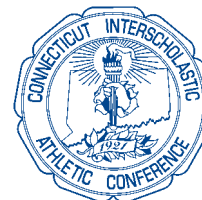




# BULLETIN

The Connecticut Association of Schools  
The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference



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

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## Message from the Awards and Recognition Committee

The CAS Awards and Recognition Committee often faces extremely difficult decisions when selecting winners of awards, particularly the awards for principal or assistant principal of the year. We typically have several outstanding candidates from whom to choose, each one more than worthy of the honor. We spend a great deal of time considering the merits of each candidate relative to the specific criteria in the application. When all else seems equal, the determining factors can often be the extent of service to CAS/CIAC and the tenure of the person in his/her position. The committee members realize that because of the amount of effort and emotional expenditure that go into the application process, it can be difficult to reapply at a later time. However, we would hope that candidates who are not selected would consider resubmitting an updated application for at least two more years. Although the decision can be more difficult, we do appreciate a strong pool of candidates.

- Jerry Auclair Chair,  
Awards and Recognition Committee

## CAS NAMES 2005 ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR



**Donald Friedman**  
Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year



**Laura Ferrante Fernandes**  
High School Assistant Principal of the Year

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) is pleased to announce the selection of the **2005 Assistant Principals of the Year!** Each year nominations are solicited for the elementary, middle, and high school *Assistant Principal of the Year* awards. The winners are chosen by the CAS Awards and Recognition Committee, a selection committee consisting of active and retired principals and assistant principals. Congratulations to Lincoln Middle School Assistant Principal **Donald Friedman**, the CAS Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year, and Masuk High School Assistant Principal **Laura Ferrante Fernandes**, the CAS High School Assistant Principal of the Year! No 2005 Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year was named.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE . . .

"Middle Level Best Practices  
and the K-8 School"  
page 7

Upcoming Events for  
Elementary Schools  
page 8

Is Your School in Compliance  
with Title IX?  
page 12

### Donald Friedman

A 30-year veteran educator, Donald Friedman is in his tenth year as assistant principal at Lincoln Middle School in Meriden. He began his career in education as a social studies and mathematics teacher at Platt High School in Meriden. There, he also coached Cross Country and Track & Field. After fourteen and a half years in the classroom, Friedman took on the role of assistant principal at Cheshire High School, where he served for five years before relocating to Massachusetts. After a two-year tour of duty as an administrator in Falmouth, MA, Friedman returned to Connecticut to assume his current position as assistant principal at Lincoln.

*continued on page 6*

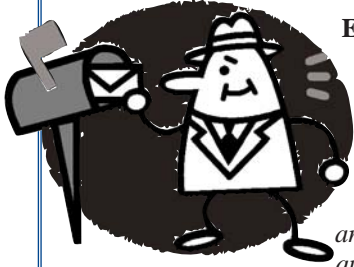
### Laura Ferrante Fernandes

Laura Ferrante Fernandes is in her twenty-ninth year of service to the public school children of Connecticut. Her professional career includes nineteen years as an assistant principal, sixteen of which have been spent in Monroe. She began her career in the New Haven Public Schools where she taught Spanish and Italian and worked as a Bilingual/ESOL teacher at Wilbur Cross High School. After three years as assistant director of the state's vocational technical school system, she assumed the role of Masuk High School assistant principal, the position she now holds. In her twenty-nine years as an educator, Fernandes has made measurable

*continued on page 6*

# 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:** One of my next year's resolutions is to keep my school tidy. I told my teachers at the faculty meeting last week that they must make sure that the hallway in front of their rooms is neat. At most, they have to bend over once or twice and pick up a piece of paper. You'd think that I had asked them to shovel snow (not that that is such a bad idea). Now the union is threatening me with an unfair labor practice if I do not rescind my directive? Help!

-- *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder*

**A. Dear Disorder:** While teachers remain free to pick up trash (and it is good exercise), you overstepped when you formalized your expectations. Under the labor laws, management cannot unilaterally change working conditions without negotiations (unless you can point to a contract provision on point). A good way to think about the issue is to ask yourself whether a teacher could be written up for failing to pick up the trash. If not, you have simply asked for help. If so, it's a clear directive, which is a problem.

**Q. Dear Mailbag:** One of the non-tenured teachers in my building is a weak performer. I warned him last year that he had better shape up, but I have seen little improvement. I am ready to recommend non-renewal, but I am concerned about procedural issues. He has missed a lot of school after claiming to have hurt himself in the elevator, and consequently I have been able to conduct only three classroom observations instead of the four set out in our evaluation program. Can I go ahead anyway?

-- *Itchy Trigger Finger*

**A. Dear Itchy:** Compliance with procedural issues in teacher evaluation is very important. That said, in this particular case you can recommend non-renewal if you think it appropriate. Non-renewal is a discretionary act concerning a probationary teacher. The teacher can appeal a non-renewal to a board of education hearing. The statute, however, provides that the board should affirm a non-renewal decision unless it is arbitrary and capricious. Here, the teacher has been warned, and his absences have been the problem in conducting observations. A non-renewal under these circumstances could certainly be reasonable, even if you were able to conduct only three observations because of his absences.

**Q. Dear Mailbag:** I have been concerned about the double standard in discipline between regular ed and special ed. Recently I heard on Fox News that in December Congress changed the special education laws to permit school officials to discipline special education students in the same manner as those in regular education. I know the people at Fox are fair and balanced, but dare I hope that they are correct in their description of the new law?

-- *Fair is Fair*

**A. Dear Fair:** I don't know what Fox News said exactly, but the IDEA Reauthorization of 2004 did make several changes in IDEA, including a change in the standard for a manifestation determination. Now, to determine that misconduct is a manifestation of a disability, the PPT will have to decide either that the misconduct was the direct result of a failure to implement the IEP or that the misconduct was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability. Moreover, if there is a disagreement over that determination, the stay-put placement is the disciplinary placement, not the prior program. We are learning exactly how the changes to IDEA will affect us. Stay tuned.

## ct news & notes

■ A new coalition of municipal officials and educators has formed to challenge the state's existing school-funding formula. Members of the Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding contend that the state's school funding system is shortchanging the state's public schools by millions of dollars. And they have hired a national school finance consulting firm to help prove their case. The new coalition is calling for an overhaul of the Education Cost Sharing grant which it alleges is inadequate; has caused local property taxes to soar; and has forced towns to cut back on everything from police services to street repairs. The coalition has engaged the services of a national consulting firm to assess the cost of providing adequate education in the state. The study is expected to be ready in the spring.

■ While the economy is boosting most states' fiscal pictures, Connecticut's budget health is precarious, a national survey of the states reported last month. The 2004 Fiscal Survey of the States found that Connecticut's year-end budget balance is well below what's considered adequate to withstand an economic downturn or runaway spending. Traditionally, a state is seen as healthy if it has a year-end balance of about 5% of its budget. Connecticut's balance as a percentage of expenditures is estimated to be 1.6% in Fiscal 2004 and 2.2% in Fiscal 2005, leaving it in the bottom sixteen states as far as its economic health standing. For the first time, the survey found, state spending nationwide on health programs for the poor and disabled will top elementary and secondary education. Some 21.9% of all state spending will go for Medicaid, compared to 21.5% for education.

■ A U.S. Census Bureau report released last month showed that Connecticut's population topped 3.5 million people for the first time in 2004. Relative to the three previous years, Connecticut's growth slowed in 2004, but the state still added more people than any of its New England neighbors, more even than New York state. Connecticut added approximately 16,600 people last year, compared to 14,600 people in New York and 4,500 in Rhode Island. Massachusetts lost about 4,000 people, making it the only state to suffer a population decline last year. Connecticut's population gains are being driven by the strong growth among Latinos and Asians, who are migrating to Connecticut from abroad and from other states, particularly the New York City area.

## ct news & notes

■ The State Department of Education encourages schools to take advantage of a valuable resource for parents of special education students. A *Parent's Guide to Special Education in Connecticut* can be downloaded from the SDE website at <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/special/parentguide.pdf>. This publication is particularly useful for parents of children newly referred for evaluation or newly identified as a special education student.

■ The State of Connecticut will receive \$24,080,428 in grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for important homeland security and emergency preparedness activities, including training, planning, and the purchase of specialized equipment. Senators Joe Lieberman and Chris Dodd expressed strong disappointment with regard to the distribution of funding to high-threat urban areas. New Haven received funding from this account for FY 2004, but no Connecticut cities were funded for FY 2005.

### F.Y.I.

Connecticut state law recently reduced the time period for which inactive savings and checking accounts will be presumed abandoned from five years to three years. If an account has had no deposits or withdrawals for the past three years, it will be deemed abandoned and financial institutions will be required to turn over all funds to the State of Connecticut Treasurer's Office. To prevent this, account holders should perform a deposit or withdrawal or contact their financial institution to report their interest in keeping the account active.

### SCHOOLIES

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## national news & notes

■ As reported in last month's issue of the BULLETIN, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) had voted to undertake a merger study to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of uniting the two national principals' organizations. The study was to be conducted by George Mason University and was projected to cost over \$200,000. The national groups had asked their state affiliates to bear a significant portion of the cost. However, because the financial commitment from the states was insufficient to sustain a meaningful research effort, the merger study has been called off at the present time.

■ The basic reading skills of public school students look good as measured by state achievement tests -- more than half of elementary school students in 34 states passed state tests in 2002 and 2003. But compare those scores with a nationally representative test and they paint a different picture. In a study by the RAND Corp., a leading think tank, released today by the Carnegie Corp. of New York, researchers compared state reading scores with those on the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and found that, in many states, pass rates for fourth- and fifth-graders have little correlation with national standards. Of 40 states studied (10 states didn't have scores available), 34 had pass rates higher than 50%; several topped 80%. But no state had 50% of students scoring "proficient" on the NAEP reading test. Only three -- Connecticut, New Hampshire and Massachusetts -- had more than 40% of students scoring at the NAEP proficient level. As the RAND study suggests, reports Greg Toppo, states have developed widely different standards for reading proficiency, in several cases giving the impression that students are progressing while they may be meeting relatively low standards.

■ A new analysis of 2000 census data reveals that English remains the language of choice among children and grandchildren of Hispanic immigrants, despite continuing waves of migration from Latin America. The study, conducted by researchers at the State University of New York at Albany, found that 72 percent of Hispanic children who are third-generation or later speak English exclusively. The study should, for the time being, allay the concerns of some analysts who project that the surge of Spanish-speaking immigrants and the emphasis on

multiculturalism will ultimately lead to a bilingual society. Researcher Richard Alba says that the findings suggest that people have underestimated pressures of assimilation, which continue to drive immigrants and their descendants toward English as they seek success in the American mainstream.

■ Common Good, a bipartisan legal reform coalition, has published the results of a new study entitled, "Over Ruled: The Burden of Law on America's Public Schools." The study, which collected all laws and regulations governing a typical public high school in New York City, suggests that the burden of law is paralyzing America's schools. The study examines the procedures required for administrators to make certain, even relatively routine, decisions. They include: suspending a disruptive student (involving up to 66 steps and legal considerations which can take 105 days to complete); firing an inept teacher (up to 83 steps and legal considerations which can take over a year to complete including up to 32 steps and considerations just to put a note in the teacher's file); replacing a heating system (up to 99 steps and legal considerations which can take months to complete); conducting an athletic event (up to 99 steps and legal considerations governing everything from who can coach to size of ear flaps to automated external defibrillators). "The burden of law on schools has become staggering," said Philip K. Howard, chair of Common Good. "Human beings have cognitive limits. If teachers and principals are forced to spend their time working through these arduous procedures, how will they have the energy, enthusiasm, and time to educate?" For more information, visit <http://cgood.org/burden-of-law.html>.

■ In response to the declining number of languages spoken around the world and the increase in globalization, the U.S. Senate has passed a resolution pronouncing 2005 the Year of Languages in the United States. The Senate effort will help build public awareness about the value of learning languages, facilitate discussions among education leaders and policymakers, and support research on language learning. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is spearheading the Year of Languages effort and offers sample press releases and a proclamation as well as a calendar of events. For more information on the ACTFL initiative and planning for Year of Languages activities, visit [www.yearoflanguages.org](http://www.yearoflanguages.org).

## ... more national news & notes

■ The job market for educators heated up slightly in the past school year compared with the one before it, according to a survey of higher education officials. Preliminary results of a study by the American Association for Employment in Education revealed that of the 64 education-related fields surveyed, including those in teaching, administration, and such other school services as social work, half reported shortages. As in other recent years, special education, science teaching, and math teaching showed the greatest shortages. In a sign of what the report calls a "slight recovery" in the job market, though, eight fields appeared to have "considerable" shortages this year compared with only one—general special education teachers—last year. Also in short supply, according to the survey, were teachers for children whose first language is not English and teachers of Spanish. In administration, principals are needed. A long-term trend of a slight surplus in elementary teachers continued, particularly in certain regions, the report says. But for the ninth consecutive year, no fields were reported to have a considerable surplus. (Source: *Education Week*, 12/8/04)

■ American eighth-grade students have made significant gains in math and science compared with their worldwide counterparts, but performance at the fourth-grade level appears to have reached a plateau, according to a newly released major international study. Educators described the results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), given every four years, as a "good news, bad news" picture for the United States. Since 1995, the United States has climbed several places in the international math rankings among eighth-grade students, to 15th out of 45 countries. American eighth-graders registered an average score in math of 504 out of a possible 1000, below their counterparts' scores in Singapore (605), South Korea (589) and Russia (508), but above those in Sweden (499), New Zealand (494) and Saudi Arabia (332). During the same period, the achievement gap between white students and black students in the United States has narrowed from 97 to 77 points. The achievement gap between white and Hispanic students narrowed from 73 to 60 points. At the fourth-grade level, U.S. students scored the same in 2003 as in 1995 on math, while slipping back six points in science. Because students in other countries have improved their performances, the United States dropped to 12th out of 25 in the ranking, below traditionally strong Asian countries such as Singapore and Japan but also some European countries such as Lithuania and Hungary.

■ Smoking and drug abuse among teenagers declined again this year, according to a federal study that also found the same trend over the last decade. The study, conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan, found that the smoking rate among younger teenagers was half what it was in the mid-1990's and drug use by that group was down by a third. The decline among older teenagers was smaller. This was the eighth consecutive year that smoking rates among teenagers dropped, and the decline is attributed to a number of factors including higher cigarette prices, tighter marketing practices, and anti-smoking ads. Close to three-quarters of the 12th graders surveyed said that they would prefer to date a nonsmoker, up from one third in 1977. "When smoking makes a teen less attractive to the great majority of the opposite sex, as now appears to be the case, one of the long-imagined benefits of adolescent smoking is seriously undercut," said Lloyd Johnson, lead researchers for the study.

■ Scientists have developed a real-time scanning technique to track the path of a thought as it travels through the brain. The discovery has far-reaching implications for both the medical and education fields. The technology has the potential to extend into education by showing how students are processing and retaining new concepts. It is believed that the new scanning technique will be widely available within five years. (Source: "Scientists Track Footprints of Thoughts," *ABC News Online*, 11/29/04)

■ A consortium of national organizations, under the leadership of the National School Boards Association (NSBA), has issued a resource document to help school leaders address legal issues surrounding students' sexual orientation and gender identity. Aimed at school policy makers and administrators, the publication provides practical guidance on schools' legal rights and responsibilities with respect to students, school programs, and curriculum. Using a question-and-answer format, "Dealing with Legal Matters Surrounding Students' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" addresses questions involving student organizations and clubs; dress codes; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students; and student harassment. Among the questions answered: What are your legal responsibilities as a school leader when it comes to student-sponsored clubs such as a Gay-Straight Alliance? What should you do if you learn students are being harassed because of their sexual orientation? The publication can be downloaded from the NSBA website at [www.nsba.org/site/docs/34600/34527.pdf](http://www.nsba.org/site/docs/34600/34527.pdf).

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Cellphones Don't Connect With Everyone

By Timothy Sanderson

(Reprinted from *The Hartford Courant*,

One of the high school classes I teach was recently interrupted by the ring of a cellphone. I hesitated for a moment, considering how to address the disruption. As the young perpetrator looked sheepishly toward me, I surprised the class by proudly admitting, "I don't own a cellphone!"

A few moments later, after the shock on the faces of my students wore away, I found myself assuring them that my house has electricity and I don't hand pump water from a well in my backyard. When the conversation took an inquisitive turn, I used the moment to say that I despise cellphones because too many of the people who use them are disruptive and self-absorbed.

I realize many people are considerate enough to turn their phones off in public or seek privacy when making a call. The number of rude cellphone users, however, is increasing. Their verbal graffiti is quickly becoming a pervasive part of my daily life. In restaurants and libraries, in religious services and theaters, the incessant ringing of cellphones is everywhere. People are seemingly allowed to use them with impunity.

As a young person, I'm supposed to adapt easily to technological advances. But hearing an uninhibited stranger in the post office schedule a doctor's appointment while graphically describing a medical problem is something I can't get used to. And why do I deserve calls from friends only when they are driving or waiting in a line somewhere?

Equally appalling is a cellphone horror story my wife recounted recently. She watched as a woman at a playground shooed away her crying son while babbling obliviously into her phone. This mother did not realize her son had just fallen off a swing. Imagine the same setting minus the phone -- mother interacting with child as she pushes him on the swings.

## CT DELEGATION ATTENDS NATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

By Veronica LeDuc, Principal, Torrington High School

everyone

(May 29, 2004)

To me, the mobile phone explosion is bewildering. When I left college five years ago, a handful of friends had cellphones. At first, most people claimed they used cellphones either strictly for work or in case of emergency. And now? Even my 60-year-old mother-in-law has gone wireless. (It's hilarious watching her try to find the power button.)

I suppose the effective marketing of the telecommunications industry overwhelmed people with images of a changing world fraught with peril and uncertainty; I was not fooled into paying another monthly bill. Although my life truly has changed drastically in the past five years, I still haven't felt the need for a cellphone. Even through the rigors of finding my first real job, getting married, having two children, buying a house and sharing one car with my wife, I've never roamed across a cellphone network.

Most cellphone users I speak with contend that wireless phones are popular because they offer security. I can acknowledge that cellphones have probably helped many people in an emergency. But do they really make us safer? I scold my friends for calling me while they are driving because I know how frightened I get when someone on a cellphone is tailgating me.

Because there are few restrictions on cellphone use, people feel entitled to use them wherever and whenever they want. A phone ringing in my classroom confirms for me that cellphone propriety needs to become a part of society's curriculum. Otherwise, I fear an inevitable irony: Someone using a cellphone in public will scold me for being too noisy as he tries to make a call.

.....  
*Timothy Sanderson, 27, of Glastonbury is an English teacher at Glastonbury High School.*

Secretary of Education Rod Paige opened the 2nd Annual National High School Leadership Summit on December 2, 2004 with what I thought was a very meaningful and inspirational comment: "The achievement gap is the civil rights challenge of our generation."

Gathered in Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C. over 500 educators and others examined the current status of education in America's high schools. Workshops ran the gamut from discussions of dropout prevention to meeting the needs of the talented and gifted. Standards, high-stakes testing and expectations for student success were at the heart of the presentations. What rang out loud and clear from all quarters was the very real need to look at new and alternative ways of meeting the needs of today's high school students.

Keynote speakers, including Dr. Paige, Governor Mark R. Warner of Virginia, Ioannis Miaoulis of the Boston Museum of Science, all reminded us of the important work that we are doing and the necessity to understand that what we have been doing in the past has not worked for everyone. Each of them challenged us to look at education at the secondary level not as "one size fits all" but rather as a continuum of services and options that can customize education in unique ways to meet the needs of our varied constituencies while at the same time being mindful of maintaining standards and expectations for all learners.

The Connecticut team included: from the CSDE, John Ramos, Deputy Commissioner; Barbara Westwater, Bureau Chief for Curriculum and Instruction; Ann Gaulin, Grants Manager; June Sanford,

Director of Career and Technical Education; Yuhang Rhong, Higher Education; from the University of Connecticut, Gillian Thorne, Interim Director of Education Partnerships; and from CAS, Veronica LeDuc, CAHSP Board of Directors. Each day when the workshops concluded, the members of the Connecticut team met to share information about sessions attended and to develop a framework for continuing the work of the summit when they returned home.

What I personally found remarkable was that the challenges I face in my school are found in a myriad of variations in schools everywhere. The creative solutions that are being tested at different schools are numerous. Some required major expenditures, and some were less costly. All required educators to look at students and learning through different lenses, to expect great things from all youth and to become part of their own learning community. Sometimes when we get caught up in the stress of the day-to-day operations at our schools, we lose sight of the greatness of what we do and the difference that our schools make. We can also get mired in routines and forget that education is alive and that it needs to grow and change with our students.

This summit was a real chance for us who attended to be reinvigorated and to bring back to our states the seeds for addressing reform at home. Plans are currently underway for the next state summit where the work will continue to discover new and better ways to provide quality educational opportunities that meet the needs of all of our secondary students.



### The 28th Annual Assistant Principals' Conference

**MARCH 17, 2005**

Four Points Sheraton, Meriden ♦ 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Workshops on *Breaking Ranks II*, personalizing schools,  
& best practices in Connecticut schools -- keyed to the theme . . .

**"Making Sense of School Reform"**

*Look for registration materials in the mail!*

### **Friedman, continued from page 1**

Upon learning of his selection as the 2005 Middle School Principal of the Year, Friedman remarked, "I am humbled by this honor from my peers. I consider this selection a recognition of the success of our Lincoln Middle School community and the Meriden Public Schools, which have given me the opportunity to administer."

Described by Lincoln Middle School Secretary Kathleen Kubeck as both a "dynamic administrator" and a "gentle being," Friedman is admired for his ability to delicately balance a warm personality with a strong professional focus. A caring and committed administrator, Friedman places tremendous importance on the social and emotional welfare of his students. He works tirelessly to ensure that every student is treated with compassion and respect. When handling discipline matters, he is thorough and deliberate, always careful to listen to the student's side of the story and to find a resolution that is remedial rather than punitive. Says Lincoln Principal John Lineen, "Mr. Friedman is an exceptionally gifted administrator and, more importantly, an exceptional person."

While skillfully managing the tasks of student discipline and staff development, Friedman still finds time to implement new school improvement initiatives, assist staff in reviewing and revising curricula, and engage in everyday acts of kindness which foster a positive school climate with high staff and student morale. Says teacher Judy Seldner, "Within his very busy schedule, Donn often-times leaves notes of appreciation in staff mailboxes, adding a wonderful ingredient to a positive school environment."

A progressive instructional leader, Friedman developed a curriculum mapping format for the Lincoln staff which has resulted in a synergy between the written curriculum and the instruction delivered in the classroom. Skilled in the area of math curriculum, Friedman currently serves as co-chair of the district's Mathematics Curriculum Committee. Says Seldner, "Concerned about the performance of his students, he continually strives to keep staff abreast of current best practices in math and suggests ways to link teaching strategies and concepts with state standards."

A member of the district's At-Risk Student Task Force, Friedman was the driving force behind the implementation of the successful Second Step initiative, a character education and violence prevention program. As a result of his work with Second Step, Friedman was appointed to represent the Meriden schools on the Meriden and Wallingford Substance Abuse Council.

Friedman also serves as the school's athletic director, assuming responsibility for scheduling and overseeing all school-sponsored athletic contests. He focuses his efforts on building extra-curricular programs which promote good behavior and academic success as well as athletic achievement. A sports enthusiast himself, he tries never to miss a school athletic event.

An active and energetic member of CAS and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) since 1995, Friedman currently serves as chair of the Girls' Cross Country Committee, the Boys' Cross Country Committee, and the Boys' Outdoor Track Committee. He is also a member of the Indoor Track Committee and represents CAS on the Council of New England Secondary School Principals' Association.

Mike Savage, executive director of the CAS-CIAC, praises Friedman's contributions to high school athletics in Connecticut. "Donn has become a vital asset to the CIAC, serving in several of our most challenging and important leadership roles. He has shown himself to be a soft-spoken yet decisive leader, one who is able to look at issues from many perspectives and whose first priority is always the safety and welfare of the thousands of student-athletes who participate in high school athletics each year."

### **Fernandes, continued from page 1**

contributions toward the improvement of public education at the local, state, and regional levels.

"I am privileged, honored and blessed to have been chosen as the 2005 CAS Assistant Principal of the Year," said Laura upon learning of her award. "It is an emotional, exhilarating experience to be recognized to join the ranks of Connecticut's finest school leaders."

Fernandes is known as a dedicated and enthusiastic administrator whose every action is driven by her desire for improved opportunities for her students. Her focus on academic excellence and insistence upon high standards have earned her the respect of staff, students, parents and community members alike. In the words of Alan Beitman, superintendent of the Monroe Public Schools, "Laura goes the extra mile to make sure that all of our students receive the care and attention that they need to achieve at the highest possible levels."

Masuk Principal John Battista praises Fernandes for her ability to find and build upon the strengths of her staff members, to generate community support for and involvement in school programs, and to foster a positive school climate with high staff and student morale. "Laura enriches our school environment through her encouragement, humor, professionalism and her friendly smile," says Battista

Fernandes has been the driving force behind a number of successful initiatives at Masuk, including GAMES (Gambling Awareness through the Education of Our Students), a community-based underage gambling prevention program; Fresh Fest, a transition program for incoming freshman; and CRC (Creative Response to Conflict), an initiative designed to enhance the cultural climate of the school.

A woman of extraordinary character and integrity, Fernandes has worked tirelessly to teach her students the values of community service, citizenship, responsibility and respect for others. She has provided many avenues for increasing student sensitivity to the needs of one another. Through her work with the CRC, she secured a \$75,000 grant to promote acceptance and tolerance at Masuk.

Fernandes has been a prominent instructor and motivator, not only at the high school but within the district as a whole. She is chair of the district Professional Development Committee and the Joint Curriculum Committee; and she serves as facilitator for the *Learn to Lead* Program, a collaborative summer program which involves students from Bridgeport and other surrounding communities.

Unselfish and civic-minded, Fernandes has served CAS in a variety of roles for nearly twenty years. She has been a prominent member of the Assistant Principals Committee since 1985 and she has served as chair of the Governor's Scholars Committee since its inception in 1997.

CAS Executive Director Mike Savage applauds Fernandes' passion and energy. Says Savage, "In all that she does, Laura engages herself fully and with unremitting optimism and dedication. Her presence on the various boards and committees on which she has served has provided us with greater vision and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. She has enriched us as people as well as professionals."

Fernandes has been selected by CAS to represent Connecticut in the National Assistant Principal of the Year Program sponsored jointly by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and Virco, Inc. Fernandes, along with assistant principals from each of the other fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity associations, will compete for the national honor. The national winner receives a \$5,000 award from Virco. For additional information about the National Principal of the Year Awards Program, please visit <http://www.nassp.org/awards/09-02.cfm>.

## Middle Level Best Practices and the K-8 School

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

Often enough it seems that conversations regarding middle level education and K-8 schools focus more on the structure of schooling; the schedule, grade configurations, teaching clusters etc., than the principles behind the structures. Are there specific overriding principles in order to be a middle school? Is there one format that works best? Are there one or two elements that need to be incorporated into a junior high school in order to create a middle school? The answer to all these questions is yes, and no.

Recently the question of which grade configuration is best for young adolescents has gotten a great deal of attention in some areas of the country. Some educators even suggest that this is a developing trend and that separate middle level schools are doomed! Critics of middle level education have touted the benefits of abandoning middle schools and suggest a move toward K-8 schools, and recently the National Middle School Association printed a publication devoted to this very subject.

While many states and local education authorities debate over how they should structure their schools, some states have little choice in grade configuration largely due to small towns and geography. In Vermont there are 17 different grade structures for 7th grade. In spite of all these different configurations, Vermont is still ranked as the top rated state in the 2003 NAEP for grades 4 and 8 in math and reading. This illustrates the lack of substantial studies that link student achievement and grade configuration.

It might be wise to look beyond structure to the bigger picture of middle level philosophy and what makes for a successful middle level grade school experience. Most middle level schools have differences that one can look to for the common characteristics and learn from these.

The New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS), the National Middle School Association (NMSA) and the Carnegie Association have all agreed on a variety of characteristics and provisions that should be incorporated into what is referred to as a Developmentally Responsive Middle School. NMSA has provided us with some characteristics and provisions to help guide us as we develop our educational philosophies, strategies and structures. They are:

- educators committed to young adolescents;
- a shared vision;
- high expectations for all;
- an adult advocate for every student;
- family and community partnerships;
- a positive school climate.

*continued on page 8*

## National Program Supports the Goals of "Respect Me"

By Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

For several years, the Connecticut Association of Schools has been collaborating with *Operation Respect, Connecticut* in bringing "Respect Me!" programs to teams of high school and middle school students, teachers and administrators. To date, one hundred thirty-seven school teams together with over one thousand individuals have participated in day-long workshops designed to focus on issues of climate and community for schools who are committed to increasing their school's respect quotient. A significant part of the training addresses aggressive behaviors, both physical and psychological. Among other things, workshop participants have learned that by-and-large, verbal abuse is often more damaging in the long run than physical abuse and leaves long-lasting scars on its victims.

School teams leave the workshops with first, or next steps, designed to create climates of greater acceptance for all members of their school communities.

Projected activities have focused on:

- creating stronger connections among students and adults;
- reducing the incidences of verbal abuse by changing the climate;
- creating a caring majority;
- developing language that works;
- debunking myths about name-calling;
- and much more.

We at CAS and *Operation Respect* are delighted to learn that the National Middle School Association, the National Association of Elementary Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals and scores of other prestigious national organizations have formed a coalition inviting middle schools across the country to participate in *No Name Calling Week* from January 24-28, 2005. The *No Name-Calling Week* Coalition aims to create safer schools by making bullying, harassment, and name-calling unacceptable, through public education campaigns that motivate students and educators to take school-based action around the problem of name-calling and verbal harassment." To support this effort, the coalition has created wealth of curriculum, ideas, and resources. They are available at [www.nonamecallingweek.org](http://www.nonamecallingweek.org).

The CAS Middle Level Division joins the national coalition in encouraging Connecticut schools to "take part in a week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling and verbal bullying of all kinds."

## Call for Artists

Artist and Art Teachers: Do you have a passion for working in a particular medium? Would you like to spend a day sharing your talent with highly motivated middle level artists in a top quality art studio? If the answer to these questions is "yes", consider being an artist/presenter at the fourth annual "Arts in the Middle" conference for middle level students and teachers at the Hartford Art School on May 18, 2005. This exciting day-long workshop gives participants opportunities to create two separate projects in mediums of their choosing. Leading the sessions are practicing artists from Connecticut and beyond. CAS is now seeking artists who might wish to share their talents, to work with some of the best and brightest of Connecticut's young artist, and to see their enthusiasm and zest for the artistic process.

To become a part of this exciting project or to obtain further information, contact Earle Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director at (203) 250-1111 or [ebidwell@casciac.org](mailto:ebidwell@casciac.org).



## ... more middle school news

### Best Practices, *continued from page 7*

Therefore young adolescents need:

- curriculum that is challenging, integrative, and exploratory;
- varied teaching and learning approaches;
- assessment and evaluation that promotes learning;
- flexible organizational structures;
- programs and policies that foster health, wellness and safety;
- comprehensive guidance and support services.

Research can also inform practice. Where it is widely accepted, middle level philosophy has had a positive impact on class size, teaming, cooperative planning, integrated lessons, diverse instructional strategies and comprehensive advising programs. If we take teaming as an example, there is substantial research that says effective teaming practices lead to higher scores on state tests. Teaming is found in 33% of K-8 schools and 77% of middle schools. It is also interesting to note that 73% of respondents to a survey of K-8 schools believe that the best configuration for middle level students is either a 6-8 (59%) or a 5-8 (14%) grade configuration. There were 5,552 K-8 schools in the U.S. in 1988 and 3,170 in 2001.

The question of how we should structure our schools to best meet the needs for our ten to fourteen year olds is an elusive one. There is no body of evidence that states clearly that one configuration is "better than another". It also appears that you will find educators on either side of this issue. However the fact is that there are successful examples of varying configurations, and the evidence does suggest that structure alone does not guarantee success.

With that in mind it is probably unwise to consider housing "Middle Schoolers" in the K-8 institution as the solution to young adolescent achievement. In all probability this possible "quick fix", for those that have the option, will be anything but a perfect panacea. Perhaps a wiser choice may be to look deeper at the characteristics of what is a developmentally responsive school; take on the hard work of creating, improving and aligning our current structures; and make any school that houses middle level students the quality schools they should be. This is especially true for those districts that cannot create separate and distinct middle level schools.

No matter how the students are housed, it seems reasonable that educators address the needs of young adolescents and how they learn as the primary focus for working with young adolescent learners.

*Chris Sousa is the principal of Proctor Junior-Senior High School in Proctor, Vermont; Robert C. Spear Ed.D. is the executive director of the New England League of Middle Schools.*

#### Resources:

- *This We Believe*, 2003, NMSA, Westerville, Ohio.
- *Programs and Practices in K-8 Schools: Do They Meet the Educational Needs of Young Adolescents?* McEwin, C.K. & Dickinson, T.S. and Jacobson, M.G. 2004, NMSA, Westerville Ohio

Copyright © 2004 by NELMS. *Middle Level Best Practices and the K-8 School* is another in a series of articles created by the New England League of Middle Schools on a variety of middle level topics.

For more information about specific practices and answers to your questions, please contact the New England League of Middle Schools by e-mail [nelms@nelms.org](mailto:nelms@nelms.org) or phone (978) 887-6263. Information is also available on the NELMS Web site at [www.nelms.org](http://www.nelms.org). Your inquiries are welcome!

*(A Power Point presentation entitled: "The K-8 Grade Configuration and Middle Level Best Practices" is available free of charge by sending your request via e-mail to [nelms@nelms.org](mailto:nelms@nelms.org). It is based on the book described in the resource section.)*

## elementary school news

### Elementary Spring Conference To Feature Dr. Douglas Reeves

Dr. Robert F. Carroll, Asst. Executive Director

The elementary division of CAS is hosting its annual spring conference on May 16, 2005 at the Hartford Marriott in Farmington. The focus of the conference will be *performance assessment*, currently a hot topic in Connecticut as well as other states. Acting on the recommendation of several member school principals, the conference planning committee has invited Dr. Douglas Reeves to serve as this year's keynote speaker.

Dr. Reeves is chairman and founder of the Center for Performance Assessment and the International Center for Educational Accountability, a nonprofit organization that works with governmental organizations and school systems to improve standards, assessments, and accountability systems. A member of the faculty of the Harvard Principals' Center Summer Institute, he is the author of seventeen books, among them the best-selling *Making Standards Work*, now in its third edition.

Beyond his work in large-scale assessment and research, Dr. Reeves has devoted many years to classroom teaching, working with students ranging from elementary school to doctoral candidates. He has twice been selected for the Harvard Distinguished Authors series and he recently won the Parent's Choice Award for his writing for children and parents.

If you think your school district will have a budget freeze this year, why not pre-register now? Send your district's check or purchase order (made payable to CAS) to Dr. Robert Carroll, CAS, 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT 06410.

The conference fee for representatives from CAS member schools is \$99 per person; representatives from non-members schools must pay a fee of \$135 per person. Teams of 4 or more from a single school or 6 or more from a single district can deduct \$12 per person from the individual registration fee.

For further information on this exciting conference call Jennifer at CAS - 203-250-1111.

### CAS Sponsors Technology Conference For Catholic Schools

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

The Catholic School Committee of CAS is sponsoring a conference on technology this spring for Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford and the Dioceses of Bridgeport and Norwich. This may take the form of a single, all-day statewide conference or possibly separate conferences in each of the three dioceses. The CAS Technology Committee has allocated money for this project from funds received through the Gates Foundation.

Working with the committee is Arthur Skerker, technology consultant for the CT State Department of Education, and Marijke Kehrhan of the University of Connecticut, who works very closely with the Gates Foundation.

This conference is designed specifically for Catholic school principals and their school's technology person. In order to truly meet the needs of schools at various levels in the field of technology, the committee plans to send out a survey for principals to complete that specifically addresses their schools specific needs in the area of technology. The all-day conference will be held at the CAS Conference Center located in Cheshire, which is in the central part of the state making it accessible to attendees regardless of where they are from.

The committee is very clear in not wanting to offer one-time

*continued on page 9*



## ... more elementary school news

### ELEMENTARY FALL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE MOST SUCCESSFUL

Dr. Robert F. Carroll, Asst. Executive Director

On November 23rd, Dr. Lawrence Lowery, professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley, came to Connecticut to prepare Connecticut principals for the upcoming CMT testing in science and to better familiarize them with the new Connecticut standards in science.

The all-day conference was held at the Farmington Marriott. In addition to Dr. Lowery, Dr. Betty Sternberg, Connecticut's Commissioner of Education, addressed conference attendees.

Dr. Lowery is the principal investigator for the Full Option Science System (FOSS), a science curriculum for grades K-8 developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science. He has published and edited numerous articles and books and has received numerous awards including *Outstanding Educator of the Year*. He has also been inducted into the Science Hall of Fame.

During Lowery's keynote presentation, he presented data on how the brain processes information and retains new knowledge. He then explained how brain functioning can and should impact teaching strategies.

In addition to delivering the keynote address, Dr. Lowery also presented morning and afternoon workshops on designing curricula based on how students learn. He gave his audience some fundamental ideas related to learning science and discussed the importance of these fundamentals in framing activities and/or curriculum. Dr. Lowery engaged the conference attendees in some hands-on experiments that demonstrated how teaching and learning work together. Every one in attendance left the workshop with at least one new idea about how best to teach science to young learners.

Members of the Project to Increase Mastery in Mathematics and Science (PIMMS) presented other workshops throughout the day. They included PIMMS Director Michael Zearth, PIMMS Associate Director Robert Borello, and Dr. Signund Abeles, former science consultant for the CT State Department of Education. These workshops focused on such topics as integrating science, inquiry science and science assessment.

Dr. Lowery is working very closely with the CT State Dept. of Education on science curriculum development for our elementary schools and he will be returning to Connecticut in the spring to work specifically with elementary science curriculum coordinators at another all-day workshop hosted by CAS. This will be a "roll-up-your-sleeves" workshop where curriculum specialists will work on drafting their local science curriculum based on the new CT Science Standards. Because we expect a heavy turnout for this workshop, you may want to reserve your school's slot by contacting Dr. Robert Carroll or his secretary Jennifer at the CAS office.



Keynote Speaker Dr. Lawrence Lowery



Commissioner of Education Dr. Betty Sternberg



Stephen T. Zerio, Connecticut Manager of Teachers' Insurance Plan, one of the program sponsors



Lou Pear, principal of Myrtle Stevens School in Rocky Hill and chair of the elementary division

### Technology Conference, *continued from page 8*

workshops without any follow-up for the schools that send representatives. To address this issue they are planning a second follow-up day for attendees at the various Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) located in various parts of the state. This will make follow up activities for attendees convenient. Those RESCs involved in the project are: ACES,

Hamden; CREC, Hartford; CES, Bridgeport; EASTCONN, Willimantic; EDUCATION CONNECTION, Danbury; EDUCATION CONNECTION, Litchfield and LEARN, Old Lyme.

The committee is also contemplating setting up a "trainer of trainers" program whereby schools or area people would be invited to become a trainer and work with the individual schools participating in this project on an ongoing basis.

Principals are asked to be on the lookout for a mailing containing a conference brochure as well as a survey form that should be completed and returned to the CAS office. Those principals who have people in their buildings who have technology expertise and who may want to serve as a presenter should contact Bob Carroll (203-250-1111, x3004 / [bcarroll@casciac.org](mailto:bcarroll@casciac.org)) or his secretary Jennifer (203-250-1111, x3025 / [jlacroix@casciac.org](mailto:jlacroix@casciac.org)).

## ciac news briefs

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Over the past year, the CIAC Board of Control has acted upon two requests from sports committees to expand the number of divisions for state tournaments. Such decisions are based, in part, on the number of teams that qualify in a given division and the number of spots in the tournament bracket. The table to the right reflects the number of tournament bracket spots filled in each of the CIAC sports from 2002 to 2004.

### Kevin Ollie to chair upcoming CIAC Golf Tournament

Kevin Ollie of the Philadelphia 76ers has agreed to be the honorary chair of this year's annual CIAC golf fundraiser. The former UCONN star has been in the NBA for the past seven seasons. He recently signed a 3-year contract extension with the 76ers. The June 27 event will again be held at the Torrington Country Club. Anyone interested in participating should contact Bob Ford at (203) 250-1111, ext. 3019. The 2004 event raised \$38,000 for the CIAC Endowment Fund.

### ATTENTION: GYMNASTICS COACHES

USA Gymnastics recently approved an increase in the maximum height of the vault table. In the interest of consistency, the National Federation Girls Gymnastics Committee has adopted the same standard. The new height parameters are 115-135 cm instead of 115-125 cm as specified in the NFHS Girls Gymnastics Rules Book. This has risk management implications for any gymnasts who practice and/or compete in the private gymnastics clubs, then participate on a high school team. No gymnast is required to use the higher setting, but this makes it legal to do so. The change is effective immediately.

■ According to a recent poll conducted by *Referee* magazine, 83% of officials said they felt that officials selected to work state tournaments should receive some kind of memento from their state association.

■ In 2001, the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics recommended that eligibility for postseason college bowl games should be reserved for football teams that graduate at least 50 percent of their players. If that recommendation were in effect today, nearly half of this year's participating teams would not have been eligible. Twenty-seven of this season's 56 bowl teams failed to graduate at least 50 percent of their players within six years of their initial enrollment, according to the NCAA's latest graduation rate report. The number of teams failing to meet the 50 percent standard, however, is an improvement from last season when 32 of the 56 teams failed to meet this standard. The three schools with the highest graduation rates participating in bowls were Boston College (78 percent), Syracuse (78 percent) and Notre Dame (77 percent).

**“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.”**

-- Abraham Lincoln, 16th U.S. president (1809-1865)

### Percentage of Bracket Spots Filled Spring 2002 - Fall 2004

Sport	Year	# of Divisions	Qualifying Standard	Present Format	# Spots In Bracket	# Teams Qualified	Pct. of Spots Filled
Baseball	2002	4	40%	32	118	128	92.2%
Baseball	2003	4	40%	32	110	128	85.9%
Baseball	2004	4	40%	32	118	128	92.2%
Baseball Totals:					346	384	90.1%
Boys Basketball	2003	4	40%	32	115	128	89.8%
Boys Basketball	2004	4	40%	32	116	128	90.6%
Boys Basketball Totals:					231	256	90.2%
Boys Soccer	2002	4	50%	32	93	128	72.7%
Boys Soccer	2003	4	50%	32	91	128	71.1%
Boys Soccer	2004	4	50%	32	93	128	72.7%
Boys Soccer Totals:					277	384	72.1%
Boys Volleyball	2002	2	50%*	16	17	32	53.1%
Boys Volleyball	2003	2	50%*	16	18	32	56.2%
Boys Volleyball	2004	2	50%*	16	22	32	68.8%
Boys Volleyball Totals:					57	96	59.4%
Field Hockey	2002	3	40%	16	51	48	106.2%
Field Hockey	2003	3	40%	16	49	48	102.1%
Field Hockey	2004	3	40%	16	50	48	104.2%
Field Hockey Totals:					150	144	104.2%
Girls Basketball	2003	4	40%	32	114	128	89.1%
Girls Basketball	2004	4	40%	32	116	128	90.6%
Girls Basketball Totals:					230	256	89.8%
Girls Lacrosse	2004	2	50%*	16	35	32	109.4%
Girls Lacrosse Totals:					35	32	109.4%
Girls Soccer	2002	4	40%	32	80	128	62.5%
Girls Soccer	2003	4	40%	32	90	128	70.3%
Girls Soccer	2004	4	40%	32	94	128	73.4%
Girls Soccer Totals:					264	384	68.8%
Girls Tennis	2002	3	50%	16	65	48	135.4%
Girls Tennis	2003	3	50%	16	68	48	141.7%
Girls Tennis	2004	3	50%	16	68	48	141.7%
Girls Tennis Totals:					201	144	139.6%
Girls Volleyball	2002	3	50%	16	74	48	154.2%
Girls Volleyball	2003	3	50%	16	78	48	162.5%
Girls Volleyball	2004	4	50%	32	77	128	60.2%
Girls Volleyball Totals:					229	224	102.2%
Ice Hockey	2003	2	50%-Div. I/40%-Div. II	16	35	32	109.4%
Ice Hockey	2004	2	50%-Div. I/40%-Div. II	16	37	32	115.6%
Ice Hockey Totals:					72	64	112.5%
Boys Lacrosse	2002	2	40%	16	31	32	96.9%
Boys Lacrosse	2003	2	40%	16	36	32	112.5%
Boys Lacrosse	2004	2	40%	16	37	32	115.6%
Boys Lacrosse Totals:					104	96	108.3%
Softball	2002	4	40%	32	105	128	82.0%
Softball	2003	4	40%	32	113	128	88.3%
Softball	2004	4	40%	32	106	128	82.8%
Softball Totals:					324	384	84.4%

## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Attention Attracted by Gymnast's Request Puzzling

By Todd Clark

*Reprinted from the WIAA Bulletin, December 2004*

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association's (WIAA) denial of a recent request to allow a boy gymnast to compete on the Stevens Point Area Senior High girls gymnastics team this season has received statewide media attention over the past couple of weeks and may possibly draw national attention.

Why so much exposure is being given to this particular issue is somewhat puzzling given the plethora of court precedents and opinions on such cases, the practicality of boys competing on girls teams and the impact it would have on a much wider scale.

Although efforts to allow boys to compete on girls teams in order to provide opportunities not available through school or community programs may be done with good intentions, those intentions are also shortsighted and a bit misguided.

It has been reported that a petition is being circulated, a website being created and t-shirts being printed with "Fair is Fair" printed on them to voice well-intended support for the request. Some claim what's good for the gander is good for the goose.

Yes, girls have been able to compete on boys teams, and some have excelled in doing so. Take Alyssa Lampe of Tamahawk for example. Last year, she became the first girls wrestler to advance to the State Individual Wrestling Tournament. She won her first match of the tournament before losing the next two matches.

However, few would, or even could, refute a physiological difference between girls and boys, especially considering the maturation process that takes place between the ages of 15-18. That's not to say the competitiveness, judgment and skill level of boys surpasses that of girls, but natural maturation gives most boys an advantage in strength and speed, which continues to be accepted by science and in the courts.

In addition, when Title IX was enacted in the early 1970s, it would be hard to argue the equity intentions of the law included boys competing on girls teams. In fact, it contradicts the legislation's intent. The advent of Title IX and its enforcement has definitely narrowed the gap, but it hasn't closed it all the way. Females continue to be the under represented gender.

With all the great female athletes and their achievements over the last 30 years, it's difficult for some of us to comprehend the rationale why it took so long to have girls athletics recognized in the same manner male sports have been.

Having a boy compete on a girls team and displacing the opportunity for another girls certainly rejects the intent of the rule. Even if it doesn't displace someone from the roster, it will, at the very least, displace some of the instruction time in practice afforded to other girls. Let's play this out a bit. If a boy is able to compete on a girls gymnastics team, regardless of skill level, how could we prevent boys from competing in other girls sports?

With this precedent, there are a lot of schools in the membership that have girls volleyball teams but not boys volleyball teams. What would the reaction be if a gifted 6-foot-4 boys shows up for the first day of girls volleyball practice or any other girls sport practice? What possibilities of displacement and loss of opportunity for girls exist in these cases? How fair would that be?

Perhaps the most unfortunate and disappointing aspect of this entire situation is the fact the boy was initially led to believe he would be able to compete on the girls team.

This is not a simple case of a boy being denied the ability to compete. It goes far beyond that as this scenario attempts to demonstrate. This is also not a situation whereby the WIAA is either uncompassionate or too restrictive in its regulations or interpretations.

This is an issue about one individual and a caring parent wanting what is best for her son. However, what's best for one person does not outweigh what's best for thousands of girls now and in the future. Would it be fair to jeopardize opportunities for thousands for the desires of one?

The clear answer is no. After all, what's fair is fair.

NCAA's *First Team* Program Helps High School Student-Athletes

The NCAA has developed a program to help prospective basketball student-athletes navigate the collegiate recruiting process with more ease, while also helping them focus on the benefits of pursuing an education.

The NCAA *First Team* program focuses on elite-level male basketball prospects who are entering the ninth grade, and provides them with resources to help them navigate through the collegiate recruiting process, understand the role athletics plays in the educational process, and ultimately, encourage them to become better students and critical thinkers equipped to make informed choices.

*First Team* is designed to be a year-round education and mentoring program. The NCAA partners with the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) and the National Federation of State High School Associations on the *First Team* program.

Communication is the essence of the program, and *First Team* staff maintains regular contact with *First Team* student-athletes through telephone calls, written correspondence and newsletters and visits. The goal of the ongoing communication is to provide support in areas where the student-athlete may need positive reinforcement to keep his focus

*continued on page 12*

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## Are You in Compliance?

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**Question:** Our school has just built a brand new facility for the baseball program that includes brick and block-covered dugouts, permanent bleachers and restrooms. The baseball booster club fundraised the money for the new facility. Our softball field is poorly furnished and has only portable benches for the dugouts. Our athletic director says this is not a Title IX violation because the funding came from the boosters and not the school district. Is that true?

**Answer:** No, it is a violation. The school/district has to provide equivalent facilities for the men and women's programs, regardless of the funding source. This can be a difficult issue as fundraising for facilities may be the only way a program can improve its facilities. However, would you allow your Uncle Bob to continually give nice presents to your son, but never give anything to your daughter? My guess is that most parents would tell Uncle Bob that's not fair to your daughter and that he must give equal presents to both of your children. That's what Title IX asks, be fair and equal regardless of gender, no matter who is paying the bill.

**Question:** Our school has more boys' teams than girl's teams. Is this a violation of Title IX?

**Answer:** Maybe, maybe not. Equal numbers of teams are not always equal. Different teams have a varying number of athletes. Traditionally, high school football teams may have a large number of male students participating while the girls' volleyball team may be limited to 10-15 female athletes. What is vital is that the high school completes an interest survey (every two years) among the student body to ensure that the school is fully and effectively accommodating the interests and needs of its students. Schools DO NOT have to have equal number of programs and teams if they can prove through the survey that they ARE meeting the interests and needs of the students.

**Question:** Is it a violation of Title IX when cheerleaders, bands and/or pep squads are provided for men's athletic events and not for the women's.

**Answer:** Yes, it is a violation. Cheerleaders, bands, pep squads, etc., are considered publicity services when attending other athletic teams' events. If they are provided for the men's programs, they must also be provided for the women's.

(Source: *The California Interscholastic Federation News*, Aug. 2004)

### First Team, continued from page 11

on completing high school and being academically eligible to play Division I college basketball. Communication centers on recruiting, education, life skills and health and physical fitness.

"The *First Team* program can be very important for the highly sought-after prospective student-athlete as he transitions from high school to college," said Anne Little, director of the NCAA *First Team* program.

"Leading up to the recruiting process, a prospective student-athlete has to understand what is required to go to college and be knowledgeable of the dos and don'ts regarding eligibility and extra benefits. The *First Team* program assists by providing information to student-athletes, encouraging them to think critically and make good decisions for the

future," Little said.

There are currently 158 prep student-athletes in the *First Team* program, from Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin and West Virginia. Each summer, the *First Team* staff adds a new class of prospects to the already established group of participants who will stay in the program through their senior year. The *First Team* program will grow to Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Vermont in 2005. Plans include reaching all 50 states by 2007.