



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

VOL. 78 / NO. 4

JANUARY 2004

CAS NAMES 2004 ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR!

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce the selection of the 2004 CAS Assistant Principals of the Year! Each year nominations are solicited for an Elementary, Middle Level, and High School Assistant Principal of the Year. The winners are chosen by the CAS Awards and Recognition Committee, a selection committee consisting of active and retired principals and assistant principals. The selections were made last month. Congratulations to the following outstanding administrators . . .

- ♦ **Diane DiPietro, Highland School, Cheshire**
Elementary School Assistant Principal of the Year
- ♦ **Brian Czapla, Smith Middle School, Glastonbury**
Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year
- ♦ **Sally Biggs, South Windsor High School**
High School Assistant Principal of the Year

Diane DiPietro

Diane DiPietro's 13-year career in education has been spent at Highland School in Cheshire. She began there in 1989 as a grade 4 teacher and found tremendous success in the classroom. After being named Highland School Teacher of the Year in 1995, she was appointed to serve as a Learning Initiatives Team Member. In 1998, after three years in this role, she became Highland's assistant principal.



Highland Principal Stephen Proffitt praises Diane for her ability to be both a building manager and an instructional leader. While skillfully managing the tasks of student discipline, building maintenance, and personnel matters, Diane still finds time to implement new programs, review and revise existing curricula, advance technology, and strengthen the bond between the school and its community. Says Proffitt, "There is no doubt that it is through Diane's influence and supervision that our students continue to achieve at high levels.

Skilled in the area of curriculum, Diane constantly challenges herself and her staff to rethink current practices and explore alternative paths. She vigilantly keeps abreast of emerging trends in education and is always presenting new information for the staff to consider and digest. Proffitt says, "A learner at heart, Diane dedicates herself to pursuing personal, professional growth opportunities to develop her skills as a leader."

With an ever-present focus on teaching and learning, Diane has been the driving force behind a number of successful initiatives at Highland. She established the Learning Strategies program, the Professional Readings Book Club, and the "Looking at Student Work" committee. All three programs utilize different resources and channels to achieve the same objective: improve student learning.

During her five-and-a-half year tenure as assistant principal, Diane has worked tirelessly to sustain a highly-focused, caring and professional learning community at Highland. Yvette Cain, a Learning Initiatives Teacher at Highland, credits Diane with building a "community of learners" where students, staff, and parents engage in a collaborative journey of self- and school-improvement.

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EDITORIAL: What Do You Do When the Scores Come Through?

By: Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

"What do you do when the scores come through?" is a question principals are asking themselves with increasing frequency in this age of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation.

Do you rail against the injustice of a flawed system that expects all students to perform at some ever-changing, arbitrary level? Do you wonder at a plan that, according to the Education Commission of the States,¹ ranks Texas ahead of Connecticut in its progress to leave no child behind?

And what about the validity of NCLB reporting requirements that tolerate apparent abuses like the following? . . . "In 2001-02, Texas schools enrolled 364,270 freshmen and 225,756 seniors. The state's official annual dropout rate: 1 percent."² That leaves one hundred thirty-odd thousand unaccounted for. Do you suppose they all transferred to private schools, "graduated" to the workforce or welfare rolls or perhaps moved to Connecticut? By the way, where would you want to educate your own children, in Waco or Wethersfield, San Antonio or Stamford?

Do you perhaps second-guess the decision to bring back that out-placed student who made the difference in the "students with disabilities" sub-group? Do you wonder what to make of large subgroups of economically disadvantaged or English language learners in your district, a situation over which you have no control?

Well, I suppose that some of the time, we all entertain some of these, or similar, thoughts. However, the reality is that such negative thinking is counter-productive. Leave responding to these issues to others like Editor Chris Powell, who wrote eloquently and

succinctly on the topic in the *Journal Inquirer* on September 6, 2003, "No Child Left Behind Tells Connecticut Nothing," or to Congressman Rob Simmons who has addressed some of the more onerous portions of the legislation with U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige. Also consider the work of distinguished national leaders such as Gerald Tirozzi from NASSP, Sue Swaim of NMSA and Vincent Ferrandino from NAESP, who are spearheading efforts in Washington to address shortcomings in the law. At the local level, no matter how much one protests and defends one's self from criticism, the likelihood of changing NCLB is slim to none, and the likelihood of not making AYP another year is great.

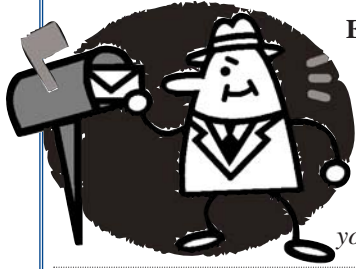
However, there are several things that principals can do at the local level when faced with lack of AYP. Here are some steps to consider.

Be proactive. Write and speak tirelessly on the subject of *No Child Left Behind*. If you don't, others will! Openly share your findings with the board of education, parents, media and community. In most cases, failure to make AYP is the result of missing the goal by a few points or one sub-group not making the cut. While acknowledging shortcomings, be sure to celebrate successes. Also, you know where the deficiencies are; you know what is possible to remediate and what is beyond the scope of your school. Remember, you are the educational expert. Your voice carries the weight of your position, background, training and commitment. If you don't speak out, there will be an information vacuum, and others less knowledgeable will fill it.

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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.

Q. Dear Mailbag: I understand that getting sued is part of an administrator's job description these days. Now, however, it is getting personal. Last week one of the students in my school brought suit, claiming that I violated his rights when I relied on hearsay evidence to suspend him last year for weapon possession. Usually, I am just one of many defendants, but this little miscreant is suing me individually as well as in my official capacity. Do I need my own lawyer?
- *An Anxious Administrator*

A. Dear Anxious: You don't need your own lawyer. When school employees are sued for actions they take within the scope of their employment (like the suspension here), the school district must indemnify the employee unless he or she acted in a wanton, reckless or malicious manner. Sometimes lawyers make claims against administrators individually, but that strategy does not affect the obligation of the school district to protect you. This duty to indemnify includes the duty either to provide a legal defense or to reimburse you for your reasonable legal fees, whether you are sued individually or in your official capacity. There is a strong public policy in favor of protecting public employees as you do the public's work, and you should have nothing to worry about.

Q. Dear Mailbag: One of the brightest students in our junior class has bombed out in chemistry this year, and it looks like his grade will be no better than C. He plans to major in science in college, and he is worried that his grade in chemistry will be a big problem on his applications. He and his mother visited me yesterday, and they really gave me a sob story. They begged me to let him take chemistry again next year so that he can improve his grade. Can we let him take the course again?
- *Awfully Sympathetic*

- *Awfully Sympathetic*

A. Dear Awfully: You can, but that may not be such a hot idea. Once a student takes a course, there is no obligation to let him take it over. I understand that an individual situation can be compelling. You must be careful about doing any student a favor, however, because school officials are limited by constitutional principles, including equal protection. If a school district permits one student to repeat a course, it must be prepared to let all similarly-situated students do the same. Before you make any special arrangements with a student, you should decide what the general rule should be and then follow it.

Q. Dear Mailbag: A student at our high school broke into one of our elementary schools and trashed three classrooms. The police caught him red-handed, and we thought we had a lay-up for expulsion. His parents hired a lawyer, however, who has cited the *Packer v. Thomaston Board of Education* case to claim that we can't expel his client. Since the misconduct was off-campus, he argues, we can expel only if we show that the misconduct seriously impeded the day-to-day operation of the school. As offensive as his actions were, I don't think that we can show that this vandalism affected day-to-day operations. To make matters worse, my board can get hung up on technicalities. Should we let this student skate?
- *Better Safe than Sorry?*

- *Better Safe than Sorry?*

A. Dear Safe: Don't buy the lawyer's argument. While the student does not attend the elementary school, it remains school property. Accordingly, his actions there are subject to the same disciplinary penalties as would be the case had he vandalized the high school. The lawyer correctly described the standard for off-campus conduct. Since the student's actions occurred on campus, however, the student can be expelled for violating school rules without your having to show an impact on the day-to-day operation of the school.

■ Congratulations to New Haven Superintendent Dr. Reggie Mayo who was named one of four finalists for the 2004 National Superintendent of the Year award! The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) announced last month that Dr. Mayo was vying for the national title along with superintendents in Rockville, Maryland, Reno, Nevada, and Raleigh, North Carolina. The four will go before a selection panel this month and the winner will be announced at the AASA national conference in February. Good luck Dr. Mayo!

■ According to the results of a first-of-its kind survey by Environment and Human Health Inc, about 1 in 10 children in Connecticut has asthma, with a greater prevalence of the disease in poor areas and urban centers. In rural schools, the mean rate of asthma among K-5 students was 8.8%; in suburban schools, 9%; in small urban schools, 10%; and, in large urban schools, 13%. The report also showed that the wealthier the school district, the less asthma. About 6.7% of students in schools at the top of the state's socioeconomic scale have asthma; at the lowest rung, that figure rises to 12.2%. The authors of the study, which was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, stressed that a number of factors causing asthma – dust, dirt, cockroaches – can be byproducts of urban poverty. The survey results were based on responses from school nurses at 698 out of 863 elementary schools (81% return rate). A similar but more limited survey conducted by the group in 2000 found about 8% of state school-children had asthma. It acknowledged, however, that the 2% increase could be due to better diagnosis and reporting rather than solely an increase in incidence of the disease.

■ At its November meeting, the state Board of Education adopted a revised Position Statement on School-Family-Community Partnerships. The new statement, originally adopted in 1997, provides more guidance on the roles that schools, families and communities can play in supporting student academic achievement, and recognizes the central role that students themselves play in partnerships. The statement can be downloaded from the SDE website at www.state.ct.us/sde/board/SFCP.pdf.

ct news & notes

CANHS CALL TO ACTION

The CANHS is promoting a statewide effort to raise funds to support the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford. Each middle and high school chapter of the National Honor Society is being asked to raise \$100. If all honor society chapter members of our state National Honor Association participate in this activity, we will meet our state goal to raise \$10,000.00 for this organization. We hope to make the formal presentation to the Literacy Volunteers organization at our state NHS/NJHS conference in May.

Schools that have already contributed \$100 each in support of this statewide effort include: East Hampton High School; John F. Kennedy Middle School in Southington; Kaynor Technical High School in Waterbury; Northeast Middle School in Bristol; Plainfield High School; Portland High School; and Stafford High School. Members schools are being asked to support this statewide effort. Mail contributions to Don Gates, Principal; Portland High School; PO Box 73; Portland, CT 06480. If you desire additional information, contact Mr. Gates at 860-342-1720.

■ According to a state survey released in November by the Governor's Prevention Partnership, school violence in Connecticut is on the decline. Surveys conducted in 1995, 1998 and 2002 by the organization reflect a steady decline in reports of vandalism, assault, sexual harassment, weapons in school and other violent incidents. The most common problems revealed in the most recent survey were vandalism and student assault. Sixty percent reported incidents of vandalism, down from 74% in 1998. Student assaults against other students were reported by 61% of those surveyed, down from 72% in 1998. 33% of respondents reported incidents of weapons in school, down from 69% in 1995. Respondents said that prevention programs, rather than tougher disciplinary policies, have been the most promising method of curbing violence.

■ A recent survey by Masuk High School students found that 6% of middle and high school students in Monroe said they gambled daily, double the rate of two years ago. The students also found that 16% of their peers reported gambling at least once in the last month. The survey of 1,400 high and middle school students found that betting on sports, lottery tickets and dice were the most popular forms of gambling. Although most students reported that they did not feel gambling was a problem for them, 6% said they had an "issue." Four percent said they had a "serious problem." A few years ago, in response to a Bridgeport area report which revealed a high incidence of gambling among middle and high school students, community leaders, educators and students from Monroe established "GAMES" –

"Gambling Awareness of Monroe Through Educating Our Students." The group focuses its efforts on showing students that gambling, which can be an addictive behavior, is often associated with other addictions, such as alcohol or drugs – or other problems such as stealing or domestic problems. For more information on GAMES, visit its website at <http://www.monroe.k12.ct.us/~game/workplan.htm>.

■ According to a report released last month by the state Department of Higher Education, women earned 59% of all college degrees in Connecticut last year. Furthermore, women held the majority at every degree level except doctorates and professional degrees in fields such as medicine, law and divinity. The 2002 year marked the 16th consecutive year in which the number of women earning degrees increased. The corollary to this positive trend is that there has a decrease in the number of men earning degrees. A male in Connecticut in 2002 was less likely to be attending college than in 1976. The number of men attending college is down about 5% since 1976, while the number of women earning degrees rose 38%. As the ratio of men to women in the general population does not explain the trend, educators are baffled. John Pothier, senior associate for research and the study's author, said he first noticed the trend in the early 1990s when he was director of institutional research at Wesleyan University. To maintain a balance of men and women, the university had to lower its admission standards for men. (Source: "More Women, Fewer Men Earning Degrees in State," Hartford Courant, 12/18/03)

national news & notes

■ According to Census Bureau figures released last month, rural states in the West and Midwest have the highest percentage of residents with high school diplomas. Wyoming leads the nation with 90.2% of residents 25 and older having graduated from high school, followed closely by Utah with 90.1%. Minnesota, Alaska and Nebraska were next, each with rates of at least 89%. Connecticut, at 85.5% was tied for 20th place. One population analyst suggests that the trend is related more to minority composition and levels of immigration than to an urban-versus-rural phenomenon. At 75%, Mississippi has the lowest rate of adults with high school diplomas, more than 7 points below the national average of 82.6%.

■ A 7-year-old boy was allegedly scolded and forced to write "I will never use the word 'gay' in school again" after he told a classmate about his lesbian mother. Second-grader Marcus McLaurin was waiting for recess November 11 at Ernest Gullet Elementary School when a classmate asked about Marcus' mother and father. Marcus responded he had two mothers because his mother was gay. When the other child asked for an explanation, Marcus told him: "Gay is when a girl likes another girl." A teacher who heard the remark allegedly scolded Marcus, telling him "gay" was a "bad word" and sending him to the principal's office. The following week, Marcus had to come to school early and repeatedly write: "I will never use the word 'gay' in school again."

In a new report from Public Agenda, school leaders say, "Give us more freedom, remove some of the hurdles, and we can do the job." According to the study, funded by The Wallace Foundation, school leaders say their biggest headaches are funding and the time it takes to comply with a blizzard of local, state and federal mandates. 93% of superintendents and 88% of principals say their district has experienced "an enormous increase in responsibilities and mandates without getting the resources necessary to fulfill them." While school leaders are unhappy with some of the specifics of federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation, 87% of superintendents and 85% of principals believe that the era of testing and accountability is here to stay. Visit www.publicagenda.org/specials/rollingup/rollingup.htm for additional findings. (*Rolling Up Their Sleeves* is available for free download to registered users of Public Agenda Online.)



... more national news & notes

■ 8,196 teachers earned National Board Certification (NBC) in 2003. This brings the total number of nationally certified teachers in the U.S. to 32,131. In 2003, the states with the highest number of teachers achieving national board certification were: North Carolina (1,448), South Carolina (867), California (689), and Georgia (513).

■ A new UNICEF report released warns that global development efforts have hit a glass ceiling, and that educating girls is the best way to break through it. Women make most of the decisions that affect a family's health and welfare and thus a nation's living standard, the report says. Without accelerated action to get more girls into school over the next two years, global goals to reduce poverty and improve the human condition will not be reached. The report argues that investing in education -- with an emphasis on the teaching of girls -- is the best use of a nation's resources, bringing multiple returns. School-age girls in many nations have less access to education because of cultural traditions and expectations that boys will grow to become the main wage earners of their families. However, the report notes, educated girls and women can make a greater economic contribution, are more involved in political decisions affecting women, know how to keep themselves and their families healthier and are more likely to educate their own children.

■ Research conducted by WestEd, a nonprofit research, development, and service agency, shows a strong connection between high school students' academic achievement and their overall health and well-being. The research detailed in two reports, available at www.wested.org/cs/wew/view/rs_press/22, demonstrates "a significant relationship between secondary school standardized achievement scores and a variety of nonacademic factors." These factors include substance use, exposure to violence, exercise, nutrition, school climate, and safety. "Our longitudinal research reveals that schools with higher percentages of students who are less engaged in risky behaviors, more likely to eat nutritiously and exercise, and report caring relationships and high expectations at school made greater progress in raising test scores," write Thomas Hanson and Greg Austin of WestEd's Health and Human Development Program. With the academic accountability requirements in NCLB, WestEd's research has important implications for policymakers and educators: The data suggest that policies and practices that address the health and developmental needs of youth are critical components of any comprehensive strategy for improving academic performance. (PEN Weekly NewsBlast)

■ Twenty-six school-associated deaths have occurred since the start of this school year in August, compared to 16 deaths during the entire 2002-2003 school year and 17 deaths during the 2001-2002 school year, according to findings by Kenneth S. Trump, a national expert on school safety. "School safety cannot be pushed to the back burner while we heighten security for bridges, monuments, and government offices. There is no room for a 'been there, done that' mindset of complacency related to protecting our students and teachers," said Trump, a 20-year veteran school safety expert and author who has worked with schools and public safety officials in over 35 states. While there is no single cause for the recent spike of incidents, Trump cautions that the current educational and political climates are ripe for school violence to continue to grow. Trump says conditions making schools vulnerable include: (1) decreasing school safety funding for training, personnel, and equipment, including a cut of 35% (\$50 million) in state allocations for the U.S. Education Department's Safe and Drug Free Schools Program in the proposed 2004 federal budget; (2) increasing pressure on educators which create a tunnel vision focus on meeting academic proficiency score standards; and (3) increasing complacency and belief that school officials did everything necessary to address school violence following the spate of school shootings several years ago.

■ According to a 2003 Phi Delta Kappan survey, only 25% of parents reported that they would transfer their children out of their present school were it to be identified as "in need of improvement." 74% of parents reported that would prefer that their children remain at their present school while additional improvement efforts were made.

■ The student body appears to be emerging from its recent growth spurt. Enrollment in private and public schools soared to a record 54 million students from the late 1980s through 2001, increasing 19 percent. But over the next decade, enrollment is expected to grow at just 5 percent, upping the total to 56.4 million. The picture varies widely by region for public schools, with projections for big gains in the West, little change in the Midwest, a small increase in the South and a drop in the Northeast. The estimates, released annually by the National Center for Education Statistics, are aimed at helping state and local policy-makers in hiring, construction, budgeting and training. With the children of baby boomers moving through and out of schools, it's no surprise that the student population is growing more slowly, said a policy analyst for the Population Reference Bureau.

Working Smarter to Leave No Child Behind

Accountability based on student test results lies at the heart of NCLB, which requires states to set academic standards for all students, establish increasing annual targets for student performance, provide suitable assistance to schools to enable improvement, and offer educational alternatives for families with children in schools that have not shown adequate improvement despite assistance. A new paper published by RAND offers guidance to the state policymakers, district administrators, and school principals who must implement NCLB. It presents RAND's synthesis of the evidence on educational accountability systems and describes the NCLB accountability model, discusses its underlying assumptions, and offers educators specific recommendations for effective operation in an era of accountability. Visit www.rand.org/publications/WP/WP138/.

■ For the first time since its inception almost 50 years ago, the College Board's Advanced Placement program is adding four new languages: first Mandarin Chinese and Italian and, at some point, Japanese and Russian. The program has, until now, offered only Spanish, French and German. The Chinese and Italian governments have agreed to pay a substantial part of the cost of developing the tests for their respective language. The Italian course will be launched in the 2005-2006 school year, with the Mandarin Chinese course starting the following school year.

■ While many school administrators are hopping from job to job or leaving the profession because of the increasingly challenging educational environment, there are some who aren't just surviving but thriving. Despite all the pressures, they ooze confidence and win kudos -- even awards -- from teachers and parents throughout their communities. Pamela Wheaton Schorr reports that top school leaders share the following successful tools and techniques: (1) Don't try to play spin doctor; (2) Remember that kids are your customers; (3) Don't forget who writes the checks; (4) Don't just call when you need something; (5) Don't play the blame game; (6) Acknowledge people's feelings; (7) Distinguish fact from opinion; (8) Close the technology gap between teachers and students; (9) Demonstrate a vested interest in your community; (10) Mentor your teachers; (11) Empower staffers; and, (12) Empower yourself! To find out more, visit the Scholastic Administrator@tor website at <http://www.scholastic.com/administrator/novdec03/articles.asp?article=secrets>. (PEN Weekly NewsBlast)

... even more national news & notes

■ Inspired by a high school assignment, Stephanie Haaser leaped onto a cafeteria table, shouted "End homophobia now!" and kissed classmate Katherine Pecore. Haaser said she was making a statement on behalf of gay and lesbian students because she was bothered by the verbal and physical harassment they face. Their principal said he respected what the heterosexual students were trying to do, but they needed to learn more appropriate ways to make a point. Haaser and Pecore were suspended for two days. "It's highly inappropriate to stand on a table in the cafeteria and make out, whether the kiss was heterosexual or homosexual," said River Hill High School principal Scott Pfeifer. "I don't think there's a school in the country where parents would consider that appropriate behavior." Haaser, a junior, said she chose to make the statement as part of an English class assignment, which required that she engage in a nonconformist act in the tradition of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. "You hear derogatory comments in virtually every class," Haaser said. "It's not always spiteful -- someone might say, 'Oh that's so gay,' where 'gay' means stupid or dumb. But those comments can be really hurtful." The incident has sparked debate about tolerance at the school.

■ Education Department officials have decided children with the most severe learning problems can be held to a different academic standard than their peers -- a move that will ease pressure on schools struggling to make yearly progress. The new department rule announced last month will affect a limited number of students deemed to have "significant cognitive disabilities" by their states. It will allow those students to be tested against standards appropriate for their intellectual development. And, more significantly, their scores would be counted as part of their school's performance. Currently, students who take tests based on different standards can't be considered "proficient." This penalizes schools as they add up yearly achievement, which is critical because schools that receive federal aid for the poor but fail to make adequate yearly progress face increasing sanctions from the government. Many schools have failed to make annual progress because their disabled students didn't score high enough on tests or because too few of those students participated. The new provision (final rule), as well as a fact sheet & webcast, are available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2003/12/12092003.html>.

■ Countless studies show that it is not the best and the brightest of college graduates who go into teaching. Common sense tells you the same thing. A field where the average

salary is around \$41,000 a year -- and many are a lot lower -- is not going to recruit the "best" people. To help solve the teacher recruitment problem, Richard Cohen has come up with his Leave No Teacher Behind Act. In its roughest form, it means forgiving all teachers their federal income tax. For a married teacher with two kids under the age of 14, that would mean an additional \$4,300 a year in disposable income. If states and localities joined in, the pot would be even richer. Would this by itself mean that we'd find only great teachers in the classroom? Of course not. Salaries would still not be great, and working conditions would not change at all. Still, it would be a start. Maybe the tax break should apply only to public school teachers or those who choose to work in really tough schools. Maybe it would kick in only after a set number of years. But the point is for us -- the Bush administration and the country as a whole -- to put our money where our mouth is. (*PEN Weekly NewsBlast for November 21, 2003*)

■ Several studies published last month show that drugs given to children to treat ADHD could have long-term effects on their growing brains. According to the studies, rats given Ritalin, a popular ADHD drug, were less likely to want to use cocaine later in life, but also often acted clinically depressed and behaved differently from rats given dummy injections. In one study conducted by William Carlezon of McLean Hospital and Harvard Medical School, one group of rats was given Ritalin during the rat equivalent of pre-adolescence, while a second group was given a salt water injection. When they matured, the rats were tested for "learned helplessness" -- that is, how quickly they gave up on behavioral tasks under stress. Rats exposed to Ritalin showed large increases in learned helplessness during adulthood, suggesting a tendency toward depression. But rats, which generally like cocaine, were less likely to eat it if they had been given Ritalin. While rats are different than humans, the studies suggest that doctors should watch children for long-term effects.

■ Homeless children face numerous hardships in their personal lives that sometimes result in significant academic, health, developmental, psychological and emotional problems in school. While these challenges are not insurmountable, state policymakers must be aware of them and take extra steps to help these children overcome the damage done by homelessness. This new Education Commission of the States (ECS) Web Issue Site shares state policies and practices, federal legislation, research and other places to get information on educating homeless students. Visit www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueid=207.

■ A growing number of public, private and charter schools are now available to kids who are looking for an alternative to a traditional education. Commonly called "virtual school," it's a way of attending school at home without the hovering claustrophobia of home-schooling. Nationwide, there were about 50,000 students in virtual courses last year. As a business, virtual school is booming. Virtual school seems like an ideal choice for kids who don't fit in or can't cope. On one online school's website, students can enter a classroom without being noticed by their classmates by clicking the "make yourself invisible" icon -- a good description of what these kids are actually doing. Before the Internet, they would have had little choice but to muddle through. Now they have disappeared from the school building altogether, a new breed of outsider, loners for the wired age. Because the phenomenon of full-time online education is relatively new, there is little research into its lasting effects -- whether its practitioners become introverts and computer zombies or whether, as one parent puts it, the kids "have gathered their energy so they can go out into the world and be more effective." (*PEN Weekly NewsBlast*)

An annual survey of adults and teens released by the *National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy* suggests that teens are more cautious about early and casual sex than perhaps is generally believed. Further results include:

- Two-thirds of teens who have had sex (67%) wish they had waited longer.
- The overwhelming majority of teens (85%) believe that sex should only occur in a long-term, committed relationship (up from 82% percent surveyed last year).
- Only 26% of teens think it is embarrassing for teens to admit they are virgins.

Three in ten teens indicated that they have become more opposed over the last few years to having sex. Furthermore, unbeknownst to parents, they are the biggest influence on teenagers' decisions about whether to have sex. A surprising 45% of teens said their parents were the greatest influence while only 31% said their friends were. Download the full report at www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/data/pdf/wov2003.pdf.



Assistant Principals of the Year, continued from page 1

Brian Czapla

Brian Czapla began his career in education in 1988 as a Math teacher at RHAM High School. Looking to experience some of the "real world"



that he was telling his students about, Brian left education to become a financial analyst for the Travelers. During his 3-year "foray" into the private sector, he learned a great deal about technology applications and their potential impact on society. He brought this experience back to the classroom as a computer science teacher at Memorial Boulevard Middle School in Bristol. After only five years in the classroom, Brian was named assistant principal of Windsor Locks Middle School, where he worked for one year before assuming his present position as assistant principal of Smith Middle School in Glastonbury.

Smith Principal Dr. Thomas Russo calls Brian a "multi-dimensional leader" and lauds his ability to inspire and energize all those with whom he works. "Brian is a creative, hard-working, highly motivated change-agent for everyone," says Dr. Russo.

Brian's love of technology has continued undiminished despite his transition into administration. He has engaged in directed and creative efforts to use technology to improve classroom instruction and facilitate building management. He almost single-handedly led his school through the implementation of the Copernicus Educational Portal System, a system of high-quality, organized Internet resources and tools. This was no small task, considering that it involved "making the leap from a school of 30 computers to a school of 600." Remarks Diane Hoover, a teacher at Smith, "His gentle, yet persuading leadership has encouraged Smith teachers to risk the challenges technology brings, always showing us the great rewards that can result for ourselves and, and especially for our students."

Brian has made significant inroads in working with special needs students. He has developed and implemented specialized learning programs –including on-line instruction – which have allowed some special education students to remain in the classroom rather than be out-placed. Says Dr. Russo, "He is first and foremost a teacher, and he has applied this talent as an assistant principal working with students who need extra

attention. His constant desire to be connected to students of all abilities has made him an incredible instructional leader."

Brian has been a prominent instructor and motivator, not only at the middle school but within the district as a whole. He serves on several district committees and was responsible for implementing the Copernicus model in each of the district's schools, which involved training over 200 administrators, teachers and parents.

Brian's success as a building administrator can best be described by Dr. Russo, who said, "Brian will change the lives of everyone who comes in contact with him in his career."

Sally Biggs



A 19-year veteran educator, Sally Biggs started out as a physical education teacher and coach at Weaver High School in Hartford. In 1995, after 11 years at Weaver, Sally became the

assistant principal of South Windsor High School, the position she now holds.

South Windsor Superintendent Dr. Joseph Wood calls Sally a "tremendously committed and upbeat administrator with excellent leadership abilities."

Sally was the driving force behind the high school's transition to the "Ninth Grade Academy" model, which involved dividing the freshman class into five smaller, integrated learning communities. As chair of the School Community Committee, which was charged with finding ways to make students and staff more "connected," Sally was instrumental in both the conception and implementation of the Academy model. The Academy also has a mentoring component, which allows members of the junior and senior classes, with the guidance of faculty members, to serve as mentors for 9th grade students.

Described by staff as "a highly competent, positive and energetic force in our school," Sally is respected for her ability to juggle the increasingly demanding responsibilities of today's assistant principal. A highly-visible administrator, Sally is a constant presence in the hallways and cafeteria as well at all school-related activities.

Recognizing that the key to successful leadership today is encouragement, not authority, Sally has created a supportive and collegial atmosphere which allows all stakeholders — teachers, support staff, parents,

students, and community members alike — to enjoy a shared responsibility for the governance of the school. She strives to learn from those around her and invites others to take ownership and feel involved. "As a teacher on her staff, Sally has always made me feel that I work with her, not for her," says Marsha Meehen, a Spanish teacher at the high school. "She is a true leader without being a boss."

According to John DiIorio, principal of South Windsor High School, "Sally is a conscientious leader committed to the well-being of every member of the South Windsor High School Community."

Sally has been selected to represent Connecticut in the NASSP National Principal of the Year award competition.

Diane, Brian and Sally will all be honored at the 27th Annual Assistant Principals Conference on March 15th.

Food for thought . . .

The late David Berlo, a noted communications scholar and the former president of Illinois State University, believed that the transformation of our culture from an Industrial Age to an Information Age required a similar transformation in education.

"Most of what we have called formal education has been intended to imprint on the human mind all of the information that we might need for a lifetime," he wrote in 1975. But the simultaneous explosion in information and technology mean that "for the first time in history" it is no longer either possible or necessary to store all available information within the human brain and Berlo argued that education must adjust accordingly.

"Education needs to be geared toward the handling of data rather than the accumulation of data," he wrote. "Humankind needs to be taught how to process information."

SCHOOLIES © 2002 by John P. Wood



Principals' Center Committee Calls for Action on the Principalship. . .

The Principals' Center's Critical Issues Committee has recently completed a position paper titled "The 21st Century Principal: A Call To Action." A description of the importance of developing leadership capacity for the improvement of student learning is joined with a call for establishing the conditions which are required for the contemporary principal to develop this capacity.

The "Call" is directed at all the principals' constituencies, including local, state and federal governments, institutions of higher education, local boards of education, the state department of education and professional associations. It will be widely distributed in January and will be available as a link on the "news" section on the home page of the CAS Website.

The CAS Board of Directors voted its support for the "Call to Action" at the board's October 2003 meeting.

Critical Issues chair, Mike Galluzzo, Principal of East Farms School in Farmington, hopes the "Call to Action" will revitalize the state's interest in school leadership in Connecticut promulgated in the Connecticut State Legislation report in 2000 "The Future of School Leadership in CT."

SDE APPEALS TO PRINCIPALS

Recently, a letter co-signed by the Commissioner of Higher Education, Valerie F. Lewis, and the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, was distributed to all superintendents of Connecticut schools and deans of higher education institutions in the New England region, concerning the inappropriateness of placing student teachers from out-of-state institutions in Connecticut schools. Although these placements by out-of-state teacher preparation programs may be appropriately supervised, the student teaching practices are not appropriately coordinated in partnership with Connecticut accredited teacher preparation programs.

Connecticut General Statutes requires that all programs of higher learning institutions must be licensed or accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education before they can provide educational programs or opportunities within the state of Connecticut. Additionally, "any out-of-state institution with a physical presence in the state shall be subject to the requirements of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies." Currently, no out-of-state teacher preparation program has been licensed or accredited to operate any programs in Connecticut. Therefore, conducting student teaching in Connecticut by any out-of-state teacher preparation program is a violation of Connecticut General Statutes and appropriate state regulations.

As administrators who place student teachers within your school, please be aware of these requirements. An exception may be made for student teachers from an out-of-state institution who have genuine family and/or medical needs, but the out-of-state institution must formally request an accredited Connecticut teacher preparation program to provide the on-site supervision and to ensure that the student teaching experience meets the standards set forth by the State of Connecticut teacher certification regulations. In such cases, the school that places the student teacher will be officially notified of the authorization by the Connecticut accredited collaborating teacher preparation program.

Questions about the content of this memorandum may be directed to the Department of Higher Education at (860) 947-1822.

*Nancy Pugliese, Acting Chief
Bureau of Educator Preparation and Certification*

LOOKING BACK . . .

Ever wonder about how the organization evolved from a modest operation concerned mainly with the governance of interscholastic athletics into a powerful organization that is a recognized and respected force in Connecticut education? Would you like to learn some of the who's, what's and when's that constitute CAS-CIAC's rich history? Each month, this new column will offer you a glimpse of the association's past by chronicling some of its major – and minor – milestones.

1921:

How it all began . . . The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference was founded in 1921 following a proliferation of unregulated high school athletic activities. It was established to mitigate the unsafe and abusive practices that were prevalent in high school sports in Connecticut. The CIAC was formed by a group of high school principals who, in the absence of any other groups or organizations,

stepped forward to protect the interests of student-athletes. Egbert E. Case, then superintendent of schools in Willimantic, was appointed the first president of the CIAC and served in that position until 1923.

What began as an organization of regulation, the CIAC has grown dramatically over the years. In 1953, the CIAC merged with the Connecticut Association of Secondary Schools (formerly the Connecticut Association of Secondary School Principals) to create a new organization with the resources to serve the needs of secondary school students in all areas of interscholastic activity. CAS-CIAC has emerged as an informed leader in Connecticut's education system, providing services to Connecticut's public and parochial schools in areas ranging from academics to athletics. Today, the Association has grown to represent well over 1,000 of Connecticut's public and parochial schools.

Harassment Can Drive Down Grades, College Desires

Sexual Orientation Discrimination is Frequent and Largely Ignored

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students who report frequent verbal harassment in school have on average a 10% lower GPA (2.9) than those LGBT students who report only rare or less-frequent verbal harassment (3.3). The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found a direct connection between in-school victimization and the GPA's and college aspirations of LGBT students in its 2003 National School Climate Survey.

"This year's findings clearly demonstrate that despite modest measurable gains, violence, bias, and harassment of LGBT students continues to be the rule, not the exception, in America's schools," said GLSEN Executive Director Kevin Jennings. "To ignore these numbers is an irresponsible message to all students that any promise of equal access to education remains forged and fictitious."

The study, which can be accessed at www.glsen.org, found that students who experience frequent verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation are also less likely than other students to plan to

attend college -- 13.4% of LGBT who report verbal harassment do not intend to go to college, twice the figure of those who report only rare or less-frequent verbal harassment.

The study also found that 82.9% of LGBT students report that faculty or staff members never intervened or intervened only some of the time when present and homophobic remarks were made.

To combat harassment and encourage a safe atmosphere, GLSEN recommends creating and supporting such programs as gay-straight student alliances, which increase students' sense of belonging. Principals should implement school policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes along with existing categories, such as race, religion, and ability.

In addition, schools should institute teacher-training programs on how to support LGBT students and intervene when harassment occurs because teachers want to do right but don't always know how.

*(Reprinted from NASSP
NewsLeader, January 2004)*

Community Involvement in Middle Level Schools

By Chris Sousa and Robert C. Spear, Ed.D

While it may be a cliché, educating our youth really does take a village and, in light of recent legislation, community involvement in education has never been more important. As middle level schools are mandated to achieve ever-higher standards and to produce test-driven results, they offer great opportunities for communities to invest in their present and future.

If we accept that community members and parents would like to be more involved in the education of our young adolescents, and if we all agree that community and parent involvement is vital to a healthy middle level school, then why do parents and others have such difficulty getting involved in our middle level schools?

The teachers, principals, and superintendents we have spoken with about this issue often cite time and opportunity as the number one and two challenges for effectively connecting with the community. Time is always an issue and at the very basic level this makes sense. Creating meaningful opportunities is a challenge that often derails the best of intentions.

There are a number of strategies that can be implemented to overcome these hurdles. Most of the suggestions we received revolved around committee work, action plans, and public relations endeavors. All of them had one thing in common, a fair amount of time and work on the part of a few school personnel as well as a small number of committed parents. Burnout among these groups is high, as is easily understandable.

One idea to facilitate more opportunity and spread the time commitments out among more individuals came from a conversation with Winton Goodrich, associate director of the Vermont School Boards Association. He spoke of how his organization was helping some Vermont school districts and towns implement "Study Circles." Study circles are not focus groups, mediation groups, or public hearings.

continued on page 9

Middle Schools Certified for Exemplary Teaming Practices

By Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

According to the National Middle School Association's *This We Believe, Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*, "the interdisciplinary team of two to four teachers working with a common group of students is the signature component of high-performing schools, literally the heart of the school from which other desirable programs and experiences evolve." Consequently, the CAS Middle Level Professional Studies Committee researched characteristics of successful teams and developed an instrument to measure team effectiveness. In an effort to promote outstanding middle level practice, they subsequently initiated a program to recognize and certify schools with exemplary teaming practices and highlight these schools for others wishing to replicate their success. It is anticipated that certifying and spotlighting successful models will enhance the practice of middle level education in Connecticut.

The two part process for certifying schools begins with a rigorous self-assessment undertaken by applicant schools; examining twenty-seven areas of school practice including curriculum integration, collaborative decision-making, parent or community involvement and flexible grouping and scheduling. Teams of assessors from CAS then visit schools that meet initial standards to verify and validate their findings. Schools found to have exemplary teaming practices are then awarded a CAS Certificate, a three-year exemplary practices designation and a link on the CAS website.

The Professional Studies Committee of the Connecticut Association of Schools is proud to announce that initially five Connecticut middle schools have been granted Exemplary Teaming Practices status. They are the Albert D. Griswold Middle School in Rocky Hill, East Hartford Middle School, Mansfield Middle School in Storrs, Mystic Middle School in Stonington and Timothy Edwards Middle School in South Windsor.

Schools wishing to improve their teaming practices are invited to contact the award winning schools for consultation or to visit.

- ★ Albert D. Griswold M.S., Ms. Cori-Ann Marino, Principal (860) 258-7741
- ★ East Hartford M.S., Ms. Catherine Carbone, Principal (860) 622-5600
- ★ Mansfield M.S., Mr. Jeffrey L. Cryan, Principal (860) 429-9341
- ★ Mystic M.S., Mrs. Susan E. Dumas, Principal, (860) 536-9613
- ★ Timothy Edwards M.S., Ms. Janice M. Tirinzonie, Principal, (860) 648-5030

CAS middle schools wishing to be considered for "Exemplary Teaming Practices" status are invited to download and complete the self assessment instrument from the CAS website www.casciac.org.

Scores, *continued from page 1*

· **Don't go it alone.** Solutions are more likely to occur when teams of educators are involved. It goes without saying that meaningful progress will come only with the combined efforts of the administration and the faculty. Involve teachers in the analysis of the problem, brainstorming solutions and implementing an improvement plan.

· **Inform all constituents about resources needed to make AYP.** Is assistance needed from people who speak another language? Is there a need for food and clothing for disadvantaged students? How about lower teacher/student ratios? Help the community to understand that societal, as well as educational issues, impact successful schooling, and community members can play a significant part in educational progress. Even if you are not able to reach your goal next year, you will have gained valuable support from those who will now have a greater stake in your success.

· **Develop and widely publicize your improvement plan.** As you create your plan, focus resources on those areas that stand the best chance for success. For example, your chances of raising all-school reading scores a couple of points may be greater than succeeding with students with disabilities. If this is the case, devote maximum time and energy in this direction. Make sure that all constituents are aware of your plan. Exemplary schools literature indicates that success is far

more likely when administrators, teachers, students and parents work toward a common goal.

· **Project the most likely outcomes for next year.** Be realistic. If you need to raise the percentage of math students meeting the goal by 10%, it might be more realistic to predict a 5% improvement for next year and an additional percentage for the following year. While you may still not make AYP, improvement will tend to increase your credibility in the community and gather supporters.

· **Stay focused.** Determine the most important improvement you need to make in the next school year and work toward it. Don't be sidetracked by the new hot issue or next mini-crisis. Ultimately your success as an educational leader is determined more by the academic success of your students than by satisfying peripheral needs.

The bottom line is that when it comes to NCLB, you have little chance of changing legislation or the accompanying regulations. However, you have a wonderful opportunity to establish yourself more firmly as an educational expert, to raise community awareness about educational issues and to rally support for needed change. Choose wisely.

1. Education Commission of the States, <http://nclb.ecs.org/nclb/>
2. By Joshua Benton, The Dallas Morning News, www.dallasnews.com/localnews/education/columnists/jbenton/stories/090103dnmetedcol.f699.html

... more middle school news

Community, *continued from page 8*

Briefly stated, they are school and community members gathering to create community dialogue, explore possibilities, and make recommendations to school and community leaders in order to institute lasting change. Now this is hardly a new idea, but what is different is the results they are having.

How they might work is that a group of eight to twelve individuals typically made up of school board officials, teachers, and administrators in conjunction with parents and community members, commit to four two-hour sessions to expand understanding about issues and begin problem solving relationships. What Winton suggests is to begin by identifying allies, finding and training facilitators, and building a coalition that will help be the catalyst for action.

There are numerous towns in Vermont that are taking advantage of this process and here in Proctor the focus has been on building community-school relations. Forming these groups and creating action plans around common issues have led to the creation of a new school discipline policy, teacher advisories, new climate initiatives, adult education classes, and a community organization called "Our Yard" that is committed to developing community pride in conjunction with the school. In general the study circles that were created here and in other towns throughout Vermont linked interventions to district action plans, made recommendations to both the school board and town officials and recommended new policies. Together the idea of changing the school and community culture was realized.

A natural by product of these circles was the development of "community coffees". A few of the community members took on the leadership of organizing these monthly nighttime meetings to gather to discuss community issues and build collegiality. The focus of these group gatherings could change as well as the organizing leadership. This way the challenge of time management could be spread out among many.

Chip Baldwin, the superintendent of Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union, has used this approach successfully in the past. While superintendent of the Blue Mountain Supervisory Union in Wells River, Vermont he utilized community coffees to get his message and vision out to the community. Working with the school board for over a year in this manner the result was a new multi-million dollar bond to renovate the school. This was no small feat considering at the time the school budget was under considerable scrutiny. It became evident that community involvement through good communication was the key.

The link between middle level schools and communities is very important. Results can be achieved when we forge these connections and foster these relationships. We have witnessed some of these results and are firm believers. It is evident that working together we can create long lasting outcomes, not only in the area of student achievement but also in community pride and collegiality. Here in Proctor there is a vested interest among community members to see that the school succeeds in the work that is being done. All this does translate into greater student achievement and a positive climate for educating our youth. It truly does take a village, and when the village can communicate and work together effectively, anything is possible.

- *Chris Sousa* is principal of Proctor Jr-Sr High School in Proctor, VT
- *Robert Spear* is executive director of the New England League of Middle Schools

For more information on "Study Circles" here in New England or throughout the country, please contact:

Study Circles Resource Center
 PO Box 203 / 697 Pomfret Street
 Pomfret, CT 06258
 860-928-2616 (phone) / 860-928-3713 (fax)
www.studyircles.org (web)

elementary school news

Exciting Opportunities for Students on the Horizon

Robert F. Carroll, Ed. D., Assistant Executive Director

Annual Student Leadership Conferences

Plans are underway for the 2004 Elementary Level Student Leadership Training Conferences. Our member elementary schools are continually in need of successful, positive student leaders, who can guide their peers and serve as role models in their schools.

The purpose of these conferences is to provide Connecticut's elementary students with an opportunity to acquire a specific set of skills needed to be effective leaders. Students will participate in hands-on activities presented by teachers and administrators who have demonstrated their leadership throughout the state. Activities will engage fourth and fifth grade students in mixed groups designed to foster leadership skills in areas such as productive thinking, decision-making, and communication.

Schools with grades four and five have a choice of attending one of two conferences. The first will be held on Monday, March 15th at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and a second will be held on Tuesday, March 16th at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. The snow dates for both conferences in the event of inclement weather will be Wednesday, March 17th. The presidents of both colleges and the mayors of both cities will give welcoming remarks to the students upon their arrival at the conferences.

Both conferences will offer a special workshop for parents and teacher advisors from 9:00 am – 11:30 am. Parents are free to leave after their workshop is over. Students will continue their workshop sessions through the afternoon. The parent workshop presenter for Asnuntuck will be Dr. Robin Schader, educational psychologist at the University of Connecticut's NEAC Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development. Dr. George Robinson, assistant dean of the Graduate School at the College of New Rochelle, will be the parent presenter for the Naugatuck Valley conference.

Flyers on these conferences were sent to principals earlier this month.

Annual Environmental Conferences

Because of the high interest and the number of schools participating in our Student Environmental Conferences in recent years, CAS this year has added a second Environmental Conference in Marine Science. Schools may choose to send students to either or both conferences.

Our 11th Annual Environmental Awareness Conference for 5th & 6th grade students will be held on Monday, March 8, 2004 at Wesleyan University from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The purpose of this conference is to provide students with an awareness of environmental issues as they directly relate to their lives. Each student will be individually scheduled to participate in a series of four workshops presented by school teachers, university personnel and environmental educators. These workshops will promote a greater understanding of the challenges our youth must face now and in the future regarding our endangered environment.

Our 1st Annual Marine Science Day, again for 5th & 6th grade students, will be held on Friday, April 2, 2004 at the University of Connecticut Department of Marine Sciences at Avery Point. The purpose of this conference is to educate students about Long Island Sound and Marine Science. A number of students will have the opportunity to board a ship and engage in a hands-on laboratory experiment. Registration for this activity will be limited and will be based on a first-come, first-served basis.

Materials for both conferences will be distributed at the workshops. Each attending student is requested to bring a backpack or similar carrying bag. All participating students will be given free T-shirts from our sponsors - the Long Island Sound Foundation and Northeast Utilities. The registration fee for CAS member schools will be \$50. The non-member school registration fee is \$160. Fees cover four students from sending schools. Brochures, including registration information, will be sent to all elementary and middle schools this month. For further information on either the leadership or environmental conferences, contact Bob Carroll or Jennifer by phone (203-250-1111) or e-mail (bcarroll@casciac.org, jlacroix@casciac.org).

ciac news

2003 CIAC FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

	<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL:	New Britain - 13	West Haven - 0
Class L:	Shelton - 35	Staples - 18
Class MM:	East Lyme - 17	Masuk - 14
Class M:	Hand - 28	Ledyard - 0
Class SS:	Bloomfield - 34	Brookfield - 14
Class S:	Ansonia - 55	Cromwell - 0



A decisive victory over Cromwell earns Ansonia the title of CIAC Class S Champions!



Perennial powerhouses New Britain and West Haven face off in the Class LL finals.

NYC CRACKS DOWN ON BAD BEHAVIOR:

The City of New York has enacted legislation to crack down on bad behavior at sporting events. Citing the increase of violence at city-managed recreational facilities, the New York City Council adopted a local law requiring any youth organization using city facilities to

adopt a code of conduct to regulate the behavior of its coaches, parents and players. The NYC law allows these organizations the option of requiring individuals who have violated the code of conduct to complete some form of anger management counseling before being allowed to resume attendance or participation.

NCAA REPORTS GAINS IN ATHLETE GRADUATION RATES:

Student-athletes in college sports are graduating at an all-time high percentage rate, and they are progressing at a faster rate than their colleagues in the rest of the student body. According to an NCAA report, 62 percent of all NCAA student-athletes who entered Division I colleges and universities in 1996 graduated in the six-year window established by the U.S. Department of Education as the standard. The new rate is two percentage points higher than a year ago and three percentage points better than the overall student-body. Not only is the 62 percent the highest graduation rate for students or student-athletes since the Department of Education began tracking graduation in 1984, the three percentage points difference between student-athletes and other students also represents the largest gap separating the two groups since the reports were undertaken. The 2002 class is the first class to graduate under the provisions of Proposition 16, which used the sliding scale matching grade-point averages in core courses with results on standardized test scores.

COURT RULING FAVORS NCAA IN "MARCH MADNESS" CASE:

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Dallas Division, has ruled in favor of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) in its suit against Netfire, Inc. and Sports Marketing International, Inc. The court issued an opinion upholding "March Madness" as a trademark and finding that the Dallas defendants committed trademark infringement and cybersquatting. The NCAA and IHSA, through the March Madness Athletic Association, L.L.C., filed suit in spring 2000 as a result of Netfire's and Sports Marketing International's prior registration of the domain name www.marchmadness.com and its use as a commercial Web site exploiting the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship with planned contests and information about the championship. Before the filing of the lawsuit by the NCAA and IHSA, both Netfire and Sports Marketing International had refused prior requests to remove content from their site

continued on page 12

STUDENT ACTIVITIES & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

While education reform in the United States has recently focused on improving student academic achievement, many educators have also worked to ensure that schools continue to help establish an educated citizenry capable of successful economic and civic participation in the larger society. A recent study from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development found that participation in extracurricular activities had a positive effect on student civic engagement across countries and across measures. Generally, the more frequently students were involved in these activities, the higher the expectation that they would participate in future political activities (such as voting). These students were also more likely to trust government institutions; support social-movement citizenship (protests, issue advocacy) and conventional citizenship (voting); and react more positively toward the rights of immigrants. Throughout the countries and across the age groups, more than 91 percent of students had involvement in such activities. The majority of students tended to be involved in sports, arts, and computer clubs, followed by volunteer activities and involvement in civic organizations.

www.ascd.org/publications/researchbrief/index.html

Are we draining the recreation out of recreational sports?

Reprinted below are excerpts from "As Team Sports Conflict, Some Parents Rebel," by Bill Pennington, New York Times, 11/12/03 and "Recreational Sports: Are Young Athletes Becoming Workaholics?"

There has been an explosion of travel and elite sports teams in recent years, affecting young athletes across the nation. And aside from the athletes themselves, high school teams may have the most to lose. While youth sports were originally intended to be feeder programs for high schools, they could end up devouring the sports programs they were created to serve.

"The shame of it is, you see how hardened these 14-year-olds are by the time they get to high school," Bruce Ward, director of physical education and athletics for San Diego public schools, told The New York Times. "They're talented, terrific players, but I don't see the joy. They look tired. They've played so much all year round, they are like little professionals."

The pressure to win begins as early as grade school. Critics say overzealous parents are hyper-organizing their kids' play, and many parents feel compelled to put their children on year-round traveling teams, as well as to pay for costly private lessons and summer sports camps.

One upshot: Children can find themselves tracked in a single sport. Hence some schools now seek to broaden their range. La Jolla Country Day School in La Jolla, California, requires every athlete to try at least two sports in the freshman and sophomore years. "I don't want some 14-year-old walking through the door telling me he doesn't have time for other sports because he's a soccer player," says Jeff Hutzler, the school's athletic director. "How does he know?"

In addition, young athletes can over-exercise, and La Jolla Country Day has had disturbing experiences. Student Candice Wiggins, among the top three female basketball recruits nationwide, tore a knee ligament at a club volleyball practice. "Unbeknownst to us, Candice was practicing three hours a day with her volleyball team after practicing two hours with us on the basketball court," said Mr. Hutzler.

"That same year," he added, "we had a cross-country runner pass out facedown at the finish line of a state championship race. We found out she had played in a soccer game that morning."

Some people favor this gung-ho ethic. "The baby boomer parents generally have been very motivated, very successful people in life, and they transfer all that to their kids," said British-born Ashley Hammond, part-owner of a sports complex in Montclair, New Jersey. "It's the same as a parent of a talented piano-playing child. They want their child to practice the piano every day to reach the elite level. It's the way Americans are and you're not going to stop it." *continued on page 12*

CHEERLEADING BY-LAWS AMENDED

Mike Buckley, Ph.D., Assistant Executive Director

Last year the Student Activities Board of Control (SABC) addressed a number of issues related to cheerleading, including the proliferation of competitions, the changing nature of the activity, and a perceived need for greater oversight. Discussions of these and related cheerleading issues were conducted with both the CAS and CIAC Boards. A sub-committee with representation from all three boards recommended that, for the next two years, cheerleading remain with SABC, but with the following strictures:

- A new application form be developed for cheerleading competitions.
- Approval authority for cheerleading competitions be shifted to the CIAC cheerleading committee.
- Member schools be limited to a maximum of four competitions a year exclusive of league and state championships.
- Member schools be limited to one out-of-state activity per year.
- Member schools may only participate in competitions adhering to National Federation rules.
- Member schools participating in unsanctioned competitions be liable for fines and/or probation.

This fall, SABC reviewed its By-Laws and, at its November and December meetings, amended them to incorporate these recommendations as follows:

■ **Article V, Section B**, of the By-Laws of the Student Activities Board of Control, is amended to read (changes in italics):

7. Student Activity Board will act on the recommendations of the SABC/CIAC Cheerleading Committee for in-state cheerleading competitions. All cheerleading programs shall be governed by the current Spirit Rules Book of the National Federation of State High School Associations. The maximum number of competitions in which a squad may participate annually shall be four (4), exclusive of one (1) league and the SABC/CIAC State Cheerleading Competition. (Schools without league-sponsored championships may substitute participation in any other SABC approved competition.) Attendance at one summer clinic/camp is permitted.

■ **Article VIII, Section A**, of the By-Laws of the Student Activities Board of Control, is amended to read (changes in italics):

Section A. Institutional members of the Connecticut Association of Schools shall be subject to the regulations and policies established in the By-Laws of the Student Activities Board of Control for the supervision and control of non-athletic activities.

Violations shall be referred to the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Schools.

■ **Article VIII, Section C, Sub-Section 4**, of the By-Laws of the Student Activities Board of Control, is amended to read (changes in italics):

4. Fines - Monetary fines may be imposed. The fine policy relative to Cheerleading is:

- *Exceeding maximum number of competitions, \$250 per competition, maximum to \$1,000*
- *Exceeding limit of one summer clinic/camp, \$250 per incident, maximum to \$750*
- *Participating in an in-state competition not approved by SABC, \$500*
- *Host school not adhering in competition to National Federation Spirit Rules, \$500*

These changes are in effect as of January 5, 2004, and will remain so until they are voted upon at the annual meeting in May. Approved competitions are listed on the CAS web site (see "Approved Activities" under Student Activities).

. . . more ciac news

March Madness, cont'd from page 10
and turn over the domain name to the MMAA, which holds a number of trademark registrations to the "March Madness" mark. As a part of the ruling, the court ordered Netfire and Sports Marketing International to transfer the domain name to the MMAA and awarded undisclosed costs to the NCAA and IHSA.

Attitude Problem

"We're not really going to worry about what the hell [the fans] think about us. They really don't matter to us. They can boo us every day, but they're still going to ask for our autographs if they see us on the street. That's why they're fans and we're NBA players."

- Bonzi Wells, Portland Trail Blazers Guard

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THE BULLETIN

Published monthly except July, August and Sept. by the Connecticut Association of Schools at 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT, 06410. Phone: (203)250-1111. Subscriptions to the BULLETIN are a membership service; subscription costs are \$5.00 for senior high schools; \$1.00 for middle level and elementary schools; \$1.00 for associate and retired members. Third class postage paid at New Haven, CT. Permit #561. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to -- BULLETIN, 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT 06410.

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Defenders like Mr. Hammond add that the media seize on the excesses of some traveling clubs because they make good stories. They say that kids' sports today simply reflect the times, and that the clubs teach valuable skills.

Yet the clubs operate in a freebooting world where their own interests can come before those of the athletes. For instance, clubs commonly lack academic, behavioral or safety codes. "Unless you are in jail that night, you can play for your club team," said Daniel Ninestrine, president of the Florida Athletic Directors Association. "It doesn't matter if you're failing every subject in school. And if you are willing to pitch 100 innings in a three-week period because you've got three big tournaments in a row? Go ahead. Who's going to stop you?"

What about the kids? "The kids do it because they like it," says Bill McClurg, coach of the San Diego Buccaneers baseball club. "Maybe it's not for everyone, but I see a lot of smiling faces. And there is no doubt their skills improve from all the training and game situations."

Some kids plainly do like the clubs. They offer prestige, visibility and amenities such as new uniforms every year. Indeed, traveling teams can take child athletes all over the country -- or even the world. Many top athletes spurn their high school teams altogether, preferring the more elite world of the clubs.

"By the time these kids get to high school, their club teams have flown them all over the world," said Paul Maskery, executive director of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors and 37-year veteran coach and athletic director. "They've played with new uniforms every year. We can't compete with that. At the high school level, we hand them a four-year-old uniform and put them on a bumpy yellow school bus for the next game. We have a lot to offer, but it's more the learned values over four years."

But are the clubs good for kids? Are they teaching kids to enjoy sports or breeding child workaholics? "It helps if you give up sleep," says Lydia Newton, of the Stars of Massachusetts, a 13- and 14-year-old girls' traveling soccer squad. "You get more done that way."

The issue matters now because clubs seem to be growing in influence, and some think we may eventually witness a privatization of youth sports. "In the next 10 to 15 years," said Bob Kanaby, executive director of the National Federation of State High School Associations and an original signatory to the Pursuing Victory With Honor Game Plan for Amateur Basketball, "as we continue to cut educational budgets, it is inevitable that some school official will say: 'We've already got these clubs running sports in town; why not let them take over our teams? We can save on equipment, coaching salaries and insurance. We can even make money renting the high school gyms and fields to them.'"

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