



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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FEBRUARY 2007

ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL FINE ARTS RECOGNITION ANNOUNCED

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce that the Twelfth Annual Fine Arts Recognition Banquet will be held on Thursday, April 12, 2007, at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. The fine arts recognition program annually honors from each of the member schools in the state two outstanding seniors who excel in the performing or visual arts and who possess the qualities of scholarship and leadership.

The program is again being sponsored by the Westfield Corporation, a leading international shopping center developer with interests in 121 shopping centers in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Westfield's three shopping locations are: Connecticut Post, Meriden and Trumbull.

Information about the selection process has been mailed to all high schools and is available at www.casciac.org. All banquet registrations must be completed on-line by March 9, 2007.

For more information, contact Dennis Carrithers at dcarrithers@casciac.org.

DROPOUTS - A DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

by Mike Buckley, Director, CT Principals' Center

About four out of five of Connecticut's students graduate from high school with a regular diploma within four years, a statistic that puts our state in the upper echelon exceeded only by New Jersey, North Dakota, Iowa, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Isn't this - along with our results on NAEP, AP, and PSAT/SAT - another statistic to tout? Well, yes and no. By comparison we look good, particularly run up against the national figures of one third of American high school students leaving school before receiving their diploma. We're also improving with the CSDE, using a different metric, reporting a cumulative dropout decline of 6.2 % from 1995 to 2004. But our Hispanic completion rate of 51.8% and African-American completion rate of 60.9 % is shameful and one can reasonably argue that even 10% or 5% leaving without a diploma is too much. Despite our (near) top of the nation completion status we're a long way from the vision for Connecticut high schools incorporated in the new high school framework presently being vetted, that "All students entering high school will graduate as contributing citizens in a democratic society and prepared for college and work in a global society."

Why do so many students leave without a diploma? It's not necessarily about skills and ability. As Debra Viadero (Education Week, 6/22/06) points out, the process is long-term and cumulative and includes such factors as whether or not a grade was repeated in elementary or middle school, excessive mobility and/or absenteeism, and background demographics such as "being born male, or poor or black or Latino, having friends and family who never finished high school, or becoming pregnant." The warning signs are there, certainly by middle school and often earlier, and by the mid-point of the freshman year we can safely predict who is going to drop out later on. Elaine Allensworth of the Consortium on School Research at the University of Chicago states "that accumulating fewer than five course credits and two or more consecutive F's by the end of the first semester is enough to put students on the road to an early school exit."

Whatever the causes, it is clear that there is a divide between those that see high school as important and those that do not. Those that do, more often than not, have a vision of themselves in the future, connect what they are being asked to do in their studies to its fulfillment, and have adults in their lives supporting them in its achievement. The challenge is to provide the same for those that do not. If there's progress to be made with the Connecticut high school, it will come by providing the latter with the same clear ideas about what is possible in the future, engaging and challenging academics, and adults who believe in them enough to offer the assistance they need to succeed.

It's a question of both will and resources. Models of successful programs abound with the continuum stretching from the Federal TRIO Programs (educational opportunity outreach programs

continued on page 14



TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD IN CONNECTICUT

Nominate a teacher today!

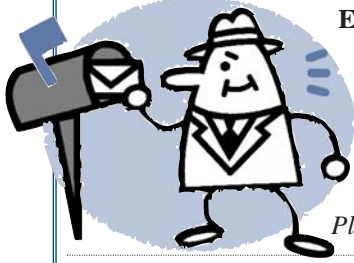
Want to recognize a teacher whose dedication, commitment and passion have contributed to the betterment of his or her school, students, or educational community? Then, place your nomination for Teachers' Insurance Plan's™ Teacher of the Year Award. The state winner receives a \$1,000 cash award while the winner's school receives \$500. A national winner is also selected from among the state winners. Nominations are currently being accepted for the 2006-07 school year and are open to all qualified teachers regardless of whether they are a Teachers' Insurance Plan member.

The Connecticut state winner for the 2005-2006 school year was Hamilton Salsich, a ninth grade teacher at Pine Point School in Stonington.

To nominate a teacher, go to www.teachers.com/toty. Nominations must be postmarked or submitted electronically by midnight March 1, 2007.

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: Right away, I knew I'd made a mistake in hiring this teacher. He was a real gasbag in the interview, but I chalked it up to nervousness. However, students and parents complained about him from the beginning of the school year. You ask him what time it is, and he tells you how to make a watch. He has got to go because I just can't take it anymore. We are coming up on the April 1 date for non-renewal, and I just want to make sure I do this right. What exactly do I put in my letter to this teacher telling him that his contract will not be renewed next year?

- *Greasing the Skids*

A. Dear Greasing: There are two things wrong with this picture. First, you do not write the non-renewal letter. A non-renewal letter comes from the superintendent, and it usually comes only after a board vote. The letter itself is simple, however, because any explanation would come only if the teacher requests a statement of reasons after he gets the letter. Second, it sounds like you lost an opportunity. Teachers are protected by the Tenure Act only after they have been employed for ninety calendar days. If this teacher is as bad as you describe, your superintendent may have been able to cut him loose during the first ninety days. In any event, the timing now is critical, because a non-renewal notification is valid only if the teacher receives it before April 1.

Q. Dear Mailbag: A teacher in my school has filed a sexual harassment complaint. As the Title IX officer, I take such complaints seriously, but this one is weird. Apparently, a student in one of this teacher's classes has made a number of comments about the teacher's appearance that she finds offensive. From her description, the comments don't seem so bad, but I suppose a student has no place telling a teacher that she has nice legs or is "all that." Since sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, should I substantiate the complaint?

- *Doing My Duty*

A. Dear Doing: At this point, it would not be appropriate to substantiate the complaint. The definition of sexual harassment is not limited to unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Rather, such conduct must also either be a condition of employment ("quid pro quo" sexual harassment) or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. To be sure, the teacher need not (and should not) put up with such inappropriate comments. However, the teacher is responsible for maintaining order in her classroom, and she should address such conduct as a student disciplinary matter. The teacher would have a valid sexual harassment complaint only if the administration did not support her in her actions to prohibit such conduct by students and others.

Q. Dear Legal Mailbag: It gets harder and harder to hire coaches, and most of my teachers don't want to be bothered with such extra-stipend positions. Accordingly, we find most of our coaches from outside the school district. Last week, we found a replacement for the girls' softball coach, and she threw me a curveball. She told me that she wants to be considered an independent contractor, not an employee. She described it as a "win-win," in that she saves on withholding and we both save on FICA. It is hard to consider her our employee if all she does is coach for a couple of thousand dollars. Am I safe?

- *You Make the Call*

A. Dear You: You're out! A coach is an employee in almost every case. Independent contractors are people who provide services for fees, and they must have control over when and how they do the work. When you call the plumber, he tells you when he can come, and he decides what to do. By contrast, a coach works for your district, according to your schedule and under your direct supervision. This is no small matter. If you incorrectly characterize an employee as an independent contractor, the district may be liable for the amount it should have withheld from the employee as well as FICA and penalties.

ct news & notes

■ At the December 2006 meeting of the Connecticut State Department of Education, Drs. Sally Reis and Peter Behuniak of the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut presented the findings of a four-phase study of student achievement in Connecticut public schools. The study revealed the following factors as those most important to high levels of student achievement.

- A firmly established sense of school and home community, where teachers and administrators encourage parental involvement and parents report that their children feel welcomed at school.
- A culture of high achievement, in which all parties (teachers, administrators, parents and students) work together to overcome obstacles to learning. This culture includes high levels of support by administrators for teachers, meeting the individual needs of students, teachers having more direct instructional time and spending less time on discipline.
- A common vision, based on high expectations for students. Teachers in successful schools have a stronger, consistent commitment to high expectations for and accomplishments from their students.
- A network of teacher support, supported by administrators. Teachers in successful schools are regularly provided with and participate in self-selected professional development opportunities.
- A strategy for using data-driven decision making. The use of data-based external and internal indicators of student achievement guides decisions by teachers and administrators.

The authors of the report conclude, "The results of this study do not suggest any single, identifiable recipe that can be adopted by a school hoping to emulate the success of the schools discussed in the report. Rather, it is the dedicated determination of a group of outstanding educators working collaboratively with parents and students to promote a culture of high achievement that will achieve this goal." (Source: CSDE, *The Board Report*, December 6 and 18, 2006)

“Death tugs at my ear and says: ‘Live, for I am coming.’”

-- Oliver Wendell Holmes

... more ct news & notes

Be a proud CAS Member School!

Membership in the Connecticut Association of Schools affords principals, assistant principals, teachers, aspiring administrators and central office staff with a wealth of resources and services designed to promote excellence in the education of all children. Be a proud CAS member and showcase your membership on your school website! Visit <http://www.casciac.org/linkto.shtml> for the html code which can be used to display the CAS logo on your school or district website. The logo will act as a direct link to the CAS website and will help us "spread the word" about the good things going on at CAS!



■ For the second year in a row, Connecticut ranked last in the nation in the number of schools participating in the federally funded School Breakfast Program. The rankings were made by the Food Research and Action Center and incorporated into its "School Breakfast Scorecard, 2006" released in December. As a follow-up to the national report, "End Hunger Connecticut!" released its own *School Breakfast Report Card* for Connecticut and its assessment focused on the positive as well as the negative. Key report card findings include:

- Over half of all Connecticut towns providing school breakfast had an increase in participation from the 2004-05 school year.
- Four Connecticut communities, Canterbury, Fairfield, Hampton and North Haven, were successful in implementing school breakfast programs for the first time.
- Communities with 100% or greater increase in SBP participation rate included Branford, Stratford, Waterford and Westbrook.

However:

- Connecticut's efforts in 2005-06 were not enough to raise it from last place in the national ranking in the number of schools offering SBP.
- Of the towns with at least a 10% poverty rate, 50% experienced a decrease in participation.
- There are still 100 eligible Connecticut communities who do not participate in the SBP. To view the SBP for your town/district, visit: <http://www.endhungerct.org/PDF/2006reportcardcharts.pdf>

national news & notes

■ Based on preliminary numbers from the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel, the number of long-term exchange students coming to the United States for the 2006-07 school year grew only slightly by 1%. The number of American students studying abroad for an academic semester or year decreased by almost 9%. For the short-term programs, the number of in-bound students to the US decreased by 23%, while the outbound number grew 5%. Among U.S. states, Texas remains the largest hosting state for long-term exchange students. Compared to 2005-06 totals, the biggest increases were found in Wyoming (24.7%), Connecticut (30.5%), and Utah (115%). The growth in Utah numbers can be attributed to the work of CSJET and local volunteers to persuade local lawmakers to restore public education funding for exchange students. Among the states where the number hosted dropped, we found Nebraska (16.2%), Alaska (24.3%) and Louisiana (27.6%). It would be safe to assume that the drop in Louisiana numbers is resultant of the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

■ Academic improvement among students attending Philadelphia public schools managed by private operators kept pace, but did not exceed, the achievement gains of students in the rest of the district in the past four years, according to an analysis issued today by the RAND Corporation and Research for Action. While significant academic gains were made from 2002 to 2006 by students across Philadelphia, private managers who were given extra funds to run 45 elementary and middle schools did not achieve additional gains exceeding district-wide trends, according to researchers. Researchers say that their findings have implications for other regions that are considering private management of public schools and that the effort in Philadelphia suggests the challenges of implementing private management on a large scale. Philadelphia is the site of the largest experiment in the private management of public schools in the United States.

■ A new report from the National Center for Education Statistics provides information about principals' satisfaction with various environmental factors in their schools, and the extent to which they perceive those factors as interfering with the ability of the school to deliver instruction. The report also describes the extent of the match between the enrollment and the capacity of

the school buildings, approaches for coping with overcrowding, the ways in which schools use portable (temporary) buildings and reasons for using them, and the availability of dedicated rooms or facilities for particular subjects (such as science labs or music rooms) and the extent to which these facilities are perceived to support instruction. Major findings (from latest 2005 data) include: More than half of the principals reported that their school had fewer students than the school's design capacity. Of those respondents, 21 percent said their school was underenrolled by more than 25 percent. Those schools that principals described as overcrowded used a variety of approaches to deal with the overcrowding: using portable classrooms (78 percent), converting non-classroom space into classrooms (53 percent), increasing class sizes (44 percent), building new permanent buildings or additions to existing buildings (35 percent), using off-site instructional facilities (5 percent), or other approaches (12 percent). For more information, visit <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007007>.

■ A new survey by the Carnegie-Knight Task Force at Harvard University shows a strong movement in America's classrooms toward the use of Internet-based news and away from the use of newspapers and television news, a trend that is virtually certain to continue. The study also shows that teachers, as they have moved to the Internet, have switched from using hundreds of local news outlets to making use of a small number of national ones. Internet-based news in the classroom is dominated by the websites of a few top news organizations including CNN, PBS, and The New York Times. In fact, the classroom use of non-U.S. websites, such as BBC's, even exceeds the use of local TV or newspaper sites.

■ Practical School Security and Emergency Planning is a free e-newsletter from the National School Safety and Security Services that focuses on providing updates on trends and best practices for protecting K-12 schools. Sign up to receive the twice-monthly newsletter by visiting www.schoolsecurity.org.

■ A Harvard Business School study found that 70% of change efforts will fail. And a Leadership IQ study found that mismanaging change is the #1 reason why executives lose their jobs.

... more national news & notes

■ A recently released state audit by the Colorado Department of Education described a booming online education system with poor student performance, sloppy accounting and lax oversight of taxpayer dollars. Just 7 percent of 10th-graders enrolled in online schools could do grade-level math, compared with 31 percent of students statewide during the 2005-06 school year. The audit team, which made 16 recommendations, urged the education department to place a moratorium on new public online schools until problems revealed in the audit were fixed. From 2003 to 2006, the number of online schools in Colorado increased from 12 to 18, and the number of students more than tripled -- from 1,900 to about 6,200. Annual funding for online schools jumped from \$8.4 million to \$32.8 million during the same period. But there has been little to no state monitoring over the quality of those students' education or how those public tax dollars are being spent. Rather, the report detailed a troubled system in which students enrolled in online schools performed worse on state reading, writing and math exams than their peers across the state for the last three years; online students dropped out or repeated grades at higher rates than students statewide; and at least five online schools appeared to violate requirements that teachers are highly qualified. (Source: PEN Weekly Newsblast, December 15, 2006)

■ The number of minority teachers receiving national board certification increased dramatically this year. African-American teachers achieving the "stamp of approval" from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards rose by 24%, from 324 in 2005 to 403 last year. Hispanic teachers, with 301 achieving certification last year, showed an increase of 13% over 2005. (Source: edweek.com)

■ Growing up near a freeway stunts a child's breathing capacity for a lifetime, significantly increasing the risk of serious lung and heart diseases later in life, according to researchers who monitored thousands of Southern California children for up to eight years. The landmark study, led by a team of University of Southern California scientists and released last month, delivers a sobering answer to a long-standing question about the health effects of being raised near a busy roadway where air is chronically polluted. These children not only are more likely to develop asthma, but their lung development can be permanently cut short, increasing their odds of having a heart attack or a life-threatening respiratory condition, starting as early as their 50s. The findings carry profound policy implications nationwide for agencies that monitor and regulate air pollution, for locally elected officials who determine where to place new roads and housing tracts, and for education officials who buy property for new schools.

■ Prior to adjourning in December, Congress passed a comprehensive tax bill (H.R. 6111) that extends through 2007 the above-the-line deduction for out-of-classroom expenses. President Bush signed the bill into law on December 20. Specifically, the law allows an above-the-line deduction of up to \$250 for K-12 teachers, principals, and other eligible educators who purchase books, supplies, computer equipment, and other supplementary materials used in the classroom. To be eligible for the deduction, the expenses must be otherwise deductible as a trade or business expense. This is a useful deduction, as a survey by Quality Education Data, Teacher Buying Behavior, 2006-2007, found that, on average, teachers spend \$475 out of pocket on classroom supplies, with 44% of respondents spending more than \$500 on their classrooms and 20% spending more than \$1,000. The majority of personal money was spent on student rewards, classroom decorations, professional materials, and materials for lessons. (Source: NASSP NewsLeader, February 2007)

STATE BOARD SELECTS NEW COMMISSIONER



Dr. Mark K. McQuillan
Connecticut Commissioner
of Education

At a special meeting on January 17, 2007, the Connecticut State Board of Education, by a unanimous vote, appointed Dr. Mark K. McQuillan as Commissioner of Education. Dr. McQuillan will assume his duties as commissioner on April 16, 2007.

Dr. McQuillan is currently the executive director/president of the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, which is the state's oldest and most diverse provider of contracted education services in the greater Boston area. Prior to that, he was deputy commissioner and chief operational officer for the Massachusetts Department of Education, with state-wide responsibility for implementing *No Child Left Behind* in Massachusetts. He was also a super-intendent of schools in Massachusetts for 12 years.

His priorities will include carrying out the goals of the state board of education, which include closing the achievement gap, improving opportunities for quality preschool education and reforming the state's high schools.

In his remarks to the board, Dr. McQuillan stated that he looked forward to working with state department staff and that he wants to meet with education leaders at both the state and local levels as soon as possible.

The commissioner serves as chief executive officer of the Connecticut State Department of Education and oversees a budget of more than \$2.3 billion.

Dr. McQuillan earned his Ed.D. from Harvard University where he also served on the editorial board of the *Harvard Educational Review*. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley.

Growth in Diversity

Racial/ Ethnic Groups	New Board-Certified Teachers		Growth From 2005-2006	Cumulative Total
	2005	2006		
Caucasian	6,208	6,428	4%	48,439
African-American	324	403	24	2510
Hispanic	267	301	13	1816
Asian/Pacific Islander	101	99	--	663
Native American	46	69	50	347
Unknown*	354	493	40	1531
Total	7,300	7,793	7%	55,306

*The unknown category refers to those candidates who chose not to identify their race/ethnicity during the certification process.

WELCOME TO WWW.CTPDC.ORG

by Mike Buckley, Director, CT Principals' Center

The website www.ctpdc.org is the outgrowth of the work of the Connecticut Professional Development Coalition, an ad hoc committee representing most of Connecticut's professional development providers. The committee was formed at the invitation of CASCD to coordinate the efforts of the state's professional organizations in developing the capacity of school leaders to reduce the achievement gap.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Connecticut Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (CASCD), and the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), with support from the Wallace Foundation, collaborated to develop this website. Its purpose is to display in one place the professional development opportunities offered within the state focused upon reducing the achievement gap. Its reality will be the state's first web-based professional development calendar with links to the providing organization to gain more information, download registration materials, or register online.

Matt Fisher, CAS Director of Information Services, created the site which is housed at and will be maintained by CAS. The site is available during SY 2006-2007 to all professional development providers at no cost; participation beyond this year will be on a shared cost basis.

Programs that are posted on the site are referenced to and may be searched by the following:

- State Standards for School Leaders
- Common Core of Learning
- Common Core of Teaching
- State Curricula Frameworks

Organizations that have not yet taken advantage of this unique opportunity are urged to contact me at 203-250-1111 or mbuckley@casciac.org.



ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD MARCH 19

The 30th annual Assistant Principals Conference will be held March 19, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell, Connecticut and is again sponsored by Teachers Insurance Plan.

Keynote speaker Attorney General Richard Blumenthal will begin the conference with his perspectives on education in Connecticut, including the status of the NCLB lawsuit. As the luncheon speaker, the entertaining Norm Bossio will bring a lighter side for educational leaders.

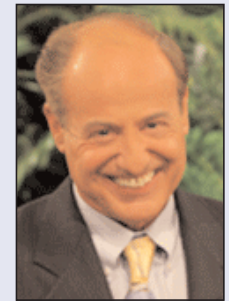
Workshops will be featured on topics including "Building Professional Learning Communities," "Breaking Ranks in the Middle," "The New Connecticut High School Frameworks," "Data Driven Decision-Making," "School-Wide Rubrics," "Teens and the 'Net,'" "Facilitating Co-Teaching," and "The Curriculum Audit."

The always popular conference engages assistant principals in current issues relative to their positions and features the opportunity for sharing and networking.

The conference brochure has been mailed to all assistant principals. Registrations must be made on-line (www.casciac.org/register) or via mail by March 13th. For more information, visit the CAS website.



Keynote Speaker
Richard Blumenthal



Luncheon Speaker
Norm Bossio

On a Lighter Note . . .

After being interviewed by the school administration, the eager teaching prospect said: "Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids, and fill their every waking moment with a love for learning, and I'm supposed to instill a sense of pride in their ethnicity, modify their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse and even censor their T-shirt messages and dress habits. You want me to wage a war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, check their backpacks for weapons of mass destruction, and raise their self esteem. You want me to teach them patriotism, good citizenship, sportsmanship, fair play, how to register to vote, how to balance a checkbook, and how to apply for a job. I am to check their heads for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of anti-social behavior, make sure all students pass the state exams, even those who don't come to school regularly or complete any of their assignments. Plus, I am to make sure that all of the students with handicaps get an equal education regardless of the extent of their mental or physical handicap. I am to communicate regularly with the parents by letter, telephone, newsletter and report card. All of this I am to do with just a piece of chalk, a computer, a few books, a bulletin board, a big smile AND on a starting salary that qualifies my family for food stamps! You want me to do all of this and then you tell me... **I CAN'T PRAY?!**"

(Source unknown)

CPTV's Family Science Expo is celebrating 16 years of educational field trips for students in grades K-8! The 2007 Expo will be held on April 26-28 at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford.



The Expo consists of an exhibit hall with more than 35 booths of hands-on science activities and two live stage performances, all designed to show that science is fun! This year the Expo highlights math and technology, along with science.

On Thurs. and Fri. April 26 & 27, the Expo is open to school groups with advance reservations. Groups are scheduled for a 3-hour session, which includes time in the exhibit hall, and the 1-hour live Science Theatre presentation. Admission is \$3 per student with teachers and chaperones admitted at no charge.

After attending a past Expo with her class, one teacher commented, "I would like you to know what a wonderful time we had at the Expo yesterday. The children were as excited today as they were yesterday. I was amazed by all that they learned and retained. We all enjoyed sharing our discoveries during science class."

Special designation identifies more than 20 booths suitable for younger children. There is free parking, a snack bar and gift shop. For more information, call Jane Moreno, Science Expo Coordinator, at 860-275-7345, or check CPTV's website at www.cptv.org.

ADMINISTRATORS REACT TO OPINION PIECE ON NCLB

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the January issue of the BULLETIN, we featured an editorial by Executive Director Mike Savage ("Failing School Me Arse," page 1) about the trappings of the NCLB legislation and, more specifically, the injustice of a misplaced and unwarranted label of "failing school." The response from our members, some of which are printed below, was overwhelming.

Dear Mike:

I read your article in Vol. 81/No. 4 of the BULLETIN with interest and appreciation for the affirmation that quality teaching and learning are being offered and embraced by our most needy students (and the districts that serve them) each day. Thanks for being a voice for the professionals, parents and students who too often feel that they are alone and that others neither see their good works nor hear their pleas.

Sincerely,
George A. Coleman
Interim Commissioner

Dear Michael,

I applaud you for writing an outstanding article about the Roberto Clemente school and its dedicated staff. Some well-intentioned legislators do not understand the devastating impact this law has on so many communities who struggle on a daily basis to provide a warm, nurturing environment in which our students can learn. I plan to share this article with my board of education and my staff. Glad to see you are still fighting the good fight.

Dr. Lawrence M. Fenn
Superintendent, Lisbon

----- Original Message -----

To: <msavage@casciac.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2007 1:21 PM
Subject: " FAILING SCHOOL ME ARSE"

>
> Dear Mike,
> Thank you for speaking out about what is
> going on in our school(s) in Connecticut.
> Don't you wish some politicians would spend
> a week with a classroom teacher re: data
> gathering, planning, teaching, re-teaching,
> assessing, and keeping discipline in a
> kind/caring atmosphere.

>
> Teachers are dealing with 25-30 "patients,"
> "clients," and "accounts" at a time...not one
> patient, one client, and one account as the
> medical, legal, and businessmen/women do
> each day!!!

>
> Steve Zepecki, Jr., Principal
> Hop Brook Intermediate School
> Naugatuck, Connecticut 06770

----- Original Message -----

To: <msavage@casciac.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2007 5:27 PM
Subject: "Failing School Me Arse"

>
> I just want you to know how much I enjoyed
> this article, and I believe that your observa-
> tions at that one school could be duplicated
> at many schools. I sent your article along to
> the staff at my school here in Torrington
> (Forbes)-- our good schools and teachers
> need encouragement, not labeled as "failures,"
> and we ALL need to focus on individual
> student success and dedicate ourselves to
> help all students become "happy, engaged,
> disciplined, and responsible learners".

>
> NCLB, increased testing, and the pressures
> of AYP have made it increasingly difficult
> to encourage a child's natural curiosity ,
> enthusiasm for learning, and individualism.
> Thanks for providing public school teachers
> with confirmation of worth!

>
> Joanne Creedon
> ESL Teacher (and UCAPP student)

----- Original Message -----

To: msavage@casciac.org
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2007 12:43 PM
Subject: Article

>
> Dear Mike,
>
> Today, as I looked through my emails and
> saw the CAS/CIAC bulletin, I quickly
> scanned the articles and was intrigued by the
> title of one - "Failing School Me Arse."
> Naturally, I read on. First, what a great
> picture of kids having fun as they learn!
> Those youngsters had smiles on their faces
> that were absolutely genuine. Your article
> demonstrates your willingness to "get in
> the trenches" and learn, first hand, what is
> going on there. As a school administrator, I
> am grateful to you for taking the only possi-
> ble stand you could (given the evidence) -
> four square behind the principal, teachers,
> staff and students. This is another example
> of the depth of your understanding of the
> complex issues facing educators. It means a
> great deal to us that you "get it."

>
> Janet Garagliano, Principal
> Jonathan Law High School
> Milford, CT

THE SCHOOLS THEY

By Gerald
Executive Director

Thomas Friedman, the closing speaker at our Annual Convention in Las Vegas, later this month, won international acclaim with his prophetic observations of the "flattening" of international competitiveness and the reality of a global economy in his book "The World Is Flat." His observations certainly contain a message for secondary school leaders as they prepare students for the world of tomorrow. Yet, as Friedman projects the complexities of internationalism and questions the preparedness of the U.S. workforce to be competitive in such an environment, others point out the dramatic pace of societal and technological changes— changes that will further challenge secondary school leaders to rethink and reconfigure curriculum, instruction, and teaching modalities. Just how fast are things changing? Willard R. Daggett, Director of the International Center for Leadership in Education, offers some examples:

- Of the 391 countries in the United Nations, only 22% existed as nations 50 years ago.
- 100 years ago, the difference between the richest and poorest nations in terms of personal wealth was 50 to 1. Today it is 390 to 1.
- When Bill Gates retired as CEO of Microsoft in 1998, 23 years after he founded the company, he was worth more than all the gold in Fort Knox, more than the gross national product of China, more than the 100 poorest nations in the world.

To achieve a 25% penetration rate in U.S. homes, it took 35 years for the telephone, 26 years for television, 16 years for personal computers, 7 years for the Internet, and 3 years for personal, digital assistants (PDAs). The pace of change makes even our prophecies obsolete. In 1968 Gordon Moore coined "Moore's Law," which stated that the capacity of technology would double every 18 months. In 2002, Bill Gates refined the expectation to 9 months. However, to borrow from Daggett, if Rip Van Winkle woke up today, he would be comfortable in most American classrooms. Our system of public education is indeed slow to react and adapt to an ever-changing

AREN'T A-CHANGING

I N. Tirozzi
 rector, NASSP

environment that is shaping, and will continue to shape, the workplace that awaits our nation's students.



One might expect, then, that any federal legislation might aim to accelerate the pace at which schools adapt to change. Ironically—and sadly—the school leader's challenge to renew the focus of education is exacerbated by the need to comply with counter-productive federal mandates. While the world passes U.S. schools by, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) maintains a myopic focus on reading and mathematics achievement, relies on minimal proficiency standards in its rewards system, narrows the curriculum, and stifles creativity and innovation in teachers and students. "My fear is that our schools are so focused on today's battles—teaching to the tests," Daggett says, "that our students are not receiving the education they need for the world in which they will live."

Tomorrow's world will not reward today's students for minimal proficiency in basic skills. Rather, tomorrow's world will reward independent and creative thinking, analytical comprehension, decision-making skills, high level achievement in a broad array of academic subjects, and the development of social and interpersonal relationship skills.

When we consider the rapid "flattening" of international competitiveness, the major and significant worldwide societal and economical changes, and the expanding role of technology, school leaders must provide the leadership and courage to chart a new course in school reform. Their mantra should be focused on ensuring that the vast majority of students will get ahead on the skills, attitudes, and attributes that will be required in the future—rather than being asked to celebrate victory when no child is left behind in minimal proficiencies.

(Reprinted from *NASSP NewsLeader*,
 February 2007)

middle school news

Looking For Solutions in All the Wrong Places

By: Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

The New York Times has embarked on a series that looks at changing theories of how middle school should be taught. In the two articles to date, *Trying to Find Solutions in Chaotic Middle Schools* (January 3, 2007) and *Taking Middle Schoolers Out of the Middle*, (January 22, 2007) reporter Elissa Gootman has made some questionable assumptions about teaching young adolescents and success in the middle.

First and foremost is the assumption that middle schoolers are failing to make academic progress. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (the nation's report card), students in grades five through eight learn more in math, writing and reading than students in grades nine through twelve. Furthermore, in Connecticut, scores have continued to improve over the past several years. In *The Condition of Education* published by the CT Department of Education (2005) it was reported that sixth graders made the following gains in Mastery Test scores from 2000 to 2004: math + 3.95 %, reading +1.54 %, writing + 1.38 %. Similarly, eighth grade scores rose as follows: math + 2.07 %, reading +1.15%, writing + 2.54 %.

A second assumption is that the middle school model is somehow responsible for the growing pains associated with young adolescence and that "it's (middle school) the roughest, toughest, hardest thing to teach." This is a myth. Teaching early adolescents is no more difficult than teaching kindergartners or high schoolers; it is just different. It requires teachers who have strong content knowledge, a thorough understanding of adolescent learners, superior collaborative (teaming) skills, comprehensive knowledge of middle level curriculum, developmentally responsive teaching expertise and a thorough understanding of the philosophy and organization of the middle school. One need only to visit recent CAS middle schools of the year, Avon Middle School or Old Saybrook Middle School to see how middle level educators can meet the academic and developmental needs of all of their students. Success is not just found in suburban or rural areas. The Hartford Magnet Middle School is an example of an inner city school experiencing superior student achievement. They, along with three dozen other New England Middle Schools have been recipients of the New England League of Middle Schools Spotlight Schools award. While all are different in terms of demographics, they share a common philosophy that all students can learn and that adherence to all aspects of middle school best practices ensures success.

Taking Middle Schoolers Out of the Middle suggests that grade configuration can somehow ameliorate the challenges of early adolescence. Educational leaders in some cities have experimented with trying to retard or accelerate the natural maturation cycle by putting students back in elementary school or pushing them ahead to high school. There is no evidence that either move results in greater academic or developmental success for students. However there is a great deal of evidence that points to success in both areas for schools that follow the recommendations found in the four signature documents on middle level education. *Turning Points 2000* (Jackson & Davis, 2000) National Forum to Accelerate Middle Level Reform Vision Statement (2003) *This We Believe* (NMSA 2003) and *Breaking Ranks in the Middle* (NASSP 2006). All make remarkably similar recommendations in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, educators, relationships, decision-making, health, wellness and safety, and parents, families and communities.

With all of the overwhelming evidence that the middle school model works, why is it then that many city schools across the country are abandoning it? The fact is that most who are giving up on the model have never really tried it. Some have put the word "middle" into the school name and stopped there. Some have created the organization structures of teaching teams, advisory programs and schools within schools, yet failed to provide necessary planning time, training and resources. Many have created appropriate content for middle school and failed to seek, nurture and develop teachers who are experts at delivery and interaction with middle school students. In short, far too many failing schools have tinkered with the middle school model rather than embracing it. These efforts, as well as those designed to fix the problem by changing grade configuration simply will not work. As Patrick Montesano from the Academy for Educational Development said, "...school reconfiguration is a costly distraction from what adolescents really need: smaller classes, an engaging curriculum, personalized attention and well-prepared teachers." When the educational community at large accepts and acts on these needs, middle schools will be recognized for what they really are, co-equal partners with elementary and secondary schools in the development of well adjusted, well educated citizens. The ways to succeed are well-documented. We need only to look in the right places.

middle school news

HELPING PARENTS WITH YOUNG ADOLESCENT INTERNET SAFETY

By Paul David Osypuk and Robert C. Spear, Ed.D

Turn on the evening news and inevitably there is a story regarding predators and other inappropriate activity and the Internet. We know that parents are scared to death that the young adolescents will reveal information about themselves or their friends that may inadvertently place them at risk. At this time in their lives, it is often second nature for young adolescents to be trusting and chatty. The magic is to help parents balance the natural and appropriate risk taking with the realities of today's world.

As educators, we feel a deep sense of responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of all of our students. Middle level educators are keenly aware that their students are at a critical level of personal and intellectual development and curiosity. They fully understand that adolescent learners are in need of social modeling and guidance as they develop their foundation for appropriate decision making. These conditions make them particularly vulnerable to the dangers posed by on line predators. A challenge for middle level schools and parents is to keep students safe at a time when developmentally they are seeking greater independence and exploration.

Some schools have developed Internet safety programs for parents that are offered several times over the course of the year. These might include staff and student developed power point presentations on a variety of related issues. Others have involved law enforcement or the district attorney's office who often have information and presentations available.

There are also a wide variety of resources on the Internet itself. When one Googles "Internet safety for teens," 12,600,000 hits come up with the first 50 looking relevant, good and filled with ideas and tips. Certainly the print media also has numerous books on this topic as well. A search of Amazon.com using the words "Internet safety" brought up 937 titles. Many school media centers and public libraries have areas devoted to this very topic.

In addition, blogs for parents can be set up locally as well as web sites and links to the school web site. Email loops can be a source of support and immediate help either locally or a broader outreach. Parent groups, hospitals, or local non-profits can be valu-

able resources for help to set up, support, and maintain such activities.

With all of this, it is important to send clear simple messages to parents frequently. One solution might be to focus on helping parents become more aware that appropriate involvement in their children's lives is perhaps the best prevention activity. This is easy to say, but often difficult to do.

A key message point to help keep young teens out of trouble is to help both students and parents understand the importance of constant and effective communication. Often an incident is not the best time to learn how to communicate effectively, but it may very well provide an opportunity for learning. This opportunity will be much more valuable if patterns of effective communication have long been established.

Educators can help parents understand certain basic steps that they can take to help ensure that their child will use the Internet appropriately and make good decisions. The following information for parents was provided courtesy of the Department of Police Services-Town of Granby, Connecticut and is designed for parents to help keep children Internet safe. The main key to Internet safety is for you to get involved.

- Set rules for your kids' Internet use. Establish limits for times and places they can be online, and exactly what they are permitted to do. Parent control blocking software is available to help restrict access to inappropriate sites. Contact your Internet provider for more information.
- Protect your kid's privacy. Teach them not to give out personal information about themselves, family, or friends without your permission.
- Guard against adult content online with the help of a web filter or child friendly browser.
- Check in on your child's online chatting. While chat rooms are great for sharing interests and developing friendships, they can easily turn into uncomfortable experiences.
- Never let your child meet anyone in person whom they met online without your permission and your presence.
- Monitor your child's e-mail. Along with e-mails from grandma and friends can come many other solicitations-often of an adult nature.

- Stay informed. Educate yourself about the resources and risks online. Familiarize yourself with the web sites and chat rooms your kids visit often.

Most importantly, they advise, is to keep your computer in a public, family area to better monitor your early teen's activities. Regularly spend time online together to learn about their interests and activities. Make sure your young adolescent understands what you consider appropriate by explaining the dangers and setting clear and reasonable rules for you teen's activities.

Middle level educators and students can also be resources. Perhaps the best source for information that students can best relate to is from the students themselves. What could be better than students offering advice to parents on ways to help protect them from the evident danger? Students can plan, create, and design programs, brochures, presentations, and interactive links that provide valuable guidance to help parents and other 10 to 14 year olds understand the dangers and joys of the Internet. After school clubs, Health or other classes like Family and Consumer Science can also be places where adults and students together can develop advice and suggestions on ways to remain safe while using the Internet.

What is imperative is that these kinds of activities are ongoing and readily available for the time that they might be needed. With the changing developmental nature of young adolescents, parents and educators are never sure of when that teachable moment might be. Parents need to know where the resources are when they need them.

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 Copyright © 2006 by NELMS. *Helping Parents with Young Adolescent Safety on the Internet, is another in a series of articles offered by the New England League of Middle Schools on a variety of middle level topics.*

Paul David Osypuk is the Principal of Granby Memorial Middle School in Granby, CT

Dr. Robert C. Spear is Executive Director of the New England League of Middle Schools, Topsfield, Massachusetts.

elementary school news

2007 ELEMENTARY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

By Louis J. Pear, Assistant Executive Director

Over 500 students from 85 schools statewide recently participated in the CAS Elementary Leadership Conferences. There were also 100 parents at each site who learned first-hand how to support their children's interest in the role of a leader. This year, we were honored guests at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. President McCloud from Asnuntuck and President Sanders from Naugatuck addressed their respective participants and encouraged all in attendance to continue to enrich all those around them. They also congratulated our young leaders and asked them to help their classmates be cooperative, collaborative and energized.

Presenters at Asnuntuck Community College included: Christie Amsden; Julie Brennan and Susan Irvine of Southeast School in Mansfield Center; Michael Hetherington, Jean Trask and Justin VanGelder of Horace Porter School in Columbia; Christine Kelley of Tyl Middle School in Oakdale; along with students from Manchester High School, Masuk High School in Monroe, and Rocky Hill High School.

Presenters at Naugatuck Valley Community College included: Robert Garry of Lake Garda Elementary School in Burlington; Joseph Gorman of Waterbury Public Schools; Jordan Grossman of Canton Intermediate School; Tom Moore; along with students from Canton High School, Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, and Plainville High School.

Our parent presenters were Michele Femc-Bagwell and Mallory Bagwell in Enfield, and Kristen Berman in Waterbury.

Michele Femc-Bagwell is the Director of the University of Connecticut's Administrator Preparation Program. Michele's role at UCONN is to carry out the goals, curriculum and delivery of the sixth-year certification program for school leaders and principals.

Mallory Bagwell is an accomplished performer in the field of mime and worked with our parents in Enfield. He was also our student entertainer at the conclusion of the conference.

Kristen Berman is an Associate Professor at the College of New Rochelle who

teaches students in the elementary education department. Kristen has also worked at UCONN and has taught children in grades 1-9.

Working behind the scenes was Barbara O'Connor, our CAS elementary level administrative assistant, who was responsible for registration, schedules, student materials, and student certificates. She also made sure all in attendance had an enjoyable and enriching conference.

Our co-chairs deserve a note of appreciation for all jobs well done. This year's chairwomen have been organizing these conferences for a long time and have done a great job. Our committee co-chairwomen are: Jean Barbaro, Library/ Media specialist of Anna Reynolds School in Newington; and Lauren Elias, Principal of Tinker Elementary School in Waterbury.

The CAS Leadership Committee members include: Debbie Baldarelli of Bungay School in Seymour; Dale Bernardoni of McKinley School in Fairfield; Sharon Bunnan of Maplewood Annex School in Bridgeport; Norma Fisher-Doiron of Southeast Elementary School in Mansfield Center; Harry Gagliardi of Anna LoPresti School in Seymour; Robert Garry of Lake Garda Elementary School in Burlington; Mary Ellen Giard of Griswold Elementary School in Jewett City; Jordan Grossman of Canton Intermediate School in Canton; Edward Lazaroff of Horace Porter School

in Columbia; John Pelchat (retired principal); Christopher Pomeroy of Center School in Old Lyme; Armand Regalbuti (retired principal); and Edward Strumello of Bungay School in Seymour.

Through the hard work of these CAS leaders, students and parents are treated each year to two exceptional conferences. Most importantly, we have young student leaders going on to be our future leaders. We hope these conferences were meaningful and energizing as we plan to make improvements each year. Participant feedback in always a valued tool.



Assistant Executive Director Lou Pear and Asnuntuck Community College President Martha McLeod.



Masuk High School student-presenters and advisors

... more elementary school news

PRINCIPALS' CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MATH AND LANGUAGE ARTS CMTS

By Regina S. Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

The Elementary Professional Studies Committee, Elementary Division, started the New Year with a CMT Math and Language Arts workshop on January 17, 2007. It was held at Highland School in Cheshire with the round table dinner discussion format. Over one hundred principals and teachers attended this session, hosted by Principal Beverly Scully and Assistant Principal Diane DiPietro.

The presenters, Charlene Tate Nichols, the Connecticut State Department of Education Consultant in Math, and Patricia Foley, the Connecticut State Department of Education Consultant in Language Arts, both discussed what principals need to know about mathematics and language arts and gave overviews of the changes in the CMT.

Patty Foley provided an overview, beginning with the NCLB legislation mandating the testing of students in grades 3-8 and grade 10. She explained that the CMT, Generation 4, (CMT 4), will be administered to students in grades 3-8 with areas assessed in mathematics, reading and writing. In March of 2008, Science will be assessed in grades 5 and 8. The testing of special education and ELL students was reviewed with accommodations explained. She continued with a discussion of testing item types,



Patty Foley, CSDE Language Arts Consultant (l) and Charlene Tate-Nichols, CSDE Math Consultant

test forms, the explanation of scoring and examples of writing prompts. She led a discussion of how to build assessment literacy and implications for instruction. Participants were encouraged to use resources on the CSDE web site: www.stste.ct.us/sde, which include CMT Handbooks, the Language Arts Framework, the Lange Arts Framework companion and additional data at CMT data at www.cmtreportr.com

continued on page 14

----- Original Message -----
 From: "Jordan Grossman"
 To: "Lou Pear"
 Cc: "Mike Savage"
 Sent: Tuesday, January 09, 2007 7:53 PM
 Subject: Thank you

- > Lou-
- >
- > I just want to let you know
- > that you did a great job
- > organizing the conferences.
- > Both my high school and
- > elementary school students
- > had a tremendous day. Feel
- > good that these conferences
- > had huge impact on so many
- > students. Thank you for all
- > the hard work that you put
- > into these events.
- >
- > Best wishes.
- > Jordan
- >
- > Dr. Jordan E. Grossman
- > Principal
- > Canton Intermediate School

SDE RELEASES PRELIMINARY KINDERGARTEN CLASS SURVEY RESULTS

The table below provides preliminary summary data from the Kindergarten Readiness Survey that the CT State Department of Education required kindergarten teachers to complete in fall 2006. The survey was designed to collect group data about the readiness of children as they enter their district's kindergarten program, based on teacher observations, which were aggregated to estimate the level of readiness across the state. Teachers were asked to observe student behavior during the first weeks of the school year and then to group their students into one of three categories, defined as students who demonstrate (a) "All/Most Skills," (b) "Some Skills" and (c) "None of the Skills" for the six domains of performance identified in the Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework. The survey specified the common, observable behaviors that are expected of students entering kindergarten. The subset of framework indicators was selected by kindergarten content experts who identified them as the most important and representative measures of readiness for each domain.

The table provides aggregated responses of kindergarten teachers at the state level for each domain. To date, the vendor has received responses from about 1,500 or 90 percent of the state's kindergarten teachers. This accounts for about 34,700 students or 85 percent of the kindergarteners enrolled in Connecticut public schools as of October 1, 2006. Given that the response rate was less than 100 percent, caution should be used in generalizing the results to all districts and schools in the state.

On average, teachers rated slightly more than 57 percent of the students as exhibiting all or most of the behaviors for the indicators for the six domains, slightly more than 34 percent as demonstrating some of the behaviors, and 9 percent demonstrating none. It is interesting to note that the distributions in Table 1 are remarkably similar to the distributions of the 2006 CMT scores across mathematics, reading and writing for students performing "At/Above Goal" (57 percent), "Proficient and Basic" (30 percent) and "Below Basic" (13 percent) in Grade 3.

Six Domains of Performance	All/Most	Some	None
Language Skills	56%	34%	10%
Literacy Skills	49%	39%	12%
Numeracy Skills	49%	40%	11%
Physical/Motor Skills	65%	30%	5%
Creative/ Aesthetic Skills	68%	27%	5%
Personal/Social Skills	57%	35%	8%

ciac news

COACH INVOKES FREEDOM OF SPEECH RIGHTS IN RECRUITING CASE

The authors of the First Amendment's freedom-of-speech clause might be surprised to learn that, in the 21st century, it is being invoked to protect a private school football coach from being punished for recruiting eighth-grade boys from other schools for his team. But the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review *Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association v. Brentwood Academy*, Docket No. 06-427, a case in which the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals did just that. The case pits the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) against Brentwood Academy, a private school in the Nashville area. TSSAA contends the school agreed to the recruiting rules when it voluntarily joined the association, and that the rules protect an important state interest in ensuring fair athletic competition. Brentwood ran afoul of the TSSAA rules in 1997 when its football coach sent a letter to 8th grade students inviting them to a spring football practice. The students had already agreed to enroll at the school the following fall, but under the rules, the football coach could not communicate with them until they had attended the school for three days. As a penalty, the TSSAA excluded the academy from football and basketball playoffs for two years. The school, in turn, sued the association in the federal district court. In 2001 the suit ended up before the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled 5-4 that the TSSAA is a "state actor," even though it is a voluntary membership organization that receives no state funds, because most of its members are public schools and there is "pervasive entwinement" of state officials in the association. The court did not rule on the merits of the dispute, but because the First Amendment only protects against government infringement, the "state actor" determination was a threshold win for Brentwood.

The case returned to the district court, which ruled in favor of Brentwood on its free speech and due process claims. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit affirmed. In addition to asking the Supreme Court to reverse the Sixth Circuit's ruling on the free speech and due process claims, TSSAA is also asking the court to overturn its own 2001 decision that the athletic association is a state actor. According to Maureen Mahoney, TSSAA's attorney, "Lower courts have been confused by [the first Brentwood ruling's] 'entwinement' doctrine, describing it as 'labyrinthine,' 'nebulous,' 'vague,' and a 'free-wheeling gestalt analysis.'"

(Source: NSBA Legal Clips, February 1, 2007)

WEIGHT PROBLEMS SEEN IN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

By Laura Greifner

A study published last month suggests that high school football linemen may be at risk of being overweight or obese and susceptible to related health problems. The study, which appears in the Jan. 24 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, looked at the body mass index, or BMI, of 3,683 offensive and defensive linemen who played for Iowa high school teams in 2005. Data for height, weight, and grade in school were noted from the publicly available rosters. Forty-five percent of the players were classified as being overweight, with BMIs at or above the 95th percentile, including 9 percent who met adult standards of severe obesity. Another 28 percent had BMIs classified as at risk for being overweight, or between the 85th and 95th percentiles.

The findings follow an initial study of NFL players which was published in 2005. "We wanted to discover if this trend was prevalent in younger players as well," said researchers Joey Eisenmann and Kelly Laurson from the department of health and human performance at Iowa State University. "In addition, with the rise in childhood and adolescent overweight in the U.S., we suspected that high school linemen would reflect this trend."

The 2005 NFL study had revealed that 56 percent of professional players were considered medically obese. Additional attention has been drawn to the issue at the professional level with two high-profile player deaths in training camps in the past six years. Both players were linemen who weighed well over 300 pounds.

Last year, a Scripps Howard News Service study noted that the average body weight in the NFL had grown by 10 percent since 1985, to an average of 248 pounds. The heaviest position, offensive tackle, has gone from 281 pounds two decades ago to 318 pounds today.

Mr. Laurson suggested that emulation of professional players was one reason for the trend at the high school level. But there are other reasons, too. "High school athletes may have aspirations of playing college and professional football (even though this is not likely)," he wrote in the Jan. 24 e-mail. "They can easily turn on the TV and see the size of these players."

"Also, coaches may put some pressure on athletes to gain weight for competitive purposes," he continued. "The motto 'bigger, faster, stronger' is often used. In addition, the rise of pediatric overweight is well documented and likely contributes."

Not a Crisis Yet

Bruce Howard, the publications and communications director for the National Federation of State High School Associations, an Indianapolis-based organization that crafts national policies to guide high school sports programs, said that while the weight problem among high school football players should be watched carefully, it is definitely not at the point of being a crisis. "It's a concern," he said. "I don't know that it's a national alarm yet."

Still, Mr. Howard said, his organization's sports-medicine advisory committee is due to meet in April, and weight and health issues of high school football players are likely to be discussed as part of that meeting.

BMI is not always an accurate indicator of health, critics of the study have said, because it does not distinguish between muscle mass and body fat. The authors of the report acknowledge that weakness in their study. But they believe the data still point to a growing problem.

An extract of the report, "Prevalence of Overweight Among High School Football Linemen," is available from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

(Source: *Education Week*, January 31, 2007)

. . . more ciac news

■ On January 31st, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) suspended all high school wrestling contests for a period of eight days due to an outbreak outbreak of a very infectious skin disease called Herpes Gladiatorum. All wrestlers participating in programs sponsored by MSHSL member schools were required to cease all activities that involved direct contact with any other individual. It was hoped that the 8-day suspension would control the spread of the disease and would minimize the risk of athletes being disqualified during the upcoming section and state tournaments. The suspension was lifted on February 7th. Herpes gladiatorum is not a fatal disease. However, once it is contracted it becomes a permanent condition. Left untreated, the infection can lead to serious consequences.

■ Regular season football, and possibly the play-offs, could see some dramatic changes this fall. The Florida High School Athletic Association is considering removing the bye week, eliminating the pre-season classic, trimming one playoff round by discontinuing the advancement of district runners-up or cutting the regular season from ten to nine games so fall practices can start closer to the new, legislatively mandated starting date, (August 20th) for public schools. The issue: August 20th is a full three weeks after the current FHSAA calendar permits preseason practice to begin in fall sports, and state legislators want practices to start near the first day of classes. Last month, the FHSAA ordered its member schools to stop scheduling athletic contests, including football games, for the 2007-2008 school year, until it revises its athletic calendar. (Source: The News-Press)

■ Consistent with what is seen in adults, overweight and obese children have increased healthcare utilization and higher expenditures than their normal-weight peers, new research shows. The research also indicates that the majority of obese children who are seen during a well-child visit are not diagnosed with obesity. Even so, with or without a formal diagnosis, obese children utilize more healthcare resources. The findings, which appeared in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* for January, are based on a study of 8,404 children between 5 and 18 years of age who had a well-child visit in 2002 and 2003 and were followed for 12 months. Compared with healthy-weight children, those with diagnosed or undiagnosed obesity were 5.49- and 2.32-times more likely, respectively, to have used laboratory services. Moreover, children

with diagnosed obesity had average healthcare expenditures that exceeded those of healthy-weight children by \$172. The researchers noted that obesity was most prevalent in children who were ten years or older, female, and on Medicaid. While the current findings indicate that healthcare costs are higher for obese children than their healthy-weight peers, researchers said that the excess spending may be worth it, as preventing the complications of obesity during childhood is most certainly a cheaper alternative to addressing the complications once they have occurred in adulthood. (Source: Reuters Health Information, *Obesity Raises Healthcare Expenditures in Children*)

■ According to the results of an NCAA Sportsmanship Survey released last June, fans represent the group that raises the greatest sportsmanship concern in college athletics. Participants in the survey included 1,599 NCAA member institutions representing all three divisions. When asked if student-athletes and coaches should be held to a higher standard, 77.4 percent of respondents answered yes. About 27 percent said it is the athletic director's responsibility to set the expectations for good sportsmanship; 19.5 percent didn't have an answer; 14.9 percent said responsibility lies with someone other than the athletic director, coaching staff or president; 13.3 percent said coaching staff and 11.8 percent said the university president.

■ Recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveal that 80% of all high school students fail to eat the recommended daily allowance of fruits and

vegetables, while more than 60% of U.S. children consume too much saturated fat. Furthermore, the childhood obesity epidemic seems to be occurring predominantly within the nation's poorest rural and urban areas. The CDC reports that overweight numbers are highest among Mexican American boys, non-Hispanic black girls, American Indian youth, and non-Hispanic white students from low-income families.

■ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has announced that it will develop comprehensive guidelines, drawn from science, to help Americans fit physical activity into their lives. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans will be issued in late 2008 and will summarize the latest knowledge about activity and health, with depth and flexibility targeting specific population subgroups, such as seniors and children. HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt has underscored the importance of shifting from a treatment-focused society to one that values prevention-based care. Treatment for chronic diseases accounts for 75 percent of what America spends on health care each year, and overweight and obesity affects an estimated 66 million individuals. Emphasis on the four pillars of the HealthierUS initiative -- physical activity, good diet, healthy choices and preventive screening -- is crucial for the nation's health. The President's proposed FY 2007 budget for the federal health department calls for \$640 million on obesity-related efforts, which will fund a range of activities from research into obesity to regulating the labeling of trans fats.

What is the world coming to?

It was Snohomish's homecoming game against rival Everett High School in Snohomish, Washington. The Marine Corps Junior ROTC unit stood by to fire the school's ceremonial red cannon that traditionally kicks off every home game. Brett Karch, 16, whose goal was to serve his country as a Special Operations Forces recon Marine, had the honor of pulling the trigger before the biggest game of the year.

"Fire!" his officer in charge ordered.

The next thing Karch knew, he was lying several feet away in a haze of smoke. The cannon had disintegrated, as had most of his right leg.

Three months and three surgeries later, Karch's leg was miraculously saved, but he faces more than a year of rehabilitation and his dream of being a Marine is over. Perhaps the most lasting regret from the incident, however, was what happened afterward.

In addition to getting calls and letters from well-wishers, Karch also received notes, calls, and even visitors threatening to "make sure his other leg got blown off" if the family's investigation into the incident resulted in the school discontinuing the 20-year-old cannon tradition.

"Football wouldn't be the same without the big boom at kickoff," wrote one student in a "get-well" card. A campaign to raise money on Karch's behalf netted just \$200, nearly all of it coming from schools other than Snohomish.

[Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 12/20/06]

. . . more ciac news

MARCH MEDIA EVENT FOR GIRLS' BASKETBALL FINALS

On March 8th, the CIAC will host a media event to "kick-off" the girls' basketball championships. Representatives from each of the eight "final" teams will be in attendance, including coaches, athletic directors, and players. NBC 30 anchor and reporter Mindi Ramsey will serve as master of ceremonies for the event, which will be held at the Aqua Turf in Southington and will be sponsored by CT Sun.

**SCC LEAGUE EXPLORES UNIFIED SPORTS™ EXPANSION**

By Ann Malafronte, Director of Unified Sports™

The Southern Connecticut Conference is looking at an endorsement for Unified Sports™ basketball league play for the eight league schools that are currently offering the adapted sports program in their schools. Five new SCC schools have started Unified Sports™ in the last two years (West Haven, Amity, Branford, East Haven and Jonathan Law), making it feasible to offer more of a commitment to league play and involvement.



Ann Malafronte, Unified Sports™ director for the CIAC, was scheduled to present various options for expansion of league involvement at the February 6, 2007 meeting of the SCC athletic directors. One option would allow for more frequent contests between league schools, at host sites, prior to the CIAC Unified Sports™ state tournaments. This would allow league recognition in front of home crowds, possibly on afternoons or evenings before varsity basketball games, and more fan involvement. Another option would have the league take ownership of a particular event and crown league champions and award league medals to all SCC participants. CIAC receives funding from Special Olympics Connecticut to channel to leagues to encourage them to expand league-sponsored activities.

The Central Connecticut Conference has offered weekly basketball play for CCC schools for the last eight-plus years. The 2007 year will be the third in which the Eastern Connecticut Conference has hosted an ECC Unified Sports™ basketball tournament for league schools at Norwich Free Academy. For the past three years, the Northwest Conference has conducted a NWC Unified Sports™ mini-tournament within the larger Plainville High Unified Sports™ basketball event.

Opportunities for individuals with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities have grown dramatically over the last fifteen years that CAS/CIAC has been offering the Unified Sports™ program to Connecticut's schools.

Upcoming Unified Sports™ basketball tournament dates are as follows. Middle school tournaments: March 6 at Chippens Hill in Bristol; March 6 at St. Luke's in New Canaan; March 8 at Farmington High; March 13 at Amity in Woodbridge. Bristol and New Canaan events start at 3:30. All others begin at 3:00 with an Opening Ceremony March of the Athletes.

High school tournaments include: March 6 at St. Luke's in New Canaan; March 7 at Simsbury High; March 8 at Bunnell in Stratford; March 12 at Berlin High; March 14 at Plainville High (NWC); March 15 at Norwich Free Academy (ECC); and March 16 at Manchester High (CCC). All leagues, principals and athletic directors are encouraged to explore bringing Unified Sports™ to their school or area. Partners who work and train with the special athletes are benefiting as much as the special athletes!
Changing attitudes. Changing lives.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Ann Malafronte at amalafrente@casciac.org.

COACHES' CORNER

News from the National Federation of High School Associations



■ **Volleyball Rules Changes:** The libero - a back-row, defensive specialist in volleyball - will now be able to serve in one position in the serving order in high school volleyball, effective with the 2007-08 season. This was one of several changes made by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Volleyball Rules Committee. Several other rules related to the libero were altered while three changes were made in Rule 4 regarding player equipment and uniforms. A penalty was revised in Rule 4-1-6 to ensure that jewelry is not worn in warm-ups and competition to minimize the risk of injury. Regarding uniforms, bare midriff tops will be prohibited and the uniform top shall be tucked in or hang below the waistband of the uniform bottom. For more information on these and other changes, visit www.nfhs.org/sports.aspx and click on "Volleyball."

■ **Spirit Rules Changes:** The NFHS Spirit Rules Committee adopted six rules changes during the group's annual meeting last month. Rule 2-1-7 was modified to clarify that spring-assisted floors, mini-trampolines and other height-increasing apparatuses are not permitted during performances or competitions. The committee's other major modification addressed the expanding capacity of bracers. The group established two new exceptions to Rule 2-8-3, which states that "in braced partner stunts/pyramids, at least one bracer of each pair must be at shoulder height or below." The first exception allows three different extended stunts - chairs, multi-base deadman lifts and multi-base straddle lifts - to brace any additional extended stunt. The committee determined this addendum did not "present an unreasonable risk to participants." The second exception states that extensions may brace chairs, multi-base deadman lifts and multi-base straddle lifts and other extensions, aside from totem poles. For more information on these and other changes, visit <http://www.nfhs.org/sports.aspx> and click on "Spirit."

THE SCORE

Is sportsmanship better or worse than when you were growing up? The Awards and Recognition Association, which recognizes good sportsmanship in collegiate football players, conducted a survey in 2006 that covered sportsmanship issues. Below are a few of the survey results. (*Referee, Feb. 2007*)

63% of Americans believe that the current state of sportsmanship is worse than when they were growing up.

81% of respondents 60 years or older reported that sportsmanship is worse now.

45% of respondents 30 years or younger reported that sportsmanship is worse now.

86% reported that a parent is the best person to teach sportsmanship.

...more ciac news

THEY SAID IT...

New Orleans Saint RB George Rogers when asked about the upcoming season: "I want to rush for 1,000 or 1,500 yards, whichever comes first."

Torrin Polk, University of Houston receiver, on his coach, John Jenkins: "He treats us like men. He lets us wear earrings."

Senior basketball player at the University of Pittsburgh: "I'm going to graduate on time, no matter how long it takes." (now that is beautiful)

Bill Peterson, a Florida State football coach: "You guys line up alphabetically by height." And, "You guys pair up in groups of three, then line up in a circle."

Boxing promoter Dan Duva on Mike Tyson hooking up again with promoter Don King: "Why would anyone expect him to come out smarter? He went to prison for three years, not Princeton "

Stu Grimson, Chicago Blackhawks left wing, explaining why he keeps a color photo of himself above his locker: "That's so when I forget how to spell my name, I can still find my clothes."

Frank Layden, Utah Jazz president, on a former player: "I told him, 'Son, what is it with you? Is it ignorance or apathy?' He said, 'Coach, I don't know and I don't care.'"

Shelby Metcalf, basketball coach at Texas A&M, recounting what he told a player who received four F's and one D: "Son, looks to me like you're spending too much time on one subject."



SAFETY FIRST. SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

Teachers' Insurance Plan™, a CAS sponsor, has launched a new section on its website that can be an invaluable resource to educators, their families, and their classrooms throughout the year.

Called the Safety Information Center, it offers one-stop shopping for information and advice on driving and homeowner safety issues, as well as money saving tips. Teachers' Insurance Plan, which offers highly discounted car insurance for members of the educational community, is pleased to provide this free resource.

The Safety Information Center, at www.teachers.com/safety, offers guidance on a myriad of car, home and personal safety topics -- what to do if you have a car accident, driving tips for hot weather, the ins and outs of car insurance lingo, road rage, digging out from snow, Halloween safety, precautions for Prom night, protecting your home from lightning strikes, how to deal with frozen pipes, explaining ice dams, and water conservation, among others.

There are more than 30 topics in all, with more being added every day. So, check out the site and come back often. As the seasons change, so do the precautions you need to take.

Dropouts, continued from page 1

designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds) to the ninth grade academies that are springing up in numerous high schools across the state. We know what to do:

- Give students the opportunity to recover from mistakes (How about evening and Saturday classes to allow students to earn back credits lost not by grades but attendance?)
- Pay attention to attendance (Shouldn't every student be accounted for every day of the school year? Look at the progress being made by the Connecticut Consortium on School Attendance.)
- Create alternatives, especially smaller learning communities with relationships (teacher to teacher, teacher to student, student to teacher, student to student) at the core. One size no longer fits all (witness the exponential growth of home schooling and on-line learning)
- Mobilize the community (The Pew Partnership for Civic Change has just launched Learning to Finish, a community-wide campaign addressing the drop-out problem

with pilots in five cities)

Relative to resources, the argument can be made that it's cost-effective to keep students in school. According to a new brief from the Alliance for Excellent Education, "If the approximately 1.2 million young people who are expected to drop out of school this year were to earn their diploma instead, states could save more than \$17 billion in health care costs over the course of those young people's lives." And that savings is apart from welfare, incarceration, lost productivity, and decreased civic participation costs.

Relative to will, I think you have to relate this to the achievement gap. Is there any greater gap than that between those who graduate with a diploma and those who leave without one? Viewed in this light the words of the President of La Raza resonate strongly: "Closing the gap has to be a societal goal. To do otherwise is to admit failure, tolerate racial differences, and give up on the very fundamental ideals of America."

CMTs, continued from page 10

Charlene Tate Nichols also provided an overview and reviewed the available CSDE materials provided to the presenters. She examined the scored student work and discussed instructional implications and strategies. She went over the changes in the CMT Generation 4, (CMT 4), and discussed the CMT connection with the Mathematics Frameworks. Charlene concluded with a discussion of preparing students for the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). She emphasized that a sound K-8 mathematics

program embeds these strategies into all instructional planning. A full dinner followed the presentations with both presenters being very supportive in answering questions and helping to assist districts with materials and strategies.

Both consultants work with school districts in Connecticut helping them align curriculum with the CMT objectives. A copy of both power point presentations is available at the CASCIAC web site, www.casciac.org

**THE CONNECTICUT
ASSOCIATION OF
ATHLETIC DIRECTORS**

presents the

**23rd Annual Athletic
Directors Conference**

◆ March 22-23, 2007 ◆

Rocky Hill Marriott

(NIAAA LTC Courses - Evening of March 21)

CEU'S WILL BE AWARDED EACH DAY

PRE - CONFERENCE L.T.C. SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY MARCH 21, 2007 -

CAAD is offering two NIAAA Leadership Courses as a prelude to our Annual Conference and will be offered from 3pm-7pm. These will be offered at an additional cost.

LTC 501 Athletic Administration: Philosophy, Leadership Organizations and Professional Programs** **Instructor - Joe Tonelli**

This flagship course of Leadership Training serves as an overview for the interscholastic athletic administration. This course focuses on the roles of the NFHS, the NIAAA, the State Athletic/Activity Associations, and the State Athletic Administrator's Associations. The course also previews the NIAAA Certification Program and the NIAAA Leadership Training Program. It is a prerequisite for all levels of certification and includes study materials for the CAA Certification Examination. Required for: RAA, CAA and CMAA Certification

LTC 508 Athletic Administration: Legal Issues III - (Hazing, ADA, Employment Law)**

Instructor - Paul Mengold

This course will have in-depth coverage of the issues and strategies related to the development of an effective policy for prevention of hazing in an interscholastic athletics program; coverage of the constitutional and statutory issues affecting athletics programs, including the impact of disabilities legislation on school athletics; and coverage of employment law concerns affecting athletics programs, including contract law, equal pay, and FLSA issues.

** Optional Dinner following Course

*For a registration form (including hotel and LTC registration), visit:
www.caadinc.org/conference.html*

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2007

7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	REGISTRATION (Visit Exhibitors)
8:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	CIAC WORKSHOP (.25 CEU) Ballroom Mike Savage, Executive Director CAS-CIAC
9:45 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	CIAC WORKSHOP (continued)
12:00 noon - 2 p.m.	CAAD ANNUAL MEETING (.1 CEU) Ballroom (MF Track Sponsored Lunch) Introduction of cracker-barrel topics/current issues CAAD President - Chip Dorwin, Guilford HS Past President Award John Shukie, Northwest Catholic H.S., West Hartford
2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	GENERAL SESSION (.1 CEU) Ballroom "Coaching for Life" By Joe Erhmann, Former Baltimore Colt & Football Hall of Famer
4:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.	WORKSHOP SESSION (.15 CEU) 1. "CIAC Program Assessment Process"..... CT Suite by Craig Semple, Hand High School, Madison 2. " New Coach Mentoring Program"..... Hartford Room by Newell Porche, Torrington High School 3. "Problems of Small Schools Round Table"..... Rocky Hill Room by Rob Roach, Lyme-Old Lyme High School & Matt Perachi, Shepaug Valley High School, Washington
5:15 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.	SOCIAL HOUR Salon 1 & 2
6:15 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET Ballroom (featuring 16 oz. Prime Rib) Distinguished Service Award Recipients "From Inside the Field of Athletic Administration" John Shukie, Northwest Catholic HS, West Hartford "From Outside the Field of Athletic Administration" Tony Mosa, CIAC "Robert Duncanson Meritorious Service Award" Jim Benanto, Retired AD Shelton HS "NIAAA State Award of Merit" Susan Murphy, Platt Technical High School
9:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION Salon 1 & 2

FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2007

7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	REGISTRATION
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	CAAD BREAKFAST MEETING (.15 CEU) Ballroom (Nevco Sponsored) "NCAA Updates" By Bill Shults, University of Connecticut
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	STATEWIDE FACULTY WORKSHOP (.1 CEU)..... Ballroom A detailed workshop and training session to equip CAAD members with the CAAD Coaching Certification Course curriculum and Intro to a new Module. by CAAD Coaching Education Statewide Faculty
11:15 am - 1:30 p.m.	CLOSING GENERAL SESSION/LUNCHEON Ballroom Sponsored by COCA-COLA (.15 CEU) Featuring Buffet Luncheon and 50/50 Drawing Discussion of Cracker-barrel Topics and Closure Moderator - Chip Dorwin, CAAD President

. . . more caad news

NATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

By Chip Dorwin, C.A.A.
Athletic Director, Guilford High School

Workshops, general sessions, meetings, informal discussions with athletic directors from around the country, warm weather and palm trees; that's what the 37th National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics in Anaheim, California was in one sentence.

About twenty athletic directors from Connecticut made the cross-country journey to attend this year's National Conference and we were treated to an extraordinary professional experience and the opportunity to bring new thoughts and ideas back to our schools and to share with our colleagues who couldn't attend.

Thirty-five workshops were scheduled and presented by outstanding athletic directors and professionals from around the country. Topics ranged from: Strategies for Crowd Control, to Developing Department and Team Belief Statements, to the Five P's of Peak Performance for Athletic Administrators, to

Conducting Student-Athlete Exit Interviews and many more. Each workshop gave the attendee an opportunity to explore ideas that have proven successful in other locations by the people who have made them work. The experiences, both successful and unsuccessful, were discussed openly by the presenters with the purpose of helping all in attendance learn something that they could bring back and try.

The two general sessions were each attended by over two thousand athletic directors and helped emphasize the need for keeping a balance in one's life and prioritizing what is really important in both your professional and personal lives. Jim Morris, whose life story was made into the movie, "The Rookie", emphasized the need to follow one's dreams and to encourage the athletes we serve to do the same. Mary LoVerde changed careers because she was not following her heart. She is now a national speaker who helps

people make connections in their lives that really matter. Sectional and National meetings of the NIAAA helped give us all a better understanding of the outstanding job our national organization does for us on a daily basis. For these efforts to continue we should all consider volunteering. Perhaps by writing an article for the IA magazine, serving on a national committee, speaking at a conference, teaching an LTC course at the national or state level to name just a few. The benefits will be more than worth the effort.

Next year the National Conference will be held in Nashville, Tennessee from December 14-18. If you have never attended a conference of this magnitude you should try to make this your first. It will be a life-changing experience that you will not forget. If you have attended one in the past, then I look forward to seeing you there again.

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Chip Dorwin is the current president of C.A.A.D.

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