the turfs rubber granules.

Life Span & Long-term Costs

The life span of a synthetic field ranges from 10 to 15 years. However, at the end of its life, a new field would cost significantly less than the original because the basic design, foundation, and drainage have already been built. The replacement cost for

a basic field is approximately \$65,000.00, while a premium field is approximately \$110,000.00. However, when an in-fill synthetic turf needs renovating there is a hidden cost of disposal since the field is filled and top-dressed with a crumb rubber material. The material may require special disposal which costs are estimated at \$130,000.00 — plus any transportation and landfill charges.

continued on page 13

CIAC App, continued from page 1

SchoolZapp-Connecticut™ provides a treasure trove of detailed information about each CIAC member school and CIAC sponsored sport, including:

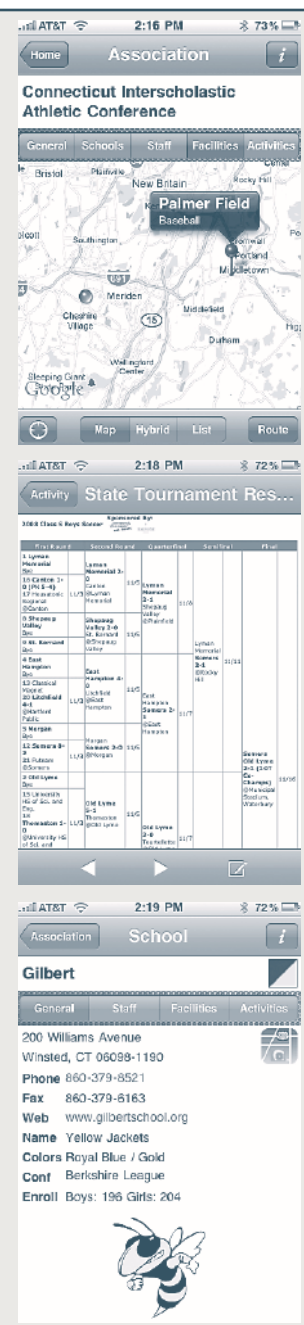
- Listing of sports sponsored by each member school with divisional info, game schedules and results and more.
- Tournament rankings, playoff point standings and tournament information.
- Playoff rosters and tournament brackets at playoff time.
- Staff lists for the CIAC and each member school with names, positions and contact info.
- Facility list (campus, stadiums, soccer fields, etc.) — you can help expand this list using your phone's GPS! SchoolZapp-Connecticut™ has a unique feature which allows users to improve the utility by identifying facilities at a school and sending that information directly to the CIAC.

SchoolZapp-Connecticut™ is interactive:

- Easily search by school or staff member name.
- Driving directions from your current location to every school.
- Coaches can enter their game results directly within the app (school-created coaches access code required).
- One-touch dialing, email creation and web browsing.

The application can be purchased from the AppStore at <http://www.itunes.com/apps/schoolzappconnecticut>

CAS-CIAC now also has a special version of its membership directory customized for iPhone. To use it, navigate to <http://www.casciac.org/mobiledir/> on your iPhone or iPod Touch.



... more ciac news

CIAC BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES NEW FOOTBALL DIVISION AND PLAYOFF STRUCTURE

The CIAC Board of Control voted unanimously at its meeting last month to accept the proposal of the CIAC Football Committee to adapt a new division and playoff structure for the sport of football beginning in the 2010 season.

"The board would like to commend the football committee for the several years of hard work that resulted in this proposal," said Berlin High School Principal George Synnott, chair of the CIAC board. "The committee was able to formulate a plan that addressed some substantial issues. Under the new system eight additional teams will have the opportunity to participate in the CIAC football playoffs each year. Our organization is about providing opportunities for student-athletes and this plan accomplishes that goal."

The format calls for four equal divisions by enrollment (down from the current six). Eight teams in each division would qualify for the playoffs. A quarterfinal round will be on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, followed by semifinals on the next Saturday and the four championship games the Saturday after that. In 2010 those dates will be November 30th (16 quarterfinals at sites of the higher ranked team), December 4th (eight semifinals at neutral sites if possible) and December 11th (four championship games at one or two sites).

"The football committee would like to thank the board for understanding the value of this proposal and giving it such a strong endorsement," commented committee chair Leroy Williams. "Starting next year an additional 500+ student-athletes will be able to experience the thrill of CIAC playoff competition as a reward for the hard work that leads to a successful season."

The complete proposal as presented to the board can be viewed on the CIAC website at <http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/32fbpropose.pdf>.

APPEALS COURT AFFIRMS RULING FOR JEWISH GROUP, WHICH SUED MHSAA

A Michigan state appeals court has sided with a Jewish school in a case in which the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) sanctioned the academy for refusing to play sporting events from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

The Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit, which had asserted its position out of respect for the Jewish Sabbath, had been victorious at the trial court level, securing an injunction against the MHSAA's decision to revoke its association membership. In so ruling, that court relied on the Civil Rights Act, MCL 37.2401 et seq., and the plaintiff's Michigan and United States Constitutional rights. The MHSAA appealed the ruling, arguing that the trial court lacked subject matter jurisdiction to grant the plaintiff's request for an injunction. However, the appeals court upheld the lower court's decision.

MHSAA Communications Director John Johnson issued the following statement through the media: "The court of appeals

turned down the association's request to overturn the lower court's ruling. Consistent with our history, we'll appeal anything we feel will harm the legitimate interests of hundreds of other membership schools. We have a very diverse membership. This is a situation that would really disrupt the academic and athletic schedules of thousands of students and create hardships for parents, students, adults, spectators, students, coaches, media and others if this were to happen, if the court says we have to rearrange our tournament schedule to accommodate one school. While we respect the academy for its strong belief, we desire that it fulfills its promise when it voluntarily joins the association every year by school board resolution to follow the rules as a requirement of membership. What's at issue here is that we're asking them to respect the tournament schedules that the other 750 some odd schools have to play by."

(Source: "Legal Issues in High School Athletics," November-December 2009)

CTSN Update

CTSN-TV is the station that airs many of our CIAC tournament and regular season games. Here are some updates on CTSN-TV that may be of interest:

- CTSN is now available on Cox - channel 144.
- On Comcast, depending on what town you are in, CTSN is available on channel 185, 187 or 744. As of January 1st they will be channel 744 in all Comcast areas.
- "Game Time" is a new half hour weekly show hosted by John Holt and Joe Zone. It airs on Thursday nights at 7pm and highlights different CT high school and college games played that week.
- "The Back Page" is a new 1 hour monthly show hosted by Jason Page. The focus is on human interest stories revolving around high school and college sports/athletes in CT.
- CTSN recently signed a contract with the University of Hartford and will be airing its games as well.

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THE BULLETIN

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... more ciac news

Sports fields, continued from page 11

The life span of a natural turf field varies greatly, depending on the amount of use, turf practices, staffing levels, etc. It is estimated that highly used fields will need a major overhaul every ten years or so. This would not be a total replacement, but a rehabilitation of the soil, grade, turf, and the irrigation system and will cost an average of \$33,000.00 for natural soil-based field and \$50,000.000 for a sand-cap grass field.

Player injuries

A recent study measured the number of incidences, cause and severity of game-related football injuries on synthetic turf, as opposed to natural grass. A total of 240 high school games were evaluated for injuries and the results showed that synthetic turf is no more likely to cause injury than natural grass. The study reported that there was a higher rate of ligament tears on the natural grass surface, while there was a higher rate of surface/skin injury on synthetic turf. In addition, higher incidences of concussions and knee injuries were reported on natural grass than on turf.

Synthetic turf, however, poses a higher potential for and has shown increased incidences of infections among players that play on synthetic turf systems. The infections were associated with increased skin abrasions and the risk of infection that occur off the field. Therefore, synthetic turf must be treated with special disinfectants to reduce the possibility of infections, which adds additional maintenance cost.

High temperatures

School districts need to be aware of the fact that synthetic turf fields cannot be played upon during high temperatures on warm days. Synthetic field surface temperatures have been documented as high as 199°F on a sunny day when the air temperature was at 98°F. Due to these high temperatures, a synthetic field may be rendered unusable during extremely warm days. Additionally, practicing on these fields could increase the incidence of heat stroke, muscle cramping, and athlete fatigue. Athletic departments and coaches holding practices on synthetic fields will need to monitor athlete health more closely and will need to limit the duration of practices on these surfaces to reduce the risk of athlete injury.

An irrigation process has been used to reduce surface temperatures of synthetic fields but the effect is expensive to use and only lasts around 20 minutes.

Miscellaneous Issues

Natural grass allows for around 250 hours play per season. Synthetic turf can be played on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Furthermore, heavy rain showers, drought, snow and frost are a major factor concerning the condition of a natural grass field. Whereas synthetic turf is not susceptible to divots, and if built correctly, drains well in wet weather. Synthetic turf is not susceptible to dust in hot weather and the snow can easily be removed during the winter. However, natural turf benefits the environment by reducing the urban heat island effect, filtering rainwater and pollution, and providing habitats for birds and insects. Synthetic turf offers none of these benefits.

Robert J. Romano is the founding partner of THE ROMANO SPORTS AGENCY, which specializes in representing NCAA and Professional League Coaches in all aspects of contract negotiations. For more information, visit his web site at www.romanosportslaw.com, or contact him at rjr2128@columbia.edu.

COACHES' CORNER*News from the National Federation*

■ **Softball Rules Changes:** Effective with the 2010-11 school year, the pitching distance for high school varsity softball pitchers will increase from 40 feet to 43 feet. The new pitching distance was one of four rules revisions made by the NFHS Softball Rules Committee. Although the new pitching distance is mandatory beginning with the 2010-11 school year, NFHS-member state high school associations may adopt the 43-foot distance in 2009-10, if desired. The other rules revisions concerned bat specifications, allowable hair accessories, and the factors for determining the winning pitcher. For more information, visit <http://www.nfhs.org/softball.aspx>.

■ **Boys Lacrosse Rules Changes:** Beginning next season, boys lacrosse players must wrap their fingers around the handle of the crosse during a faceoff. This clarification of Rule 4-3-4 was one of nine changes made by the NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee. "Fingers may not touch the head of the crosse," said Kent Summers, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee, "and further, a player must wrap his fingers around the handle." For information on other rules changes for Boys Lacrosse, visit www.nfhs.org/blacrosse.aspx.

■ **Baseball Rules Changes:** The clarification of baseball bat specifications was among four rules revisions adopted by the NFHS Baseball Rules Committee. A change to Rule 1-3-2 regarding bat specifications was made in the hope it will clarify bat compliance. The rule, which will be effective January 1, 2012, specifies that the bat should be a "smooth cylinder implement from the top of the cap to the top of the knob." The change will also require that all non-wood bats meet the Batted Ball Coefficient of Restitution (BBCOR) performance standard, which is the standard used by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Formerly, non-wood bats had to meet the Ball Exit Speed Ratio (BESR) standard. The new rule also states that non-wood bats must be labeled with a rectangular certification mark "a minimum of a half-inch on each side and located on the barrel of the bat in any contrasting color." For additional information, visit www.nfhs.org/baseball.aspx.

■ **Track and Field Rules Changes:** Beginning next track and field season, officials no longer will need to interpret the intent of hurdlers who knock over a hurdle by foot during the race. The competitor must attempt to clear the hurdle, but will not be faulted for knocking over the hurdle with his or her foot. The committee changed Rule 5-13-2b language from "deliberately knocks down any hurdle by hand or foot" to simply "knocks down any hurdle by hand." Although the words "deliberately" and "foot" have been removed from the rule, competitors must attempt to clear each hurdle. This change to Rule 5-13-2b and 10 other rules were made by the NFHS Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee. The committee made several changes affecting competitors in the vertical jumps. A modification to Rule 7-2-11 now allows the use of the previously prohibited bungee cord in place of the crossbar for warm-ups. The committee noted that the bungee cord must be approved by the games committee and must be manufactured specifically for use in track and field for this purpose. For additional rules changes, visit <http://www.nfhs.org/track.aspx>.

FALL 2009 CIAC SPORTS CHAMPIONS

GIRLS SOCCER

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL: Westhill	Glastonbury
Class L: New Canaan	Avon
Class M: NW Catholic/Suffield - CO-CHAMPS	
Class S : Immaculate/Old Lyme - CO-CHAMPS	

BOYS SOCCER

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL: Staples	New Milford
Class L: Brookfield	New Canaan
Class M: Tolland	Granby Memorial
Class S : Cromwell	Lyman Memorial

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class L: Southington	Fairfield Ludlowe
Class L: Darien	Farmington
Class M: RHAM	Joel Barlow
Class S : Coventry	Morgan

FOOTBALL

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL: Cheshire	Staples
Class L: Notre Dame-W. Haven	Pomperaug
Class MM: New Canaan	East Lyme
Class M: Berlin	Bethel
Class SS : St. Joseph	Montville
Class S : Hyde	NW Catholic



Class SS Football Champions St. Joseph High School

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

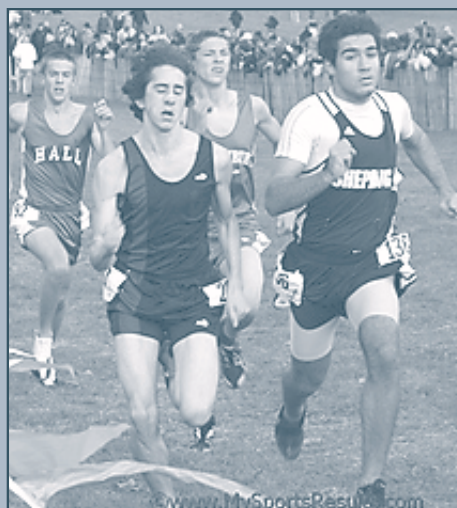
<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Open: Xavier	New Milford
Class LL: Xavier	Hamden
Class L: New Milford	Conard
Class MM: Darien	Guilford
Class M: Tolland	Wolcott
Class SS : Weston	Canton
Class S : Bolton	Shepaug Valley

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Open: Guilford	Wilton
Class LL: NFA	New Milford
Class L: Wilton	Fairfield Warde
Class MM: Guilford	Daniel Hand
Class M: New Fairfield	Suffield
Class SS : Granby Memorial	East Hampton
Class S : Old Lyme	Thomaston

GIRLS SWIMMING

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Open: Greenwich	Darien
Class LL: Cheshire	Greenwich
Class L: Pomperaug	Conard
Class M: Darien	New Canaan
Class S: East Catholic	Weston



GIRLS FIELD HOCKEY

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class L: Greenwich	Pomperaug
Class M: Darien	New Canaan
Class S : Granby Memorial	Lewis Mills



2009 CIAC State Open XC Championships, Friday, Nov. 6, 2009 at Wickham Park in Manchester CT.

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caad news

2010 CAAD AWARD RECIPIENTS

- ★ *CAAD Distinguished Service Award - Inside the Field of Athletic Administration*
Brian Fell - Woodland Regional H.S.
- ★ *CAAD Distinguished Service Award - Outside the Field of Athletic Administration*
John Fontana - Executive Director, CHSCA
- ★ *NIAAA State Award of Merit*
Trish Witkin - Glastonbury High School
- ★ *Robert Duncanson "Meritorious Service Award"*
Michael Gamari - The Gilbert School
- ★ *NIAAA Certificates of Merit (Service Awards)*
15 - **Ted Lombardo**, Coginchaug Regional H.S.
20 - **June Legge**, Watertown High School
20 - **Edward Lebo**, The Masters School
25 - **Michael Gamari**, The Gilbert School
25 - **Patrick Burke**, Old Saybrook High School

NEW AD MIDYEAR WORKSHOP

By John Krot, Athletic Director, Killingly High School

The Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors' Strategic Plan Professional Development Committee is hosting a midyear workshop for first and second year athletic directors to assist them in their daily tasks and to provide them with information pertinent to the operation of their athletic programs. The workshop is scheduled for January 13, 2010 at the CIAC office.

The format for the midyear AD workshop will include presentations from Matt Fisher (CIAC on-line website), Fred Balsamo (Connecticut Coaching Certification and NIAAA Leadership Training and Certification Program), and Paul Hoey (CIAC Rules & Regulations Updates). These presentations will be followed by a question / answer panel discussion of current CAAD members representing various school districts and programs. Joe Canzanella (New Haven Schools) will serve as facilitator for the panel discussion. The panel will include Len Corto (New Britain Schools) representing the urban schools, John Krot (Killingly High School) - the suburban schools, Dave Curtis (Vinal Tech) - the technical schools, Brian Fell (Woodland Regional) - the regional schools, and John Shukie (Northwest Catholic) - the parochial schools.

The new AD workshop should be an excellent follow-up to the workshop that was given by the CIAC in August. Now, the new athletic directors, using their own personal "on the job" experience can better relate to the responsibilities and the expectations of the athletic director in their respective schools.

There is no cost to the workshop and CEU's will be awarded. For more information, call the CAAD office.

IMPROVING STUDENT-ATHLETE CODES OF CONDUCT

by John Underwood

Just as a physical and parental permission are required to engage in high school athletics, student-athletes also are required to follow rules and standards put in place to ensure health, safety and optimal performance. Unfortunately, codes of conduct, which came into being in the early 1980s, have often failed to function, with regard to negative behavioral issues and youth.

The No. 1 negative issue reported by high school athletic directors is the problem of enforcing student-athlete codes of conduct. School leaders must understand the purposes of a code of conduct, what it can impact and how to rewrite codes for today's athletes and parents.

Codes should also include strategies for controlling adult fan/stakeholder behaviors of concern, parental issues and the seven non-negotiable conditions for involvement in high school sports.

Many modern-day codes are reactive, punishment-based documents. Codes need to be rewritten as pro-active character-based documents, in support of our young athletes by telling them what we want them to do, including our rationale, rather than telling them what we don't want and what we will do to them if they go for it.

The Life of an Athlete Program Mandated by the NYSPHSAA

Each school year, New York state's 500,000-plus student-athletes sign a code of conduct. The lacking perception of consequences for chemical-health violations was fueling a culture of rampant underage drinking and partying in this population. Data collected by the American Athletic Institute substantiated previous claims that athlete alcohol use actually surpasses general student population use between 10th and 11th grade. Much of the problem was attributed to ineffective codes of conduct.

"Codes of Conduct-Conditions for Involvement" has helped nearly 800 high schools begin the process of rewriting their codes for today's challenges, while sending a clear message to community, youth and adults that student-athlete drug use will not be tolerated.

This mandatory workshop helped attendees discover the purpose of a code, the components of a code, and valuable examples of clear and consistent boundaries to guide young student-athletes toward adulthood in a program of excellence.

The Basics: A Statement of Purpose

Is your code designed to catch student-athletes

breaking the rules and punish these individuals for their mistakes, or to educate them and set clear and consistent boundaries for their behavior? A well-written code should be a positive document that establishes a comprehensive structure for running a program of excellence.

First, it should define the positive expectations for coaches, parents and athletes. Common values in the program need to reflect shared goals and a framework of principles agreed upon by all stakeholders. The need for active support from other stakeholders, such as the school board, school administration, other school staff and the community at large must be established in the code.

Administrators need to stop telling kids what they don't want them to do (reactive) and simply tell them what they expect (pro-active). Administrators should establish an understanding and agreement to these standards with all stakeholders. This cannot be done by sending home a piece of paper...Example: "Hey Dad, sign this so I can play football!" All you have is a signature and unfortunately most parents will sign anything and agree to anything until it is their child who gets caught in a violation. Then the fun begins.

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Conduct Code, continued from page 15

Most school districts realize that mandatory seasonal meetings are the only way to get this done effectively. In New York, mandatory seasonal meetings were started for the majority of the 700-plus school districts statewide. Parents were informed that if they didn't attend the meeting their child could practice, but could not play in any contests. They came in droves. This was our opportunity to discuss seven non-negotiable areas of behavior with parents for their child to be afforded the privileges of being a student-athlete and representing their community.

Strongly stated, "These seven standards are absolutely non-negotiable if your son or daughter wants to wear a blue-and-white uniform and represent this school and community."

The Seven Standards

1. Academics
2. Serious criminal acts, such as felony, assault, rape, drugs, weapons possession, etc.
3. Out-of-character behaviors
4. Cyber-image violations
5. Drug use – possession or association
6. Hazing
7. Performance-enhancing drugs/supplements

Second, as in a clearly laid-out playing field, the code defines how the school will establish and maintain a healthy environment in which student-athletes can mature through athletics, while considering the responsibilities of stakeholders.

Third, this Athletic Code is meant to be a usable, dynamic document to guide the educational process through our school's athletic program. It defines the mission, philosophy, goals and parameters of the program, and the priority activities.

Fourth, it spells out the consequences for behavioral issues and violations, but links the identified individual to a process for help and change.

Never forget that your athletic code is school district policy. The paramount purpose of your board of education and administrators is to enforce school district

policy. If they don't they are not in compliance with their duties. When violations to your code occur, you shouldn't be in turmoil ... rather a logical series of events should commence resulting in a process aimed at helping a student-athlete learn from a mistake. The "Educate/Correct/Restore" process must be employed to help them learn (the parents are required to be involved).

Always remember that as an extension to the classroom, athletics is a valuable venue to impact youth behaviors of concern, to give athletes a perspective of character and moral decision-making and to teach them that when you join a social order, you are held to the established standards of the group. This is not the norm for today's youth. "Just Do It" has influenced much of their decision-making when it comes to issues of personal or collective responsibility or accountability.

Codes of conduct are necessary for student-athletes. Young people are learning how to live their lives, to fit in society and prepare for their adult futures. Adults need to set standards for youth behavior, gain from athletes and their parents, knowledge, understanding and agreement to the established standards and, above all, enforce them universally.

Raise the standards for your athletes, coaches and parents and they will surprise you.

For a free download of a 54-page document: "CODE ONE THAT WORKS" or "12 THINGS TO ADD TO YOUR CODES," visit americanathleticinstitute.org.

A former NCAA All-American, International level distance runner and World Masters Champion, John Underwood has coached or advised more than two dozen Olympians, including world and Olympic champions. He holds three international Olympic Solidarity diplomas for coaching and has been a crusader for drug-free sport at all levels. Underwood's innovative program, "The Life of an ATHLETE," has gained international prominence. He is the chemical-health consultant for the New York State Public High School Athletic Association drug prevention program.



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