



BULLETIN

The Connecticut Association of Schools
The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference



Affiliated with: National Federation of State High School Associations • National Assoc. of Secondary School Principals • National Middle School Assoc. • National Assoc. of Elementary School Principals

VOL. 83 / NO. 5

FEBRUARY 2009

THE BEAT GOES ON!

By Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director



Despite the state's challenging fiscal climate, Commissioner Mark McQuillan is determined to move forward with Connecticut's secondary school reform initiative; and that

is good news for Connecticut's middle schools. Those who have been following the development of the plan over the past year are aware that the proposed legislation legitimizes middle level education in state statute and defines and promotes middle level best practice for the more than one hundred and sixty schools serving young adolescent learners.

The Connecticut plan entitled "Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student" is built on the premise that secondary school success, as characterized by high graduation rates, begins in grade six, if not before. Built on the triad of *Student Engagement, 21st Century Learning and Academic Rigor*, key elements of the initiative at the middle level will be the development of student success plans for all students beginning at grade 6, advisory programs to guide student success, interventions for struggling students, model curricula to reduce the achievement gap and common expectations for all students, regardless of where they live or go to school.

While the state of the economy will undoubtedly push back full implementation of the plan for at least an additional two years, school districts have been invited to partner with the CSDE in the development of student success plans, support systems/school environment, and capstone experiences. This is an uncommon opportunity for educators to research and learn about best practices and to shape the future of middle level education in Connecticut.

The CAS Middle Level Division will continue to work closely with Commissioner McQuillan in promoting the initiative to raise standards for all students and to provide the support to enable all middle grades students to achieve success. Next steps include partnering with CSDE leaders and their counterparts from the other New England states in New England Middle Level Symposium in New Hampshire on February 10-11, 2009. Representing CAS will be principals Sue Homrok from Henry James Memorial Middle School in Simsbury; Kelly Lyman, Irving Robbins Middle School, Farmington; Michael Rafferty, Old Saybrook Middle School; Donna Schilke, Smith Middle School Glastonbury; and Earle Bidwell from the CAS staff.

Following the symposium, regional information sessions will be scheduled in various parts of the state this spring to inform middle level educators and the public of the importance of the reform effort and to engage in dialogue as to what schools need to ensure successful implementation.

"Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student" can be downloaded from the state department website at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/pressroom/TheConnecticutPlan.pdf>.



2008-09 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

The 2008-09 CIAC Membership Directory is now available and can be downloaded from the CAS website at http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/2009_CIAC_Membership_Directory.pdf.

Printed copies will be mailed to all high school principals and athletic directors at the end of the month.

SCHOOL LAW ALERT:

New Federal IDEA Regulations Impact Delivery of Special Education and Related Services

By Shipman & Goodwin LLP

New federal special education regulations were issued on December 1, 2008 and took effect on December 31, 2008. Contained in the regulations were regulatory changes that will significantly impact the delivery of special education and related services.

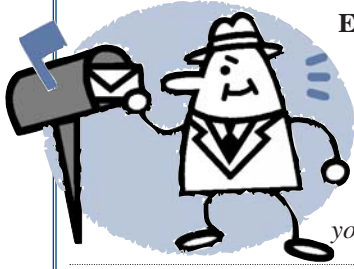
Under the new regulations, a parent may now unilaterally revoke consent for the continuation of special education and related services, provided the revocation is in writing. If a parent exercises this right and revokes consent for ongoing special education services, the regulations make clear that a local school district may not use due process or mediation proceedings to override the parent's decision.

Consistent with the current provisions governing a parent's right to refuse consent for the initial provision of special education services, if a parent chooses to revoke consent for the continuation of services under this new provision, the district will not be in violation of the requirement to provide FAPE because of the failure to provide further special education and related services. The district will also not be required to hold a PPT meeting and will not have any obligation to develop an IEP for the child. Finally, should a parent revoke consent for special education services in writing, the new regulations clarify that the district has no obligation to alter a student's records to remove any indication that the student had once received special education and/or related services.

For further information on the new regulations, download the "Alert" from the Shipman & Goodwin website at www.shipmangoodwin.com/files/upload/SchoolLawAlertIDEA012009.pdf.

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: Where I used to work, we had a suggestion box in the office. Other than the occasional prank suggestions related to the principal's anatomy, we did get good ideas from time to time. I suggested to my current principal that we set up such a suggestion box here, and he demurred. Can I tell him that we are legally required to have such a suggestion box?

- *Open to Suggestions*

A. Dear Open: I applaud your willingness to invite suggestions, but I cannot say that there is any legal obligation to have suggestion boxes. Given the interest the General Assembly appears to have in regulating every detail of school life, that may change, but for right now there is no such requirement. Perhaps you will be able to talk your principal into this. However, you should know that such suggestions would be public records subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Q. Dear Mailbag: My district is being hammered by the state's fiscal crisis, and we foresee a number of staff cuts. I am inclined to recommend non-renewal of all of our non-tenured teachers. Of course, I am sympathetic with the poor souls affected by such cuts because this is a tough time to find another job. But we need to think of the school district. Besides, I understand that non-renewal because of staff cuts is a simple process. Should we go ahead and tell our non-tenured teachers that they are through?

- *Ready to Cut*

A. Dear Ready: In this difficult time, many teacher contracts will not be renewed for next year. But you should employ this procedure cautiously for both legal and practical reasons. You are correct in your observation that the non-renewal process is a relatively easy way to effect staff reductions of non-tenured teachers. If a teacher is notified of non-renewal because of staff reductions that is the end of the matter,

and he or she does not have the right to a hearing before the board of education. However, we must be careful about wholesale non-renewals. Should vacancies arise in the future, such teachers may have the right to be recalled in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement. Therefore, you should be careful not to take the easy way out; if there are performance issues, they should be referenced to assure that such a teacher does not end up on the recall list. In addition, non-renewal can encourage highly-qualified teachers to go find other jobs. Since the Tenure Act permits contract termination for staff reductions at any time, we recommend notifying teachers of non-renewal only when you are fairly certain that the position(s) in question will actually be cut.

Q. Dear Mailbag: The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree, and an emotionally-disturbed student in my school has a mother who is herself quite a challenge. During her latest tirade, the mother yelled that she was sick and tired of our special education teachers, and that she was revoking consent for special education services. While such outbursts on her part are fairly common, I was surprised when she followed up with a formal letter that confirmed that she is in fact withdrawing consent for special education services. I can't imagine dealing with this student in the regular education setting. Should I consider her revocation a proposed change in placement and let a hearing officer decide what is in this student's best interests?

- *Serious Reservations*

A. Dear Serious: In a word, no. Effective December 23, 2008, the IDEA regulations have been changed to provide that parents may unilaterally revoke consent for special education services, and further that the school district may not challenge that decision through due process hearing procedures under the IDEA. The regulations also provide, however, that the student will be considered a regular education student for disciplinary purposes. Thus, if the mother maintains her position, the behavior that caused this student to be identified in the first place may now cause him to be suspended or expelled. Let us hope not.

ct news & notes

Visit the CAS Legislative Action Center to view the education-related bills currently under consideration by the Connecticut legislature. The site provides "legislative alerts" and direct access to bills that will affect CAS member schools.

www.casciac.org/legalerts.shtml

CT STATS

- 9 percent of Connecticut children under age 18 live in households where the household head is a high school dropout. (CT's percentage is 9th lowest in the nation.)
- 38 percent of Connecticut children under age 18 live in households where the household head has a bachelor's degree or higher. (CT's percentage is 3rd highest in the nation.)
- 18 percent of Connecticut children ages 5-17 speak a language other than English at home. (CT's percentage is 14th highest in the nation.)
- 11 percent of Connecticut residents aged 18 to 24 are not presently enrolled in school; are not currently working; and have no degree beyond a high school diploma or GED. This measure reflects those young adults who are considered having difficulty navigating what most would consider a successful transition to adulthood. (CT's percentage is 9th lowest in the nation.)
- 5 percent of Connecticut children under age 18 live in households where neither parent resides. (CT's percentage is 6th lowest in the nation.)
- 6 percent of Connecticut teenagers between age 16 and 19 are not enrolled in school (full- or part-time) and not employed (full- or part-time). (CT's percentage is 7th lowest in the nation.)

(Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center)

... more ct news & notes

CT's Report Card on Teacher Quality

The National Council on Teacher Quality has released its annual report which evaluates each state's efforts to improve teacher quality. The 2008 edition of the *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* focuses on a particular policy issue: the retention of effective new teachers. This year's *Yearbook* analyzes what each state is doing to identify teachers' effectiveness; support the retention of valuable, early career teachers; and dismiss those found to be ineffective. See how Connecticut fared below.

Overall Performance: D+

Area 1 / Identifying effective teachers: D+

Connecticut's policies regarding the identification of effective teachers are in need of improvement. The state has only two of the three necessary elements for the development of a student- and teacher-level longitudinal data system, and although Connecticut requires evidence of student performance garnered through multiple measures in teacher evaluations, the state does not require subjective and objective measures, such as standardized tests, to be the preponderant criterion. Connecticut's probationary period for new teachers is a reasonable four years, but the state does not require any meaningful process to evaluate cumulative effectiveness in the classroom before teachers are awarded tenure.

Area 2 / Retaining effective teachers: D

Connecticut requires that all new teachers receive mentoring, but the state's requirements for permanent licenses are burdensome and have not been shown to advance teacher effectiveness. Connecticut does give districts authority for how teachers are paid, but the state's other policies regarding teacher compensation are sorely lacking. Connecticut does not support retention bonuses, compensation for relevant prior work experience, differential pay for teachers working in high-needs schools or shortage subject areas, or performance pay. In addition, the state provides only a defined benefit pension plan for teachers. Connecticut's pension policies are not portable, flexible or fair to all workers; for example, teachers must have 10 years of service to vest. Further, retirement benefits are determined by a formula that is not neutral, meaning that pension wealth does not accumulate uniformly for each year a teacher works.

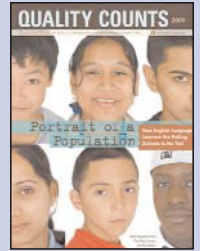
Area 3 / Exiting ineffective teachers: C

Connecticut's policies for exiting ineffective teachers often fall short. The state requires only one evaluation a year for new teachers, and although Connecticut requires an improvement plan for teachers receiving unsatisfactory evaluations, no state policy addresses whether negative evaluations would make a teacher eligible for dismissal. In addition, Connecticut issues nonrenewable interim certificates, allowing teachers who have not passed licensing tests to teach for up to one year.

**For the full report on Connecticut, visit:
http://www.nctq.org/stpy08/reports/stpy_connecticut.pdf**

QUALITY COUNTS 2009

Education Week has released *Quality Counts 2009*, the thirteenth annual report card on public education in the 50 states. In this year's report, states were awarded overall letter grades based on their ratings across six areas of performance and policy: chance-for-success; K-12 achievement; standards, assessments, and accountability; transitions and alignment; the teaching profession; and school finance. Connecticut ranked third in the nation and fifth in the nation on the "chance for success" and "school finance" indices, respectively. Connecticut's 2009 report card appears below.



	CT	Nation
Overall:	C+ (77)	C (76.2)
Chance for success	A- (90.7)	C+ (78.9)
K-12 achievement	D (66.2)	D+ (69.4)
Standards, assessments, and accountability	C (76.4)	B (83.6)
Transitions and alignment	C- (71.4)	C (75.2)
The teaching profession	C- (70.2)	C (73.1)
School finance	B+ (87.4)	C+ (77.9)

* A state's overall grade is the average of the scores for the six graded categories.

“I read with interest the president-elect's appointment of Arne Duncan as Secretary of Education. Mr. Duncan may in fact be the right man for the job, but if the president-elect and his new secretary really wish to fix public education, they need only push through one change: It is hereby illegal for any member of Congress to send his or her children to any nonpublic elementary, junior or senior high school. What do you think? My guess is the whole system would be fixed over the weekend.”

-John. M. Ogle, "When the Sauce is Only for the Goose," Letter to *The Wall Street Journal*, 12/19/08



© 2000 MICHAEL GIANGREGO. ILLUSTRATIONS KEVIN RUELLE PEYTRAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. 952-949-8707 www.peytral.com

PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS OF THE FUTURE WILL NEED TO PASS THIS CRUCIAL TEST.

national news & notes

■ On February 4, President Obama signed into law legislation that will expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) benefits to approximately four million more children of working families. SCHIP is primarily intended to reach uninsured children that can not afford health care coverage, but are not eligible for Medicaid. The expansion of this program will cost almost \$33 billion over the next four and a half years and will be paid for through an increase in the tobacco tax.

■ According to a July 2008 survey of 546 superintendents from 46 states by the American Association of School Administrators, three percent of respondents reported that their districts were moving to a four-day school week to cut costs. Fifteen percent of respondents said they were considering it.

■ The National School Breakfast Program has a profound and positive effect on student performance according to "Impact of School Breakfast on Children's Health and Learning," from the Harvard School of Public Health. A review of more than 100 published studies found that students who ate breakfast during the study but otherwise usually did not, had better attendance, increased standardized test scores, better grades, were less disruptive in the classroom, and visited the school nurse's office less. "In terms of producing good outcomes for kids, it's hard to find a better investment than the school breakfast program... It's as close to a magic bullet as you'll see for educational preparedness," said Dr. J. Larry Brown, lead author of the report. Source: Boston Globe (1/4/09)

■ A new report issued by the American Council on Education suggests that students are no longer surpassing their parents' educational achievements. And for some minority groups, the younger generation is obtaining postsecondary education at lower levels than older adults. While postsecondary achievement rates for Blacks remained the same between the younger and older generations, at about 24 percent, lower numbers of Hispanics and Native Americans were earn-

ing higher education degrees than their elders. The two groups whose young people made gains over their elders were Asian Americans and Whites. Sixty-six percent of young Asian Americans held at least an associate degree while 54 percent of the older generation had achieved the same level. (diverseeducation.com, October 9, 2008)

■ A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that a 14-year decline in the teen birth rate ended in 2006, when the rate increased. According to the study, teen birth rates went up from 40.5 per 1,000 teen women to 41.9 per 1,000 teen women, a 3.5 percent increase. Leading the nation with the highest teen birth rate was Mississippi, with New Mexico and Texas trailing just behind. The lowest teen birth rates continue to be in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts. (Sources: Washington Post (1/7/2009) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1/7/2009))

■ According to the Center on Education Policy's seventh annual report on high school exit exams, by 2012, 74 percent of the nation's public school students in 26 states will be required to pass an exit exam to graduate. The report, *State High School Exit Exams: A Move Toward End-of-Course Exams*, found that only one state (Washington) has added a state-mandated exit exam since 2007 and three more states (Arkansas, Maryland, and Oklahoma) will do so by 2012. The impact of exit exams is most striking for students of color. Today, 75 percent of students of color attend public schools in states that require exit exams to graduate; that percentage will rise to 84 percent by 2012. The report also documents a growing trend by states to move toward end-of-course exams. In 2002, only two states used end-of-course exams. That number rose to four states in 2007-08. By 2015, 11 states will rely on end-of-course exams and three more will implement dual testing systems that include end-of-course exams. To view the report, which outlines several lessons learned about implementing end-of-course exams, visit <http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/HSEEAug2008FullReport.pdf>.

■ According to a recent report by the National Center for Education Statistics, total enrollment in U.S. public and private pre-collegiate schools is expected to grow by about 10 percent by 2017, with elementary schools adding students at a faster pace than high schools. (edweek.org, 10/1/08)

■ What's a good way to see a decline in the crime rate? Make sure teens graduate from high school. Dropouts are 3.5 times more likely to be arrested than high school graduates and more than eight times as likely to be incarcerated, says "School or the Streets: Crime and America's Dropout Crisis," a report from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a nonprofit anti-crime organization comprised of more than 3,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, other law enforcement leaders. Across the country, 68 percent of state prison inmates don't have a high school diploma. And according to researchers, a 10 percentage-point increase in graduation rates has historically reduced murder and assault rates by approximately 20 percent.

CAS OFFICERS: 2008-2009

President.....	V. Everett Lyons, Bristol Eastern H.S.
President-Elect.....	Katharine Bishop, Daisy Ingraham School
Vice President (H).....	Donald Macrino, Waterford H.S.
Vice President (M).....	David Russell, John Winthrop M.S.
Vice President (E).....	Loraine Giannini, Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall School
Treasurer.....	Janet Garagliano, Jonathan Law H.S.

CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF

Michael Savage.....	Executive Director
Earle Bidwell.....	Asst. Executive Director
Regina Birdsell.....	Asst. Executive Director
Ken Bragg.....	Asst. Director of Unified Sports®
Michael Buckley.....	Director, Principals' Center
Dennis Carrithers.....	Asst. Executive Director
Bob Deasy.....	Asst. Director of Unified Sports®
Matt Fischer.....	Director of Information Services
J. Robert Ford.....	Director of Development
Stephanie Ford.....	Director of Marketing
Paul Hoey.....	Assoc. Executive Director
Robert Lehr.....	CIAC Executive Staff
E. Patricia Llodra.....	Asst. Executive Director
Lou Pear.....	Director of Unified Sports®
David Maloney.....	Asst. Executive Director
Karen Packtor.....	Editor, Asst. Executive Director
Beth Rasmussen.....	Young Athlete Program Coordinator
Joseph Tonelli.....	Director of Officials

THE BULLETIN

Published monthly except July, August and September by the Connecticut Association of Schools at 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT, 06410. Phone: 203-250-1111. Third class postage paid at New Haven, CT. Permit #561. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to -- BULLETIN, 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT 06410.

... more national news & notes

■ According to a new study in the *American Journal of Public Health*, adolescents attending schools located within one-half mile of a fast food restaurant are more likely to be obese. The study done by researchers at Azusa Pacific University included data from more than 500,000 California middle and high school students. In addition to finding a link between obesity and the location of fast food restaurants, the researchers also found that students who attended schools near fast-food venues were more likely to consume sugary beverages and less likely to eat fruits and vegetables. (Source: *American Journal of Public Health*, 12/23/08)

■ European researchers have found that children who were the most physically active as teens were most likely to be physically active into their 30s. The study, which followed 1,000 Norwegian children starting in 1979, also found that the physically active teens were more likely to be at a healthy weight through their 30s, although once the subjects reached their 40s the effects were no longer evident. Researchers emphasized the results show the importance of keeping children physically active, as well as the importance of physical activity into adulthood to maintain maximum health benefits. (Source: *Pediatrics*, January 2009)

■ A new study from the National Council of Teacher Quality reports that states do not do enough to determine a teacher's effectiveness before awarding tenure and are therefore complicit in keeping ineffective teachers in classrooms. The *2008 State Teacher Policy Yearbook* reports that only 16 states require evidence of a teacher's worth, and only one state uses this as the main factor in awarding permanent licensure. For more on this study, got to www.nctq.org/stpy08/index.jsp.

■ USA Today reported that a study published in *Environmental Research* suggests that from 1953 to 2003, the fall and rise of the average SAT math and verbal score has tracked the rise and fall of blood lead levels so closely that half of the change in scores over 50 years, and possibly more, probably is the result of lead. The study is the work of economist Rick Nevin, who says there's an "incredibly strong" correla-

tion. Nevin estimates that lead explains 45% of the historic variation in verbal scores and 65% in math scores. His analysis compared national snapshots of children's blood-lead test results with SAT scores 17 years later. As lead levels dropped, scores rose—and vice versa. He also found that over a 56-year time frame, the drop in lead levels tracked consistently with decreases in mental retardation 12 years later. The average amount of lead in children's blood dropped sharply in the 1970s and later, mostly because of a phase-out of leaded gasoline in the 1970s; at the same time, paint manufacturers phased out lead house paint.

■ A federal judge has ruled unconstitutional the "Illinois Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act," which requires a moment of silence in public schools across

the state, writes The Associated Press. U.S. District Judge Robert W. Gettleman found the law to be "a subtle effort to force students at impressionable ages to contemplate religion," violating the separation of church and state. The lawsuit, brought by Illinois talk show host and atheist Rob Sherman and his daughter, sought to prevent enforcement of the statute. Under the law passed by the Illinois General Assembly, teachers were obligated to instruct their pupils "about prayer and its meaning, as well as the limitations on their 'reflection.'" Proponents of the law contend that it allowed reflection on the day's activities rather than prayer if a student so chose, and didn't force religion on anyone. The ruling contradicts a federal ruling last year on a challenge to a similar law in Texas, where the challenge was thrown out of court.

Save The Date

4th Annual Connecticut Data Showcase

Data Showcase

...to recognize and replicate our best practices



May 13, 2009

Holiday Inn, Waterbury

Sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Schools,
the Connecticut State Department of Education,
And the RE3C Alliance

Keynote Speaker: Nancy Love

Director of Program Development, Research for Better Teaching
Author of "Using Data to Improve Learning for All: A Collaborative Inquiry Approach"
and "The Data Coach's Guide to Improving Learning for All Students:
Unleashing the Power of Collaborative Inquiry"

New to Data? Already using Data? Come! Learn! Grow!
Differentiated Breakout Sessions & Facilitated Sharing Sessions!

Registration opens March 1, 2009

www.eastconn.org

. . . more national news & notes

■ The Forum for Education and Democracy has launched a national web-based campaign that challenges all Americans to transform the optimism of the past election into the promise of collective future action to improve public education. A short web film, an homage to the "Yes We Can" campaign video, sets in motion a national petition drive in which all signers commit to work with President Obama to honor four promises that must be fulfilled if we are serious about supporting young people and public schools: 1) every child deserves a 21st Century education; 2) every community deserves an equal chance; 3) every child deserves a well-supported teacher; and 4) every child deserves high-quality health care. To watch the video or sign the petition, visit <http://forumforeducation.org/>

■ A new study finds that black and Latino students are more segregated from white students than at any time since the Civil Rights movement and are more often educated at failing schools, reports Reuters. The trends are "the result of a systematic neglect of civil rights policy and related educational and community reforms for decades," said Gary Orfield, co-director of the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, which issued the findings. Orfield gave several demographic explanations for the trend. As the percentage of white students shrinks -- whites now make up 56 percent of the U.S. school population -- they are less integrated with students who are nonwhite. In addition, increasing residential segregation in the country dictates racial composition of schools unless education authorities take specific measures to create and maintain integration. According to Orfield, residential segregation has intensified due to lax enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, which forbids discrimination in housing and was set up to foster equality in the housing market. The overall segregating trend was strengthened due to the 2007 Supreme Court decision on voluntary desegregation, which removed pressure on local authorities to foster integration.

■ A new analysis of federal data by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health has found that more than half of 11,000 youths surveyed became sexually active before marriage, regardless of whether they had pledged abstinence, *The Washington Post* reports. Moreover, youth who did not take a pledge were more likely

to protect themselves against unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases by 10 percentage points. The report is the latest to question sex education programs that focus on abstinence until marriage, including those that specifically ask students to take a "virginity pledge." The study compared teenagers who had pledged with those who did not take a pledge but were otherwise similar, basing that judgment on about 100 variables, including their attitudes and their parents' attitudes about sex and their perception of their friends' attitudes about sex and birth control. "The pledgers tend to be more religious," the study's author, Janet Rosenbaum, explained. "They tend to be more conservative. They tend to be less positive about sex. So comparing pledgers to all non-pledgers doesn't make a lot of sense." Rosenbaum's findings come as Congress and the new Obama administration are about to reconsider more than \$176 million in annual funding for abstinence programs.

■ In an article in *The National Review*, Michael J. Petrilli, former associate assistant deputy secretary in the Office of Innovation and Improvement in the Bush Department of Education and co-author of "No Child Left Behind: A Primer," writes that he's "gradually and reluctantly come to the conclusion that NCLB as enacted is fundamentally flawed and probably beyond repair." A self-professed "True Believer" in the law during his years in the Bush administration, Petrilli now concedes problems that he had foreseen -- that the "highly qualified teacher" mandate was a "huge overreach," and that requiring all states to reach proficiency by 2014 but allowing them to define proficiency would spur a "race to the bottom" -- but he also admits other problems that took him longer to recognize. These include the conversion of schools into "test-prep factories," and the fact that school-choice laws are meaningless when there are too few good schools for parents to choose. Petrilli says he remains a supporter of the ideas underlying the law, which he enumerates, but no longer believes in "the machinery of the law itself." "The way forward," he writes, "starts with a more realistic assessment of what the federal government can reasonably hope to achieve in education," and includes weighted student funding and nationalization of standards.

■ While gay high schools in Milwaukee and New York City provide safer environments for gay students, the debate continues about their segregational aspect, writes *U.S. News & World Report*. Tina Owen of Milwaukee's Alliance High School concedes the point, but says she was frustrated by openly gay kids getting bullied and dropping out when she taught at a regular high school. "A lot of people see schools like Alliance and say, 'You're taking away the kids and leaving the problem behind,'" Owen said. "But I felt like we were not addressing the problem as it was, and we were losing kids in the process." Studies have found that kids identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning are more likely to report high levels of teasing, depression, suicidal feelings, and drug use. Despite positive track records and graduation rates at the nation's two gay high schools, it's unlikely more will open soon because of social opposition, though one is under consideration in Chicago. Alternatively, several large cities have installed liaisons in schools to help gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning students with mental and physical health issues.

■ A struggling Colorado school district has decided to eliminate grade levels, *The Denver Post* reports, and instead group students based on what they know. The standards-based model, which allows students to advance when they have proved proficiency, is currently in use in some districts in Alaska but has yet to be tested in a district of this size and with this profile. The Adams 50 district has 10,000 students and 21 schools, serving a working-class suburb north of Denver. Seventy-two percent of its students qualify for federal meal benefits, two-thirds are Latino, and 38% are learning English. Two years ago the district was put on academic watch because of achievement troubles, and fewer than 60% of its students graduate on time. Superintendent Roberta Selleck, who was hired in 2006 to reform the district, says that current practice isn't working, but "in a standards-based system, time becomes the variable and learning is the constant." The district has spent the year defining the standards for each level, training teachers, and working with state officials to create assessments. Students will take the Colorado Student Assessment Program annually to monitor individual and school-wide progress.

SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT TO RAISE ACHIEVEMENT

By Dr. Mary Jo Kramer, CAS Executive Coach

Reprinted from *The School Administrator*, August 2006

Strategy, coherence, culture and capacity are key concepts of systems thinking. Yet unless they are embedded in reform practices that improve learning, they will become, in Yogi Berra's words, "Deja vu all over again."

Two principles provide a framework for raising achievement by applying systems thinking to district wide reform:

- Raising achievement requires a coherent, strategic focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms; and
- Transforming school and district cultures by developing the instructional capacity of teachers and administrators is essential to accomplish this goal.

Strategy and Coherence

Superintendents face the challenge of raising the achievement of all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status. The starting point is identifying the most pressing student learning needs to set goals that exceed the district's current performance. Using data to determine priorities is the cornerstone of an effective strategy to raise achievement.

In crafting a strategy, the most important question superintendents can ask is, "What initiatives will be most likely to raise achievement by improving teaching and learning within a reasonable time-frame?" Superintendents who think strategically adjust and evaluate their strategy by applying the ultimate measure of success, as expressed by Harvard Professor of Education Richard Elmore: "If it doesn't happen in the classroom, it doesn't happen." District initiatives raise achievement when daily instruction produces high quality student work.

This standard is difficult to meet for three reasons:

- Well-meaning educators often pursue structural reforms that have a minimal or indirect effect on teaching and learning. Grade or schedule reconfigurations, for example, will not raise achievement unless the quality of instruction

improves. While restructuring may be necessary, it can become an end unto itself.

- Less is more. Districts usually have more initiatives than can be implemented effectively, leaving staff with a sense of initiative fatigue. Being strategic requires unpacking the layers of initiatives to concentrate on those most likely to raise achievement.
- Unless a strategy is coherent, disconnected initiatives vie for attention. No one is in a better position than a superintendent to align district functions and operations with the goal of raising achievement. Coherence is essential among the functions that most directly effect teaching and learning: curriculum, instruction, in-service, personnel, supervision and assessment. Aligning other operations and practices is equally important.

Culture and Capacity

Superintendents who sustain a coherent improvement strategy understand the political and organizational dynamics that shape a district's culture as well as the beliefs that drive behavior and school practices. Reform-minded superintendents inevitably face a two-fold cultural challenge:

- Creating a sense of urgency among either school boards, staff or constituents, and
- Transforming the district and its school cultures into ones where professionals embrace the goal of enabling every child to achieve.

Superintendents who meet this challenge pursue an improvement strategy that builds a consensus for change by engaging staff and public alike.

Professional development is vital to sustaining a culture of improvement. We tend to underestimate the in-service teachers need, particularly when new programs or methods are introduced. Without sufficient attention to developing their knowledge and skills, widespread variability of

practice inevitably occurs. Initiatives become homogenized when professionals lack a common understanding of purpose and approach.

Adults need time and opportunity to learn, most effectively in the context of instructional practice within schools through job-embedded in-service, such as lesson studies, student work reviews and walk-through observations.

Developing the instructional leadership capacity of principals is equally critical to creating a culture of improvement that results in achievement gains.

Instructional leadership requires an understanding of school and teaching practices that raise achievement. School leaders need to recognize that the effectiveness of a lesson, however interesting or organized, depends on whether the students are engaged in learning that integrates higher-order thinking skills with challenging, meaningful content. Instructional leaders provide supervision and in-service to promote this definition of learning in every classroom, and they align curriculum, assessment and other school practices to raise expectations for all students.

Superintendent Stewardship

Systems thinking, when focused on raising achievement, provides a framework for district improvement through a coherent strategy that results in high quality teaching and learning, develops the instructional capacity of professionals and creates a culture of improvement in every school. These principles for effective systemic reform are grounded in the belief that all children can achieve at higher, if not exceptional, levels.

Superintendents are stewards of human potential. In Maya Angelou's words, "The educator is a lifesaver. ... It's an amazing power. It's an honorable calling."

Mary Jo Kramer, a superintendent for twenty years, is an associate professor in Southern Connecticut State University's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

middle school news

MIDDLE LEVEL MEMBERS' SURVEY

By Earle G. Bidwell
Assistant Executive Director

Outstanding organizations in all sectors of American life -- businesses, educational institutions, foundations and not-for-profit associations -- have several things in common. Among the most important are:

- a commitment to purpose;
- a commitment to analysis and feedback;
- a commitment to action.

Stated another way, outstanding organizations periodically re-examine their vision and mission, gather data through dialogue and engagement among all constituents, and adapt programs and services to meet the needs of their membership.

Beginning with a staff retreat in September, your CAS organization has embarked on a self-evaluation/visioning process designed to ensure that we are doing the association's work and meeting members' needs to the best of our abilities. Based on the work of Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great* and contributor to *7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't*, we are in the midst of a self analysis and goal-setting process.

Collins postulates that good associations know what their members want and do it. Remarkable associations ask to ensure "...an internal conversation continually occurs among staff and volunteers about the organization's direction and priorities." This leads to organizational adaptability to respond to change where it is needed.

The Middle Level Board of Control and the Center for Early Adolescent Advisory Board have created a survey of the membership to ascertain the degree to which member school principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders value each of the middle level services provided by CAS. In short, they want to "ask." The fifty item survey will cover middle level services; middle level professional development; advocacy and professional studies; recognition programs; and other services.

A link to an on-line survey will be emailed to leaders in every member middle school this month. We encourage you to take the time (less than ten minutes) to fill it out to let us know your priorities. The survey results will go a long way toward determining "a commitment to action" that will guide our work for the next several years.

"IT CAN'T JUST BE ABOUT THE NUMBERS"

By Jim Ellsworth & Robert C. Spear, Ed.D

After providing a wealth of research that supports middle school philosophy, Dave Brown and Judy Knowles state in the last chapter of their book, *What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know*, that the reader is now either a believer that middle school adolescents require a "distinctive learning environment to serve their particular needs....or not." Count me among the believers, although a nervous believer. My nervousness stems from the pressure to perform well on standardized tests to appease *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Schools and districts struggle to devise and implement improvement plans, a cure for poor performances on state mandated tests. In the case of middle schools, however, will the cure treat the symptoms but kill the patient? It can't just be about "the numbers".

Some seemingly innocuous changes have tremendous ripple effects. When it comes to middle school philosophy, what is simply too precious to give up? It can be difficult for individual teachers to deal with many of these changes. Each individual teacher needs to decide around what concepts to circle the wagons. Subtracting key middle level components to address the numbers on standardized tests is to perform the wrong operation on the wrong part of the body.

For this teacher, three core principles need to remain in place when schools and districts begin to tamper with an adolescents' program with the hope of raising "the numbers" in test scores. These principles are an advisory program, the retention of flexible grouping and scheduling, and the integration of the curriculum. To me, this triumvirate of middle level fundamentals needs to be my "last stand".

Research over the last 30 years supports the positive impact these three core principles have had on the learning of young adolescents. Whatever changes are put in place to improve the numbers on test results, they should be such that the impact on each of the three areas is minimized. The decisions that bring about change should be

informed by the last 30 years of research and the positive and successful effects these fundamentals have had on the learning of so many adolescents.

The Carnegie Council report, *Turning Points 2000*, and other studies highlight the critical need for an advisory program. To me, an advisory is the cornerstone of successful middle school programs, the catalyst that allows all the other elements of middle school philosophy to function at their maximum efficiencies. Brown and Knowles mention a few of the social and emotional issues that adolescents face. Some of these include:

- personalization of learning
- learning to be independent
- physical changes
- peer pressure
- developing friendships
- dealing with academic pressure
- goal setting and monitoring

How can it be just about "the numbers" when students face these difficult issues? Advisory helps to clear these obstacles from their playing fields, or at the very least, it helps to check their negative impact, allowing students to perform better, not weighed down as much by the emotional and social stresses imposed by the above pressures.

Flexible grouping and scheduling is a tremendous advantage in delivering meaningful instruction. Giving teachers the ability to schedule a student's day, in such a way so as to maximize the student's learning, seems to make common sense. Imagine giving students a double or triple period to work on a project with their peers, or better yet, scheduling a project day where students spend the whole day working with a subject area teacher, working in depth on a topic. Imagine freeing up a language arts teacher so that he/she could work in a social studies class on an upcoming debate, helping students refine their persuasive speeches.

Often students are engaged to such a degree, that it doesn't make sense to split their day up into 45

continued on page 16

elementary school news

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION BANQUET

Every school in Connecticut is blessed with parents and other volunteers who contribute to the success of the school. The Elementary and Middle Level Divisions of the Connecticut Association of Schools take great pleasure in announcing the CAS Volunteer Recognition Banquet intended to give public recognition to those volunteers. Contributors may be tutors, event organizers, PTO/PTA officers, fundraisers, advisors team parents. In short, they are often unsung heroes to whom we want to say "Thank You" in a special way in a very special place.

The banquet will be held at the AquaTurf Club in Southington on March 25, 2009 beginning at 5:00 p.m. The cost of the event, which includes musical entertainment, program recognition and award certificates for all honorees, as well as the legendary AquaTurf dinner, is \$37.00 per person. We are indebted to Bearingstar Insurance Company for its financial support which allows us to charge only for the meal. Schools that are not members of CAS are welcome to participate for an additional surcharge of \$100 per school.

All registrations must be made online through the password-protected Member Schools Area of the CAS website. The deadline for registration is March 6, 2009.

It is expected that a large number of elementary and middle schools will participate and schools will be seated on a first come-first served basis. We will reserve individual tables for schools sending groups of 10. Smaller groups will be seated with participants from another school. An early response will ensure priority seating.

Kids need to play, blow off steam

As the pressures of NCLB accountability have caused schools to cut free time and recess -- depriving children of exercise and socialization -- unruly classrooms are the result, Reuters reports. A new study by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine compared the behavior of 10,000 children aged eight and nine, finding that children who had at least a 15-minute break during the school day had superior classroom behavior. The report, which was published in the journal *Pediatrics* (Vol. 123 No. 2 February 2009), states that "recess may play an important role in the learning, social development, and health of children in elementary school." The research team added that lack of free time had implications for the obesity epidemic, and raised concerns "in light of evidence that many children from disadvantaged backgrounds are not free to roam their neighborhoods or even their own yards unless they are accompanied by adults," the team said. "For many of these children, recess periods may be the only opportunity for them to practice their social skills with other children."



Chris La Belle, Principal

Six to Six Magnet School, Bridgeport

CT ADMINISTRATOR NAMED NORTHEAST MAGNET SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

By Jodie LaBombard
Public Relations/Marketing Specialist
Cooperative Educational Services

Christopher La Belle, principal of the Six to Six Interdistrict Magnet School, has been awarded the Principal of the Year award for the northeast region by the Magnet Schools of America (MSA), a national agency that provides leadership and resources for choice schools across the country.

"I am honored to have been selected as the Region One Principal of the Year for Magnet Schools of America," stated Chris. "While it's an honor to win the award, it really reflects the talent and hard work of all the staff at Six to Six Magnet School. I am proud of what they achieve with our students each and every day. Without them, this award would not be possible."

Chris will now be in the running for the national principal award along with the winners from each of the other regions throughout the country. He will attend and be recognized at the MSA's national conference in April in Charlotte, North Carolina along with other regional winners.

This is the first year a national 'Principal of the Year' honor is being awarded by MSA.

"Magnet school principals are not very often credited with the extra effort and drive it takes to be a leader in a magnet school," stated MSA President Bill Magnotta. "Chris was selected from a group of five outstanding magnet school principals in Connecticut. Chris's leadership in his school and the state and federal grant programs are outstanding; and he is a pleasure to work with."

Among the criteria principals must meet to be considered for the award are evidence in promoting equity and diversity among students and staff within the school, evidence of leadership toward equitable academic success for all students, evidence in leadership in supporting the implementation and sustaining an innovative magnet program, and at least five years as a principal.

"Chris LaBelle is a talented educational leader," stated Evan Pitkoff, Executive Director of C.E.S. "His unrelenting focus on improving student achievement has paid off for the students and faculty of his school, and he is a tremendous asset for the Cooperative Educational Services leadership team."

Six to Six was one of the first magnet schools in Connecticut. The school recently received a \$2.1 million grant from the Magnet Schools Assistance Program through the U.S. Department of Education to increase diversity and become more mathematics, science and technology focused.

Chris has been the principal at Six to Six for four years.

ciac news & notes

■ **ATTENTION GOLF COACHES:** The CIAC Golf Committee, in partnership with the Connecticut State Golf Association (CSGA) and the Connecticut Professional Golf Association (CTPGA), will offer a pre-season clinic for all boys and girls golf coaches. This NO COST event will be held on March 19, 2009 at the CIAC headquarters from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For additional information, contact Judy Sylvester at jsylvester@cas-ciac.org.

■ Out of the fifty states, only seventeen conduct a state championship in boys and girls lacrosse.

■ While 11-player football is the most popular high school sport among student-athletes and is played in all 50 states, there is a small fraction of football leagues with varied team configurations. Currently, five states sponsor 6-player football; fourteen states sponsor 8-player football; and three states sponsor 9-player football.

■ In 2008, there was a flurry of legal cases which impacted interscholastic athletics and activities programs. Among the issues that were addressed by the courts were: hazing, Title IX, drug testing, sexual harassment, freedom of speech, intellectual property rights, transfer and recruiting rules, and liability for sports injuries. An article in the January issue of *High School Today*, published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, reviews some of those legal cases. The article can be accessed at: www.nfhs.org/web/2009/01/sports_law_yearinreview_2008.aspx

“Success without honor is an unseasoned dish. It will satisfy your hunger, but it won’t taste good.”

– Joe Paterno, College Football Coach

In 1970, only one out of 27 high school girls played sports. Today, one in three girls participates in athletics.

New DNA Test Purports to Determine Which Sports Are Best for Your Child

A controversial new genetic test claims it can help parents steer youngsters to sports to which they're genetically predisposed. Atlas Sports Genetics in Boulder, Colorado, offers a \$149 mouth swab for kids up to age 8 that tests for ACTN3, a gene that research has shown to be linked to specific athletic abilities. The test's goal is to determine whether an individual would be best at speed and power sports like sprinting or football, or endurance sports like distance running, or a combination of the two.

Atlas executives acknowledge that their test has limitations but say that it could provide guidelines for placing youngsters in sports.

Critics say the data is premature, not to mention questionable. Theodore Friedmann, director of the University of California-San Diego Medical Center's gene therapy program, doesn't deny that the gene has a role in athletic success, but says it's too soon to offer it to the general public, calling the test "an opportunity to sell new versions of snake oil."

Stephen Roth, director of the functional genomics laboratory at the University of Maryland's School of Public Health, has studied ACTN3 but told the *International Herald Tribune*, "The idea that it will contribute to the Michael Phelps or Usain Bolts of the world is shortsighted." More than 200 genes affect athletic performance, he emphasized, not one.

Carl Foster, director of the human performance laboratory at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, said the best way to determine if a child is gifted is still the old-fashioned way: "Line them up for a race and see which ones are the fastest."

The study that identified the connection between ACTN3 and elite athletic performance was published in 2003 by researchers primarily based in Australia.

[Source: iht.com and nytimes.com, 11/29/08]

"THE PATHWAY": UNIFIED SPORTS FROM PRE-K THROUGH GRADE 12

By Beth Rasmussen,
Young Athlete Program Director

The Young Athlete Program, the newest addition to the Unified Sports Program now in its second year in Connecticut, has enjoyed significant growth since its inception. Prior to the introduction of Young Athletes, children had to be age 8 in order to participate in the Unified Sports Program; now we are thrilled to be able to welcome special needs children and their traditional peers to the concept of inclusive play through age appropriate gross motor skill activities, as early as age 3.



Young Athletes enjoyed a successful first year piloting 9 programs throughout the state in Glastonbury (2 schools), Southington, Rocky Hill, Farmington, Enfield, North Stonington, Avon and New Haven, with over 150 children participating. Halfway through its second year the Young Athletes Program has grown 10 fold from 150 to 1,500 children! We have added programs in Waterford, Waterbury, Bridgeport, Milford, Hebron and Marlborough!

The Young Athlete Program acts as the very first step into the Unified Sports® school-based programs available at the elementary, middle and high School levels. Beginning at the pre-K level, we are witnessing the sheer joy of the children as they begin to form strong bonds of friendship in this inclusive play environment. It is our hope that these bonds will continue to flourish and strengthen as the children move along "The Pathway" of the Unified Sports Program, from pre-K through grade 12.

This flexible program is available to all pre-schools/kindergartens and can be incorporated into the classroom as an enhancement to existing gross motor skill activities or used as part of the physical education curriculum.

For more information or to receive the FREE Young Athlete Guidebook and Activity Kit, please contact Beth Rasmussen at 203-250-1111 or email at brasmussen@cas-ciac.org.

In swim suit, MIAA a winner

Supreme Judicial Court rejects former Andover High star Mancuso's claims

By Bob Hohler, Globe Staff | January 24, 2009

Children in Massachusetts have a constitutional right to attend public schools but not to participate in interscholastic sports, the state Supreme Judicial Court ruled yesterday in a landmark opinion that ended a former Andover High School swimmer's nearly six-year struggle to restore her reputation and reverse a decision that cost her team a state championship trophy.

In a unanimous ruling that largely vindicated the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's handling of the controversy, the court rejected Elizabeth Mancuso's claims that the agency violated her constitutional rights by denying her a waiver to swim for Andover as a fifth-year student. The waiver request prompted the MIAA to rule that Mancuso broke eligibility rules by swimming for Andover in 2000, forcing the girls' team to forfeit its championship trophy.

While some sports and physical education advocates raised concerns about the high court's ruling, the MIAA declared the decision a firm endorsement of its authority to govern athletic competition among the state's high schools. The agency has confronted numerous controversies in recent years, including a dispute over an eligibility issue involving the Mansfield football team, and the Mancuso case marks the first time the SJC has weighed a comprehensive challenge to the MIAA's policies and practices.

"The decision of the Supreme Judicial Court confirms our position that participation in high school sports is a privilege and not an entitlement," the MIAA said in a prepared statement. "The Court decision upheld all the significant positions the MIAA had argued in this case, including its authority to establish rules and regulations governing interscholastic sports in Massachusetts. In addition, the decision affirmed the MIAA's internal appeals process." Mancuso, 23, who became an All-American swimmer at Andover, has graduated from Dartmouth College, survived thyroid cancer, and begun working as a clinical research coordinator at Massachusetts General Hospital since she filed the lawsuit in 2003. She declined to comment on the ruling, as did her lawyer, Paul Klehm. The only consolation Mancuso could draw from the decision was the SJC's refusal to reverse a lower court's ruling that the MIAA was "arbitrary and capricious" in denying her waiver request after she had apparently satisfied the requirements to obtain the waiver. The high court cited the MIAA's failure to pay a procedural fee for its refusal to address the matter.

Otherwise, the SJC's decision was generally consistent with state court rulings across the country on the rights of student-athletes. Unless states enact laws or regulations that specifically grant students the right to participate in interscholastic athletics, courts have shown little interest in doing so.

Massachusetts law states that "physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students in the public schools." Mancuso argued in court that "the right to participate in

interscholastic athletics is an outgrowth of the right to an education," but the high court disagreed.

"The right to a public education, even one with a mandatory physical education component, is not synonymous with the right to participate in extracurricular activities, such as interscholastic athletics," Justice Judith M. Cowin, writing for the court, stated.

"Although such activities may serve as a beneficial supplement to required physical education, they are by their nature separate from that curriculum."

Advocates for broader rights for interscholastic athletes said the decision reflects a trend by courts to minimize the role of sports in education.

"There is a substantial amount of learning that goes on in interscholastic sports in terms of teamwork, discipline, and getting back up when you are knocked down that students may not gain elsewhere, especially given our increasingly isolated society," said Matthew Mitten, a law professor and director of the National Sports Law Institute at Marquette University. "Courts should recognize that there is a protected interest in having an opportunity to participate in high school athletics."

Interscholastic sports also open the door for college scholarships for many students, according to advocates who believe the right to compete should be better protected.

The roots of Mancuso's costly court battle date to 1999, when she entered Austin Preparatory School in Reading as a freshman. Though she was a highly competitive swimmer, she chose to compete for a private club rather than Austin Prep's team. She transferred the following year to Andover, where she repeated the ninth grade and helped the school's swim team win a state championship. She told the court she repeated the ninth grade because she was at least a year younger than her classmates and needed to mature socially and emotionally.

With Mancuso's help, the Andover girls repeated as state champs in 2001 and '02. Then came trouble in 2003, when Mancuso sought a waiver to compete as a fifth-year student.

When MIAA officials learned she had not received a proper transfer waiver in 2000, they concluded she had broken the eligibility rules and stripped the Andover girls of their title. In addition, the agency denied Mancuso's request to compete as a fifth-year student, citing a rule that students are eligible for interscholastic athletics in only four consecutive academic years.

At that, Mancuso went to court, receiving a preliminary injunction that allowed her to swim for Andover in 2003. She made the most of it, leading the Warriors to yet another state title as she earned

continued on page 13

... more ciac news

PENNSYLVANIA STUDIES HIGH SCHOOL SPORT PROGRAMS

The Pennsylvania Alliance in Sport conducted an extensive, two-year study of scholastic athletics in Pennsylvania in an effort to determine what needed to be done to improve the sport experiences of secondary school athletes (understand how sport participation is affecting student-athletes' personal, social, athletic, and academic development) as well as to better understand what those most directly involved in sport (athletes, coaches, parents, and athletic directors) felt was the purpose and benefit of sport participation. The results, which were published in "Extending Student-Athlete Success: A Study of Scholastic Sport Across Pennsylvania," confirmed the long-held belief that sport is a "value-loaded" phenomenon where life lessons and skills are learned and where foundations are laid for success in any future endeavor. Below are some of the study findings. To view the publication in its entirety, visit http://psada.org/files/pasada_book.pdf.

Fact

43% of athletes completely agree that learning life skills through sport is as important as winning. 33% slightly agree.

Fact

82% of parents believe participating in sport has increased their children's self-confidence.

77% of athletes said sport has a positive influence on their behaviors (ex: keeps them away from drugs and alcohol, and out of trouble).

86% of parents said sport has a positive influence on their children's behaviors.

Life skills learned through sport:

- hard work
- dedication
- preparation
- integrity
- discipline
- respect
- teamwork
- responsibility
- sportsmanship
- time management
- ability to deal with adversity
- communication skills
- goal setting
- competitiveness

Most Important Characteristics of Sport Participation

	Student-Athletes	Parents	Coaches	Athletic Directors
1	Fun	Life skills	Life skills	Life skills
2	Make a contribution	Improve skills	Fun	Stay out of trouble
3	Improve skills	Make a contribution	Make a contribution	Fun
4	Playing time/ compete in events	Fun	Improve skills	Improve skills
5	Life skills	Friends	Stay out of trouble	Make a contribution
6	Friends	Stay out of trouble	Win	

Characteristics of a Successful Athletic Program Ranked 1 (most important) - 11 (least important)

	Athletes	Parents	Coaches	Athletic Directors
Has a focus on teaching athletes life skills	5	1	1	1
Provides a fun experience	1	2	3	5
Team performance consistently improves	2	6	4	2
Athletes' performance consistently improves	3	3	5	4
Produces model citizens	10	4	2	3
Has adequate communication	7	5	8	8
Has a winning record	4	10	7	10
Has continuity in the coaching	9	9	6	7
Has a good reputation	8	8	9	9
Is supported by others	6	7	10	11
Has high participation and enrollment rates	11	11	11	6

Fact

55% of student-athletes agreed that even if a coach says a practice is optional, they will most likely be punished in some way if they do not attend.

68% of student-athletes agree that athletes should be encouraged to participate in multiple sports while in high school.

79% of athletes believe coaches should integrate all team members into a competition if the team is winning by a lot.

Reasons Why Athletes Discontinued Sport	Male	Female	Gender Difference
No longer enjoyed playing	51%	64%	13%
Better abilities in another sport	53%	43%	10%
Liked another sport better	53%	43%	10%
Too much team "politics"	11%	20%	9%
Not enough playing time	17%	8%	9%
Not good at the sport	33%	40%	7%
Disliked coach	26%	30%	4%
Increase scholarship chances in another sport	19%	22%	3%
Did not like fan behavior	3%	1%	2%
Did not like teammates	15%	13%	2%
Disliked time commitment	17%	17%	0%

Cheerleading is a contact sport, Wisconsin court rules

MADISON, Wis. -- High school cheerleading is a contact sport and therefore its participants cannot be sued for accidentally causing injuries, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled last month.

In a case closely watched in the cheerleading world, the court ruled that a former high school cheerleader cannot sue a teammate who failed to catch her while practicing a stunt. The court also said the injured cheerleader cannot sue her school district for the coach's alleged lack of supervision.

Brittany Noffke, then a varsity basketball cheerleader at Holmen High School, was practicing a stunt for the first time before a basketball game in 2004 when she fell backward off the shoulders of another cheerleader and suffered a severe head injury. She filed a lawsuit against a 16-year-old teammate, Kevin Bakke, who was supposed to be her spotter but failed to catch her. She also sued the district and its insurer, alleging the coach was negligent for failing to supervise the stunt and allowing them to practice it without using mats.

At issue in the case was whether cheerleaders qualify for immunity under a Wisconsin law that prevents participants in recreational contact sports from suing each other for unintentional injuries. The law does not spell out which sports qualify and the District 4 Court of Appeals ruled last year that cheerleading doesn't because there's no contact between opposing teams. Many observers warned that families of cheerleaders would be forced to take out insurance policies if that decision stood.

But all seven members of the Supreme Court agreed to overturn that decision. In the lead opinion, Justice Annette Ziegler wrote that cheerleading is a sport and involves "a significant amount of physical contact between the cheerleaders that at times results in a forceful interaction between the participants." Ziegler cited stunts in which cheerleaders are tossed in the air as an example of the contact involved. Ziegler rejected Noffke's argument that the legislature intended to limit the definition of contact sports to more aggressive ones such as football and hockey.

The decision means cheerleaders can only be sued for acting recklessly or intentionally in causing injuries. The court said Bakke's actions did not meet that standard since he only made a mistake.

Kara Burgos, a lawyer who represented Bakke and his insurer, American Family Insurance, praised the decision and said it will have far-reaching effects. "Cheerleading is becoming a pretty high-profile activity that many engage in. This offers protections to a lot of these students and their parents," she said. "This decision will be cited by many other litigants not only in Wisconsin but in other states as well."

Ziegler said the school district cannot be sued for the coach's behavior under a Wisconsin law that shields government agencies from lawsuits for the actions of employees. The coach had no duty to provide mats or make sure a spotter was in place even though the voluntary rules recommend those precautions, the court said.

The National Cheer Safety Foundation said the decision is the first of its kind in the nation and a victory for Wisconsin cheerleaders who will no longer have to worry about getting sued. At the same time, the group's executive director, Kimberly Archie, said the case underscores the need for stricter rules governing the sport. Archie, whose daughter was injured while cheerleading in 2003, said the rules should be toughened so coaches are held accountable for safety.

Because of the increasingly difficult stunts, injuries among high school cheerleaders are a problem. Researchers at the University of North Carolina have found that two-thirds of the roughly 100 cases of "catastrophic" sports injuries among high school girls since 1982 have involved cheerleading.

More than 95,000 female students and 2,100 male students take part in high school cheerleading every year, according to the researchers.

Most state athletic governing bodies do not regulate cheerleading. Those that do make a distinction between "competitive spirit squads" and sideline cheerleading, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations. The group writes voluntary rules for cheerleading that do not have the force of law.

"There's a lot of gray area about whether it's a sport or an activity," said spokesman Bruce Howard.

Excerpted from an article published by the Associated Press, 1/27/09

Swim suit, continued from page 11

All-America honors and the Globe's recognition as the state's high school swimmer of the year.

In the wake of yesterday's ruling, MIAA spokesman Paul Wetzel said the agency might consider stripping Andover of its 2003 title as well.

Swimming helped Mancuso gain admission to Dartmouth, where she cocaptained the women's team, set several school records, and won the Kenneth Archibald Prize, which is awarded to the best all-around athlete in the senior class.

But she was less fortunate in the legal arena. After a four-day trial in 2005, a Norfolk Superior Court jury found that the MIAA had violated Mancuso's civil rights and awarded her \$10,000. A judge reversed the verdict, however, ruling that Mancuso had no constitutionally protected right to participate on the swim team.

In affirming the reversal, the high court all but exhausted Mancuso's legal options. But her legacy as a star swimmer endures, nowhere more so than in Andover.

caad news

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CAAD CONFERENCE A BRIEF HISTORY: 1984 - 2009

By Ed Tyburski

The Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors has come a long way since its inception in 1978.

In the fall of 1984, after a year of planning, CAAD, then in its sixth year of existence, initiated the First Annual CAAD State Conference. It was held at the Ramada Inn in Mystic, Connecticut on November 18-19.

Patricia Lemley Kamercia, CAAD president and athletic director at Haddam-Killingworth, and Fred Balsamo, then athletic director at Middletown, served as conference co-chairpersons.

This first gathering of Connecticut athletic directors was a great success with over 100 ADs and 30 vendors participating. Some of the topics at workshops included: Save Our Sports, What Coaches Expect of the Athletic Director, Computers for the Athletic Director, Coaching Certification and Game Plan for Retirement. Breakfasts, luncheons and a banquet dinner gave the ADs opportunities to mingle and exchange thoughts and ideas with their peers. Positive and enthusiastic comments from conference attendees encouraged CAAD to make the conference a yearly event.

The following year the conference moved to the center of the state, in Cromwell, and was held at the Treadway Hotel. Patricia Lemley Kamercia and Fred Balsamo continued as co-chairpersons.

In the spring of 1986 the conference moved to the Holiday Inn in Cromwell where it continued to be held for the next 17 years. It then moved for two years to the Holiday Inn in North Haven. In the spring of 2006 the conference moved to the Rocky Hill Marriott where it will be held this year on March 26th and 27th. During all those years, Fred Balsamo volunteered to serve as our conference chairman.

At the first conference in 1984, registration was \$50 before October 15th and \$60 after that date. After 25 years, conference registration has only increased to \$100. Registration forms and a tentative conference schedule is on the CAAD website.

All through the 25 years that CAAD conferences have been held, Fred Balsamo has been the man behind the success of these annual gatherings. He works all through the year spending countless hours lining up speakers, vendors and seeing that the hundreds of details at each conference are taken care of. His extraordinary efforts have helped advance the profession of the athletic director and made Fred one of the outstanding leaders of the CAAD organization.

SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE NEW ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR

by Dr. Nancy Giebel, CMAA

I've heard school administrators, parents, coaches, trainers and teachers say the position of athletic director is the most difficult job in the school system. This is supported by the hours spent in the job, the massive amount of details needed to complete tasks, the importance of understanding legal concerns affecting athletic participants, and the safety of those attending as spectators. Perhaps the most time-consuming task is handling questions and disagreements, and adhering to rules and regulations of local and state edicts. This also is the most satisfying result of athletic administration.

The position of athletic administrator is time-consuming and requires extensive knowledge and planning if the athletic programs are to be well run and successful.

Athletic administrators are the individuals who schedule athletic contests, mentor the coaching staff, arrange for transportation, hire officials, complete the budget, order equipment, comprehend legal ramifications, secure the custodial/maintenance staff, and are the "behind the scenes" forces at athletic events. Too often a "good" day for an athletic administrator is one when he/she hasn't received any negative phone calls or frantic knocks on the door! Athletic administrators need to increase their visibility and leadership, and help educate the administration and community to the role of athletic administrator. This will help everyone to survive. The following tips to help new athletic administrators survive are simple:

Put Yourself First

Athletic administration is a time-consuming position. Be sure to set aside time each week for yourself. Spend time with your family, work out, take vacations and spend time on your own interests. Do not allow school activities to totally eliminate your private time. You then will be able to deal with school issues in a much more positive light.

Ethics

Remember that athletic administration is a lonely job. Peers and coaches with whom you were previously close may question why certain athletic decisions were made. At times, it may feel as if you are the only one making the proper decision. Persevere -- your dedication to ethics will pay off.

Legal Issues

You can never be too aware of or know enough about legal liability. Attend clinics and conferences. Complete NIAAA Leadership Training Courses 504 and 506. Learning about these important liability issues will be of tremendous assistance in practicing athletic administration.

Be Proactive

A proactive athletic administrator can often prevent many unwanted situations. Publish pertinent athletic rules, regulations and information for parents, coaches and student-athletes in the student/parent handbook. Publish pertinent athletic information for coaches in the coaching handbook. Meet with parents and student-athletes on a regular basis to verbally cover issues of importance. Meet regularly with coaches to discuss issues relevant to completion of a successful athletic program. Give positive reinforcement to coaches and athletes for a job well done.

Don't Reinvent the Wheel

Be sure to seek guidance and assistance from established athletic administrators as you begin your quest. Most athletic administrators are more than willing to share resources with you and are honored when you ask to use their handbooks, guidebooks and written materials. All of us have the same goal -- to make athletics a positive experience for coaches and student-athletes. Be sure to seek advice from those mentors who will help guide you through problems or situations you face within your program.

continued in page 16

... more caad news

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

25th Annual Athletic Directors Conference

Thursday and Friday, March 26-27, 2009 ♦ Rocky Hill Marriott
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Thursday, March 26, 2009:

8:00 - 11:00 a.m. CIAC Workshop - *Mike Savage, Executive Director*
 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Luncheon / CAAD General Meeting -
Ray DeAngelis, CAAD President
 2:15 - 3:15 p.m. General Session
 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Workshop Session
 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Social Hour
 6:15 - 9:00 p.m. Awards Banquet
 9:00 - 11:00 p.m. President's Reception

Friday, March 27, 2009:

8:00 - 9:30 a.m. CAAD Annual Breakfast
 9:45 - 11:45 a.m. CAAD Coaching Education Modules
By CAAD State Faculty
 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Coca-Cola Buffet Luncheon and CAAD Closing
 Meeting

CEU'S WILL BE AWARDED EACH DAY

**2009 C.A.A.D.
AWARD RECIPIENTS**

*Distinguished Service Award Recipient From
Inside the Field of Athletic Administration*
**DAVE JOHNSON, BUNNELL H.S.,
STRATFORD**

*Distinguished Service Award Recipient From
Outside the Field of Athletic Administration*
PAUL HOEY, CIAC

NIAAA State Award of Merit
JOHN KROT, KILLINGLY HIGH SCHOOL

Meritorious Service Award
**BRAD STEURER, NORWICH TECHNICAL
HIGH SCHOOL**

PRE-REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Early Bird Conference Registration

Name _____
 School _____
 Town _____ Zip Code _____
 Telephone () _____

Payment enclosed is to cover:

Registration: CAAD Member -- \$100 _____
 Non-member -- \$200.00 _____

Total Enclosed -- \$ _____

Turfer Fleece (men's sizes): S M L XL XXL 3XL

Make checks payable to: **CAAD**

Return to: Judy Sylvester
 30 Realty Drive
 Cheshire, CT 06410

**No one-day fees ♦ No refunds after March 12, 2009
 Conference gift not guaranteed after March 1st**

Hotel Registration

Group: Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors

Name _____
 Mailing Address _____
 Telephone () _____

Arrival Date: _____

Departure Date: _____

Credit Card #: _____

VISA MC American Express

Expiration date: _____

Check one: 2 Double Beds King Bed
 \$95 per night plus 12% tax

Send this form along with check or credit card # to:

Rocky Hill Marriott
 100 Capital Boulevard
 Rocky Hill, CT 06067
 Attn: Laurie Quinn

Room Rate NOT guaranteed after March 12th

Numbers, continued from page 8

minute disconnected segments. Just the time wasted in moving from place to place in order to fit a fixed schedule is a wasted opportunity. Can or should all changes just be about "the numbers"? The more rigid the schedule becomes even in a well-intentioned attempt to address weakness in test scores, the fewer opportunities teachers have to schedule and group students in such a way that their learning is maximized.

In an attempt to raise test scores, some districts try to provide increased time in a particular subject as if that might have a long term beneficial impact on test scores. If 45 minutes of math instruction per day doesn't cut it, why not provide 60 minutes or more per day. What about pacing guides? The more we can cover the better the scores. These changes can be a death knell to integration, a core practice that enables students to see the connections to the content and world around them. If math concepts need to be emphasized, this can be done on the team, through all subject areas by the teachers.

"Locking a schedule" as described above limits the flexibility teachers have in integrating the various subject areas. It can't always just be about "the numbers". The more pegs that can be created in a student's mind, upon which to hang information and develop meaningful connections, the more likely the students will understand and retain this learning.

Survival, continued from page 14**Be Accessible**

Coaches often express their need to have the athletic administrator easily accessible. Coaches want to know you will support them in their endeavors. Student-athletes and parents want an outlet to seek direction with their educational and personal experiences. You are often able to assist with critical issues simply by being visible and accessible.

Athletic administrators make important contributions to the school system. They teach and influence many adult coaches, who in turn influence

Imagine early adolescents effectively dealing with their many social and emotional pressures - think advisory program. Imagine students engaged and working at their maximum because the school day is adapted to fit their unique needs - think flexible scheduling and grouping. Imagine learning and memory improving because students create more connections among the many bits of information they receive each day - think integration. Imagine "the numbers" now!

Resources:

Brown, Dave F. and Trudy Knowles. *What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know*. 2nd edition, 2007

Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century, Carnegie Council for Adolescent Development, 1989, New York: Carnegie Corporation

Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century, New York, Carnegie Corporation

- Jim Ellsworth is a middle level teacher at the Scofield Magnet Middle School in Stamford, CT. He is also a Board Member of NELMS and co-chair of the Professional Recourses Committee.

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

many of our young athletes and spectators. There will be frustrations encountered in our position, but they are countered by many positive experiences. Each of us has a truly challenging job, but the positive effects on our youth far outweigh the "hassles" along the way.

Edited by Mike Blackburn, CMAA

Dr. Nancy Giebel, CMAA, is the director of athletics for Glenbrook South High School in Glenview, Illinois. Currently she is a member of the NIAAA Publications Committee and is a member and past president of the Illinois Athletic Directors Association (IADA).

INVESTORS IN CT YOUTH

- ★ Baden Sports ★
- ★ Bearingstar™ Insurance ★
- ★ Big Y Supermarkets ★
- ★ Coca Cola ★
- ★ CT Lighting Centers ★
- ★ CT Sun ★
- ★ Dick's Sporting Goods ★
- ★ eesmarts ★
- ★ Grynn & Barrett Studios ★
- ★ Horace Mann ★
- ★ IGA / Bozzutos ★
- ★ Konica ★
- ★ Liberty Mutual ★
- ★ Macy's ★
- ★ Martin Screen Printing ★
- ★ McDonald's ★
- ★ NBC-30 ★
- ★ Nationwide Insurance ★
- ★ N.E. Fitness Distributors ★
- ★ PureTech Water ★
- ★ Rawlings ★
- ★ The Republican-American ★
- ★ Spalding ★
- ★ Subway ★
- ★ Teachers' Insurance Plan ★
- ★ U.S. Army ★
- ★ U.S. Marine Corp ★
- ★ Westfield Corporation ★
- ★ Wilson Sporting Goods ★