



# 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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## FAILING SCHOOL ME ARSE (OR, CALL ME A LIAR, MR. PRESIDENT)

By Michael H. Savage, Executive Director

Today, I had one of the most wonderful and memorable educational experiences of my 47 year career. I was invited to and visited an NCLB and State of Connecticut "FAILING" school. I needed to experience first hand what NCLB and, consequently, the Connecticut State Department of Education classified as a failing school for three consecutive years.

I accepted an invitation from Principal Dr. Leroy Williams to visit Roberto Clemente Leadership Academy, a K through grade 8 school in New Haven. It is located in one of the poorest sections of the city. Its student population consists of nearly 100% Spanish and African-American students.

Upon arrival, I was asked to meet with one of the parents. Her name was Patricia Gore, the parent of four children, three of whom attended and one who is attending Clemente. The oldest child is now graduating from Temple University; two are matriculating through Career Academy, a magnet high school in New Haven; and the youngest is now in grade two. Mrs. Gore was originally from Stamford and, upon moving to New Haven, had to be strongly persuaded by Dr. Williams to enroll her children at Clemente. Her reluctance stemmed from the reports both

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## PAT LLODRA JOINS CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF

Patricia Llodra, former principal of Northwest Regional High School in Winsted, has joined the central office staff as an assistant executive director for the CIAC. A 29-year veteran educator and former chair of the CIAC Board of Control, Pat has assumed many of the responsibilities of recently retired Assistant Executive Director Tony Mosa. Pat is overseeing fourteen CIAC sports committees and is serving as liaison to the CIAC Eligibility Committee and the CIAC Eligibility Review Board. As such, she is responsible for processing and monitoring all appeals of eligibility committee decisions. Pat is also serving as a clinical supervisor for the Stamford cohort of the University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP). Pat settled into the central office and began her new duties last month.

Pat earned a bachelor of science in psychology from the University of Bridgeport and a master of science in education from Western Connecticut State University. She began her professional career in 1978 as a mathematics teacher at John Read Middle School in Redding. After four years at Read, Pat became a math teacher and computer coordinator at Nonnewaug High School in Woodbury, where she also served as an assistant principal. In 1989, Pat assumed the position of principal of Northwest Regional, where she worked until her retirement in 2004.

During her tenure as principal, Pat was an active and dedicated member of CAS-CIAC. She served as chair of some of the association's most important and challenging boards and commit-



tees, including the Eligibility Review Committee, and the Girls' Tennis Committee. She was also a member of the CIAC Girls' Basketball Committee and the High School Professional Studies Committee. A respected and decorated administrator, Pat was awarded a CAS Citation, the association's highest honor, in 2000, and was named Connecticut High School Principal of the Year in 2001.

"Pat has been one of the strongest leaders in the history of the association," said CAS Executive Director Mike Savage. "With her incisive grasp of CIAC issues and her ability to maintain a global view of athletics as but one factor in the overall education of our students, Pat possesses the ideal skills and perspective to advance the interests of CAS-CIAC and of high school athletics in Connecticut."

Since her retirement in 2004, Pat has served as interim principal at Newtown High School; as a leader in residence for the Connecticut State Department of Education School Improvement Unit; and as an executive coach for the National Governor's Association Grant.

## CAS Names 2007 Assistant Principals of the Year



**DONNA M. CULLEN**

Elementary School  
Assistant Principal  
of the Year

*See page 9*



**JALE L. HALE**

Middle School  
Assistant Principal  
of the Year

*See page 8*



**DONNA D. RUSSO**

High School  
Assistant Principal  
of the Year

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## ct news & notes

### BE ON THE LOOKOUT!

Are you a member of a CAS committee and aren't sure if you have a meeting next week? Has your basketball team qualified for the post-season tournament and you don't know when the entry form is due? Did you forget the registration deadline for the upcoming workshop on CMTs? If so, just look for the weekly "News and Events" e-mail from this office. The weekly broadcast contains timely news and announcements as well as a listing of CAS-CIAC meetings and activities for the upcoming week. It is sent out every Thursday evening to all member school principals, assistant principals, CAS-CIAC committee members and athletic directors.

### Study Spotlights Need for Afterschool Programs

The results of a 2005 survey conducted by the Connecticut After School Network revealed that the families of afterschool program participants are benefitting from afterschool programs in a variety of ways:

- 88 percent of parents agree that knowing that their child is in a supervised afterschool program helps them better focus on their jobs during the after school hours.
- 78 percent agree that having their child in a supervised afterschool program helps them miss work less often.
- 93 percent agree that the hours of operation meet their needs.
- 93 percent agree that the child enjoys the program that he or she attends.
- 79 percent agree that the afterschool program helps that child do better in school.

The survey also revealed that afterschool programs are in great demand in the region. Only ten percent of Connecticut children currently participate in a structured afterschool program, while 60 percent of parents with children who do not participate in a program agree that their children would be likely to attend a convenient, affordable, quality program if it were available.

*(Source: New England after 3 PM: Spotlight on Connecticut, Afterschool Alliance)*

### CT Ranks High on Chance for Success Index

According to a report released earlier this month, a child born in Virginia is significantly more likely to experience success throughout life than the average child born in the United States, while a child born in New Mexico is likely to face an accumulating series of hurdles both educationally and economically. The analysis by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center is based on the "Chance-for-Success Index," which tracks state efforts to connect education from preschool through postsecondary education and training. The index was developed by the EPE Research Center for *Quality Counts 2007: From Cradle to Career, Connecting American Education From Birth to Adulthood*, produced by Education Week. The "Chance-for-Success Index" provides a perspective on the importance of education throughout a person's lifetime and is based on 13 indicators that highlight whether young children get off to a good start, succeed in elementary and secondary school, and hit key educational and income benchmarks as adults. Connecticut ranked second, behind Virginia, at the top of the index, while Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Arizona, Louisiana, and New Mexico were at the bottom. States gain or lose points on each Chance-for-Success indicator based on how they perform compared with the national average. Putting that picture together across each of the 13 indicators reveals a state's educational trajectory from childhood through adulthood. See Connecticut's scores below. The report is available online at [www.edweek.org/go/qc07](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc07).



■ Teenagers in Connecticut die at the lowest rate of anywhere in the United States; and Connecticut ranks 14th in the number of children 17 and under without health insurance. The state's high rankings are attributed to the wealth of its residents and to its progressive health care policies, including immunizations. *See tables below.*

#### Success Indicators

	Connecticut		National
	State Average	Points Awarded	Average
<b>Family income</b> – Children from families with incomes at least 200% of poverty level	<b>75.3%</b>	<b>+2</b>	59.8%
<b>Parent education</b> – Children with at least one parent with a postsecondary degree	<b>54.7%</b>	<b>+2</b>	42.5%
<b>Parental employment</b> – Children with at least one parent working full time, year-round	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>+2</b>	70.6%
<b>Linguistic integration</b> – Children whose parents are fluent English speakers	<b>89.1%</b>	<b>+2</b>	84.3%
<b>Preschool enrollment</b> – Three- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool	<b>60.2%</b>	<b>+2</b>	44.8%
<b>Kindergarten enrollment</b> – Eligible children enrolled in kindergarten programs	<b>70.1%</b>	<b>-1</b>	75.3%
<b>Elementary reading</b> – Fourth grade public school students proficient on NAEP	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>+2</b>	29.8%
<b>Middle school mathematics</b> – Eighth grade public school students proficient on NAEP	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>+2</b>	28.5%
<b>High school graduation</b> – Public high school students who graduate with a diploma	<b>79.3%</b>	<b>+2</b>	69.6%
<b>Postsecondary participation</b> – Young adults enrolled in postsecondary or with a degree	<b>53.8%</b>	<b>+2</b>	47.8%
<b>Adult educational attainment</b> – Adults with a two- or four-year postsecondary degree	<b>46.0%</b>	<b>+2</b>	37.4%
<b>Annual income</b> – Adults with incomes at or above national median	<b>61.7%</b>	<b>+2</b>	50.0%
<b>Steady employment</b> – Adults in labor force working full time and year-round	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>0</b>	67.2%
State score:		<b>+21</b>	
State rank:		<b>2</b>	

#### State rankings in teen deaths (rate per 100,000)

1	Connecticut (lowest)	40
2	New Jersey	42
3	New Hampshire	46
4	New York	48
5	Massachusetts	51
6	Maine	53
6	Vermont	53
8	Hawaii	54
8	Washington	54
10	Michigan	55
50	Alaska (highest)	105

#### State rankings in % of children 17 and below without health insurance

1	Vermont (lowest)	5%
2	New Hampshire	6%
2	Wisconsin	6%
2	Nebraska	6%
2	Rhode Island	6%
14	Connecticut	8%
59	Texas (highest)	21%

*(Source: Annual Kids Count Survey, Annie E. Casey Foundation)*

**. . .more ct news & notes**

■ A state report shows that, since the PJ vs State of Connecticut settlement four years ago, the number of mentally retarded children in regular classrooms has tripled - increasing to 34 percent. The 2002 court settlement requires the state to ensure compliance with the federal "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" - a law requiring schools to educate students with disabilities in regular classrooms whenever possible. (Source: *Hartford Courant*, Robert Frahm, 1/4/07)

■ During the 1980s, state aid to CT municipalities accounted for more than 20% of the state budget. This year, that amount will drop to 16%. And, currently, federal aid contributes only 1.7% of municipal revenues in CT while property taxes account for 69%. The per capita property tax burden in CT far exceeds the national average: \$1,760 vs. \$992. (Source: *Connecticut Conference of Municipalities*)

■ A research study by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation finds that, by 2020, Connecticut will suffer a large drop in the percentage of young workers holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Connecticut's percentage is projected to fall from 34% in 1993 to roughly 30% in 2020. While seemingly modest in percentage terms, each point drop represents a loss of many thousands of young educated workers. (Source: *www.nmefdn.org*)

**The high cost of housing in CT**

- Over the past five years, housing costs in CT increased 63.6% while wages only rose 18.5%.
- Since 1990, CT has lost a higher percentage of 20-34 year-olds than any other state.
- A total of 19% of Connecticut households pay 30% or more of their income for housing.
- In 2005, a family earning the median state income could not afford a median-priced home in 157 of the state's 169 municipalities.
- The median wage of 294 occupations in Connecticut, including EMTs, police dispatchers, school bus drivers, hairdressers and auto mechanics, is less than the hourly pay needed to afford a typical two-bedroom apartment.
- A May 2006 UConn/Hartford Courant poll found that 43% of state residents considered leaving Connecticut because of the high housing costs, and only a small percentage believe that they will be able to afford to live in CT when they retire or that their kids will be able to afford to live here. (Source: *Connecticut Town and City*, October 2006)

**national news & notes**

■ To assess the prevalence of cigarette smoking among youths aged 12-17 years in six major racial/ethnic populations in the United States, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and CDC analyzed self-reported data collected during 2002-2004 from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The results of that analysis indicated that, among youths, American Indians/Alaska Natives had the greatest cigarette smoking prevalence (23.1%), followed by non-Hispanic whites (14.9%), Hispanics (9.3%), non-Hispanic blacks (6.5%), and Asians (4.3%). No significant differences were observed between male and female youths in any of the major populations, except for non-Hispanic white youths, among whom females had a greater prevalence of cigarette smoking (16.0%) than males (13.4%). The analysis suggests that implementing tobacco-control programs that include culturally appropriate interventions might help reduce cigarette smoking in racial/ethnic populations. (Source: *www.medscape.com*)

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“Navigating this complex world will require some specific skills from tomorrow's leaders. We look at six leadership traits that we think all new employees need to have to be successful in a global economy. These six are ethics, trade literacy, sensitivity to foreign cultures, fluency in different languages, managing complexity, and technological savvy.”

—Jim Winestock Senior Vice President, UPS

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■ Students learn more when teachers are given financial incentives to do a better job, concludes a new University of Florida (UF) study that finds merit pay for instructors equates to better test scores for their pupils. Pay incentives for teachers had more positive effects on student test scores than such school improvement methods as smaller class sizes or stricter requirements for classroom attendance, said David Figlio, a UF economics professor. The study, by Figlio and UF economics professor Lawrence Kenny, has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming

issue of the *Journal of Public Economics*. Students at schools with teacher pay-for-performance programs scored an average of one to two percentage points higher on standardized tests than their peers at schools where no bonuses were offered, Figlio said. The UF study found the effects of these pay incentives were strongest in schools with students from the poorest families. Figlio and Kenny collected surveys from 534 schools that were among 1,319 public and private schools participating in a national study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education beginning in 1988. About 16 percent of American schools have teacher pay-for-performance programs in place, Figlio said. Many teachers criticize these bonus plans, saying they raise questions about fairness and they destroy cooperation among teachers. (Source: *PEN Weekly Newsblast*, January 4, 2007)

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

## ... more national news & notes

■ It is commonly known that kids who stay in school will secure better jobs and earn higher salaries. However, new research reveals that increases in educational attainment contribute to a longer lifespan, reports Gina Kolata in the *New York Times*. The one social factor that researchers agree is consistently linked to longer lives in every country where it has been studied is education. It is more important than race; it obliterates any effects of income. And, health economists say, those factors that are popularly believed to be crucial -- money and health insurance, for example -- pale in comparison. Experts point to one plausible explanation for the life-extending impact of education -- as a group, less educated people are less able to plan for the future and to delay gratification. If true, that may, for example, explain the differences in smoking rates between more educated people and less educated ones. Better educated people tend to make better choices about lifestyle, diet, exercise, savings, and other factors that prolong life. (Source: *PEN Weekly Newsblast*, January 4, 2007)

■ The world's richest man, billionaire Bill Gates, is the most influential person in American education, according to a study conducted by the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center. The study, which is based on an extensive survey of the education field's opinion-elite, lists Gates as the individual who has had the biggest impact in education policy during the last decade. Founder of Microsoft and one of the most prominent voices in education reform, Gates has sparked national movements to improve high schools and create small schools, two initiatives that have been priorities for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the largest philanthropic organization in the world with an endowment of \$32 billion in 2006. Gates outpolled President George W. Bush, whose landmark No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) earned him the rank of second-most influential person, and former President Bill Clinton, who took the sixth spot and is credited with overseeing the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the federal law that is NCLB's predecessor. (Source: *PEN Weekly Newsblast*, December 15, 2006)

■ According to a recent analysis conducted by the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center, an estimated 1.2 million students nationwide failed to graduate with their peers in June 2006. Breaking this figure down, this means that 7,000 students drop out of high school each day. Based on 2002–03 data (the most recent available), only 69.6% of public school students nationwide graduate from high school with a regular diploma. Among minority students, graduation rates are particularly troubling for African-Americans (51.6%), American Indians (47.4%), and Hispanics (55.6%). Asian (77.0%) and white students (76.2%) fare much better. The report also found that female students (72.7%) graduate from high school at higher rates than their male classmates (65.2%). The gender disparity holds for every racial and ethnic group and is widest among African-American females, who graduate at a 57.8% rate, compared to only 44.3% for African-American males, a difference of 13.5%. The report also broke down graduation rates for specific geographic areas. Students from urban areas face the longest odds in their efforts to earn high school diplomas, with only 60% graduating on time, compared to 73.1% of rural students and 74.4% of students from the suburbs. When examining graduation rates for the nation's 50 largest school districts, the report finds a mean graduation rate of approximately 56%. The districts with the highest and lowest graduation rates are shown in the chart below. In order to determine at what point students are lost in the high school pipeline, the report analyzes the transitions from 9th and 10th grade, 10th to 11th, 11th to 12th, and 12th grade to graduation. It finds that 35% of the students who "fall off track" do so between 9th and 10th grade. In contrast, only 17% of students who make it to the 12th grade fail to earn a diploma. (Source: *Alliance for Excellent Education, Straight A's, Volume 6, Number 13*)

Top 5 School Districts		Bottom 5 School Districts	
District	Graduation Rate	District	Graduation Rate
Fairfax Co., VA	82.5%	Detroit	21.7%
Wake Co., NC	82.2%	Baltimore City, MD	38.5%
Baltimore Co., MD	61.9%	New York City	38.9%
Montgomery Co., MD	61.5%	Milwaukee	43.1%
Cypress-Fairbanks, TX	61.3%	Cleveland	43.8%

**T**he World Future Society forecasts the following emerging careers for the next 25 years:

- artificial intelligence technician
- automotive fuel cell battery technician
- computational linguist
- information broker
- leisure consultant
- medical diagnostic imaging technician
- retirement counselor
- shyness consultant
- cybrarian (organizing a library growing at more than a million pages a day)
- neuromarketer (advising on neural response - i.e., why some people buy Coke instead of Pepsi)
- fusion engineer
- terrorism analyst/homeland security specialist
- image consultant
- underwater archaeologist
- water quality specialist

(Source: Gary Marx, President, Center for Public Outreach)

### CAS OFFICERS: 2006-2007

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 Vice President: Preston Shaw, Griswold Middle School  
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**... more national news & notes**

■ How and what teachers purchase for classroom use is changing, according to a new report, "Teacher Buying Behavior, 2006-2007." It takes a look at what types of materials and products educators are purchasing and with what funds. On average, teachers report spending a total of \$475 of their own money on classroom materials and supplies. Forty-four percent of respondents spend over \$500 on their classrooms, with twenty percent spending over \$1,000. Eighty-five percent of teachers surveyed use their own money to buy student rewards; seventy-five percent use their own money for classroom decorations; fifty-nine percent dig into their own pockets to purchase professional materials. Congress recently passed a tax bill that temporarily extends three popular tax breaks for classroom teachers. The Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006, awaiting President Bush's signature, allows teachers to deduct up to \$250 in out-of-pocket classroom expenses, even if they don't itemize deductions. (Source: *PEN Weekly Newsblast*, December 15, 2006)

■ Legislation that would let thousands of illegal-immigrant high school students attend college or serve in the military has a good chance of passing in a Congress controlled by Democrats, immigration experts say. A bill known as the DREAM Act would give illegal immigrants a conditional visa that would turn into permanent residency if they complete two years of college or serve honorably for two years in the armed forces. It also would allow them to qualify for in-state college tuition. (Source: *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12/17/06)

■ A new paper issued by the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education uses data from the National Household Education Survey and other sources to examine why some families choose home schooling over other private schooling options. The study finds that families are more likely to engage in home schooling if the mother has abundant time but scarce income, and if the state public school finance system is centralized, making switching schools less efficient and private schooling more costly. Preferences for home schooling are especially strong among well-educated parents with younger children. (Source: *PEN Weekly Newsblast*, December 15, 2006)

**Attention High School Principals and Student Advisors**

*CAS/CSAC to offer Summer Leadership Camp!*

The Connecticut Student Activities Conference (CSAC) Board of Control has authorized a high school student leadership camp for this summer as part of CAS's goal to extend the leadership development opportunities available to Connecticut high school students. The camp is tentatively set for August 12-18 and will follow the model of the summer leadership camps formerly sponsored by NASSP. More details will be available in next month's bulletin and on the CAS website. In the meantime, please contact Assistant Executive Director Dennis Carrithers.

**THE NHS NATIONAL CONFERENCE: A CHANCE TO GROW**

Douglas P. Case, CANHS News Editor

Yes, it was early November; but even for the date, it was a very cold Connecticut morning – the thermometers were hovering around thirty degrees. But, a little less than four hours later, the chills felt by the Connecticut delegation to the National Honor Society national conference were warmed by the seventy degree weather in Orlando, Florida.

Along with the outside temperatures, the delegation's hopes for the weekend heightened as we approached the Sunshine State. Luckily, we were not disappointed.

The conference was held November 3-5, 2006 at the Doubletree Hotel in Orlando, Florida. Local twin seniors Ben and Mary Brinkopf were the emcees of the event. Connecticut's own Robert Krom coordinated the 5th Annual Scholars Bowl.

Friday's keynote speaker, Keith Hawkins, electrified the stage with engaging personal stories, witty comments, and valuable pieces of wisdom. He told of his two-year-old son, nicknamed 'J-Hawk,' who already shows valuable leadership skills: energy, excitement, and confidence, which are all key to employing your ideas in our world. Hawkins stressed three major points throughout his presentation: "own your time, don't rent it;" "people don't remember what you say, but they do remember what you do;" and "it's not your 'IQ' but your 'I Will' that makes a difference."

Instead of the traditional dance on Saturday night, this year's organizers opted to invite hypnotist Tom DeLuca. Despite early doubts over the legitimacy of the act, it was a good choice; most students were having a wonderful time watching the antics on stage. "The hypnotist was really great," said Meghan Horne of Northeastern Middle School. "Everyone

thought it was real and it looked real to me. I'm pretty sure I joined the fan club for the karate kid, too." She is referring to one of the students who believed he was Jackie Chan's cousin while under DeLuca's influence; other students became the defenders of fruit and avid users of the phrase "Who's your daddy?"

Saturday's keynote speaker was Karen Dawson. She was funny and upbeat despite living through several personal tragedies, stressing that "someone always has it worse off than you do" and "if you give something away, it will come back a thousand times." She is a firm believer in the motto of the Special Olympics, "If I cannot win, let me be courageous in the attempt," and created 'super hero hats' for the portions of the crowd (expertly modeled by the Southington H.S. delegation). She also took the time to suggest several service project ideas, including a 'drive-by-raking,' in which students raked the leaves off the lawns of those physically incapable and left signs saying "You've been raked by X-Y-Z High School!"

The 2006 Outstanding Service Project Awards were handed out by National Director Rocco Marano and National Chair-Elect Vince Bertram on Saturday. While congratulations were in order for some, it was a humbling experience for others. Kristie Nardini of Kennedy M.S. reflects, "Wow, they've done a lot of volunteer projects. I feel bad that we don't do as much as some of the other schools from around the country." And, for some, the awards ignited a spark hard to ignore. "If a high school in California can work over two hundred hours on a single project, surely we can do more than six hours in a term," decided Marilyn Albrecht of Southington H.S.

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**Failing School, continued from page 1**

she and her husband were given during their initial research into which of the district's schools would best serve their children's needs. Their experience with the schools in Stamford was exceptionally good, as their children attended magnet schools which served a diverse ethnic population consisting of a good percentage of white students. They wanted to duplicate the same experience in New Haven; and Clemente could not offer it. There were hardly any white students who attended the school.

I spent approximately one hour intensely interviewing Mrs. Gore. A few of her observations, though not necessarily revelatory, are worthy of noting. When questioned about parental involvement at Clemente, she was quick to point out that because many of the parents never achieved an education and, therefore, could neither read nor write themselves, there was great reluctance on their part to participate in any aspect of their youngsters' education. Further, many of them, because of their own failures in school, never promoted an enthusiasm for getting an education with their children. In fact, they were more apt to speak ill of the school and, hence, offered little support to teachers and administrators. It also surprised me to hear that there were many single mothers with children in the school.

Mrs. Gore was full of praise when describing the education her children received at Clemente. While she wishes that her children were exposed to more white students during their years there, she did not think her children's academic achievements were adversely affected due to the racial isolation. However, she strongly believes that schools with a significantly higher population of whites have greater opportunities to be successful and that if there were a greater presence of white students at Clemente, that fact alone would significantly improve the school's reputation. In other words, a balanced, integrated school offers greater opportunities for the children attending them than schools whose population consists primarily of one population. Magnet schools were used as an example.

I had the opportunity to visit, unsupervised and unannounced, approximately 10 classrooms. Each classroom I visited had both a teacher and teacher's aide. There was electronic teaching equipment in every available space in the classrooms and library. I spent some 15 to 20 minutes in each. I witnessed well managed, well disciplined students hard at work: no lecturing by teachers; all students learning through different mediums, some on computers, many connected to ear phones listening to discs and tapes, others with the teacher or teacher's aide working one-on-one

or in small groups. Everyone was on task and my presence had little, if any, effect on what was going on.

I was overwhelmed by the degree of serious learning that was going on around me. I didn't know until the end of my visit, if those students were two or three or four years behind or on grade level. It didn't matter. They were obviously learning as well as they could be taught, and isn't that what it's all about? They were being successful. They were happy, engaged, disciplined, and responsible learners. And many had little else to be happy about in their lives, according to Principal Williams and Mrs. Gore. In fact, I was told before leaving that most students were not at grade level. Many as much as four years behind. The consequence of that fact was a recent decision by the staff and administration to double the time on literacy skills for those students.

My last experience, before leaving, was the opportunity to observe a teacher in conference with a state appointed executive coach, school reading consultant and an assistant principal discussing how to interpret and use a plethora of school, district-wide and state data to track her success in the classroom with each individual student. It was a fascinating experience to realize the depth of information this teacher (and all Clemente teachers) had at their fingertips to evaluate the progress of her students and the degree of success she was having in the classroom. It was truly a great lesson on the individualization of learning skills for each youngster. It was also interesting to observe that the young teacher was somewhat anxious about the fact that her successes could be reasonably tracked by the successes or failures of her students. Marvelous work was being accomplished from top to bottom as a result of the resources and data that are now available.

I left Roberto Clemente Leadership Academy with a renewed enthusiasm for public education. Upon retirement, I would love to return as a volunteer teacher's aide if Williams will have me. I want to be part of the exciting work that is being done at Clemente. I'm a competitor by nature and I want to experience the thrill of increasing the achievement of "my" kids from where they were the preceding month or year. I don't care about NCLB and how "my" kids this year



Executive Director Mike Savage visits with students from Roberto Clemente Leadership Academy.

succeeded in comparison to the kids I had last year. Each is a unique personality with different skills, talents and problems. They need to be taught and tracked according to their individual successes. They need to receive immediate feed-back on their work so that they can take ownership of the effort they make on a daily basis. All that was happening at Clemente.

I believe the staff in this school could match the successes of any staff if transplanted to any other system in the state. President Bush and Secretary Spelling, you are doing the whole Clemente community an egregious disservice by labeling them as failing in their mission to educate each and every one in their charge. They are doing a superb job. Give them credit and stop condemning them as though they don't know how to teach. Begin to measure success one student at a time. Stop with your contrived, politically motivated efforts to belittle and degrade the thousands of dedicated, hard working, competent inner city public school teachers and administrators for the tremendous efforts they put forth on a daily basis to educate the kids of this nation to the best of their ability. Call me a liar, Mr. President and Secretary Spellings, but Roberto Clemente is not a failing school. It is a school I would be proud to send my grandchildren to for a quality education. If you doubt my assessment, then I suggest you seek out and study the report from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. They are the respected authority on the subject and they found as I did that this inner city school deserves high praise and our respect.

## TEACHER EVALUATION SERIES OFFERED

The Connecticut Principals' Center is pleased to offer a series of professional development workshops for school administrators. The series, which begins in March and ends in April, consists of five workshops, each of which addresses a component of teacher evaluation. The topics include:

- *Legal Implications: Understanding the Do's and Don'ts of Writing Teacher Evaluations* (Parts I & II)
- *Classroom Walk-Throughs and Professional Learning Communities: The Principals Role*
- *Supporting and Retaining New Teachers: The Principals Role*
- *Summative Evaluations and More*

The workshops are designed to provide administrators with an opportunity to fulfill the requirements of the amendment to the Connecticut General Statutes which mandates the completion of 15 of the required 90 hours of continuing education in the area of teacher evaluation. Administrators may register for the entire series of 5 workshops or for individual sessions. For more information, visit <http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/TeacherEvaluationSeriesBrochure.pdf>.

### NHS, continued from page 5

Teresa Huggins, a frequent speaker in several sessions, takes a different approach to leadership. She believes all of life's struggles are simple brick walls in your brain which collapse when you relax, and that, if you let all of your little problems fade away, you will be able to find a creative solution to any problem. She teaches the Sedona Method, an exercise when you ask yourself three simple questions to remove any issues you have from your life: "Could I let it go? Would I let it go? When?" And, when asked about the nerve-wracking college process, she calmly stated that "the colleges where you're accepted are the colleges where you can make a difference."

Overall, delegates took home with them not only 'really nifty pens,' and memories of Universal Studios, but a new outlook on service and an eagerness to share what they learned at the conference. It was definitely a worthwhile experience for all who made the trip, weather included.

Connecticut national honor society school chapters attending the national conference included Cromwell H.S., Portland H.S., East Hampton H.S., Southington H.S., W.F. Kaynor Technical H.S., Northeast M.S. and J.F. Kennedy M.S. Besides many representatives from individual chapters, CANHS officers Kevin Armstrong, Douglas P. Case, and Meghan Horne were in attendance to represent Connecticut.

.....  
Douglas P. Case is a student at Southington High School

## DARIEN ADMINISTRATOR NAMED HIGH SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

A veteran educator, Donna Russo is in her eleventh year as assistant principal at Darien High School (DHS). She began her career in education as a fine arts teacher, first in Rochester, New York, and then in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. After eight years in the classroom, Donna relocated to Connecticut to become the chair of the fine arts department at Bethel High School. A graceful and natural leader, she was appointed assistant principal of Bethel High and served in that role for seven years before assuming her current position as assistant principal at DHS.

Darien First Selectwoman Evonne Klein calls Donna "a visionary and skillful leader," one who is respected for her ability to juggle the increasing responsibilities of today's busy assistant principal. While proficiently managing the day-to-day operations of the school, Donna still finds time to implement new programs, assist teachers in reviewing and revising curricula, and mentor young leaders in the district. Says Darien Superintendent Donald Fital, "Donna has demonstrated the ability to focus on instructional leadership, while doing justice to the relentless demands placed on assistant principals to manage daily school operations."

DHS Principal Jerome Auclair, who nominated Donna for the award, describes her as a "patient, dedicated, effective, intelligent, clear-thinking leader" who is always ready and eager to take on a new role. During her tenure at DHS, Donna has been the driving force behind a number of successful initiatives. She spearheaded the Big Brother/Big Sister Program, a mentoring program which pairs upperclassmen with freshmen and transfer students to help ease their transition into a new school; and she designed and organized the school's annual *Volunteer Fair*, a day-long extravaganza which brings the entire Darien community together to celebrate the values of citizenship and community service. Furthermore, under Donna's leadership, DHS has established several afterschool clubs and activities that provide avenues to increase students' sensitivity to the community and to one another. The *Buddy Club* assists emotionally and physically challenged students; *Weekend Alternatives Club* plans alcohol-free weekend activities for students; *Kids Giving Back* reaches out to people in need; and the *Culture Club* studies the cultures and customs of others.

As an educational leader, Donna is celebrated for her ability to create a culture of learning that is innovative and supportive and that allows all staff members to fully develop and explore their individual talents. As the district's BEST facilitator, she has been instrumental in shaping the professional growth and development of every new teacher, not only at the high school, but at all of the Darien schools.

All those who work with Donna agree that her greatest strength is her collaborative leadership skills. She always strives to learn from those around her and invites others to take ownership and feel involved. In so doing, she has helped to create a supportive and collegial atmosphere at DHS which allows all stakeholders — teachers, support staff, parents, students, and community members alike — to enjoy a shared responsibility for the governance of the school. Says Barbara Simms, co-chair of the DHS Parent Association, "For the six years that I have known Donna, she has continually demonstrated collaborative leadership. She actively involves the students, parents and members of the community to achieve a wonderful environment for our high school and the teens of Darien."

Donna 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.



**Donna D. Russo**  
High School Assistant Principal of the Year

## middle school news

### Academic Vigor and Meeting the Learning Needs of Middle Level Students

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

Middle level schools are unique places largely due to their unique student population. Students ages 10 - 14 undergo vast social, intellectual, emotional and physical changes. It is the role of middle level schools to provide an academically vigorous curriculum and instruction while assisting them to become knowledgeable about themselves and the world around them. This knowledge, their experiences, and their education will assist students to make better decisions about their personal and educational lives in order to form a strong foundation as they enter adulthood. Increasingly, more has been written about the difficulties for schools to find the balance between providing academic vigor as compared to meeting the developmental needs of young adolescent students.

Academically, middle level schools work to provide students with a vigorous curriculum that will move them through their own brain development from predominantly concrete thinkers to primarily abstract thinkers. This needs to be done by specifically trained educators who are not only experts in their specific disciplines but are artisans in the area of teaching early adolescent children. Studies suggest that successful students are taught by teachers who are not only proficient in their discipline (history, math, art, science, etc) but also have a high level of understanding and training while working with middle level students specifically. The same is true about middle level administrators.

Middle level educators have always embraced the importance of academic vigor; they have used the mantra of learning, relevance, and relationships to guide developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom. (These practices are outlined in the Carnegie Corporation's *Turning Points 2000* and the National Middle School Association's *This We Believe*.) It is these practices that are sometimes maligned that form the foundation upon which appropriate academic expectations are built to provide vigorous academic challenges. These practices also help students better understand their unique learning process and style and they also encourage students to take educational risks and to learn from their mistakes.

Educators, who know and understand young adolescents, can create developmentally appropriate curricula that builds upon basic skills and broadens the information base to provide opportunities for mastery. These results are achieved by an assortment of methods to properly assess the variety of thinkers in any middle level school group. One common practice that middle level educators use are the interdisciplinary links that provide opportunities for authentic learning that fits better with the natural curiosity of young adolescents.

Academic vigor cannot be measured accurately for middle level students by traditional standardized testing alone. Educators must assess and provide frequent feedback in many forms such as classroom discussions, essays, reports, tests, projects, and performances. Authentic assessments based on portfolio review and service learning is often overlooked by traditional testing measures.

Middle level schools can also support academic vigor by supporting the learning that occurs outside the classroom setting; encouraging faculty and students to take advantage of field trips, extra curricular activities, and social events. Participation in these activities can be risky for some young adolescents, but they are often successful when they are supported by a deliberate program of student advocacy. This advocacy/advisory can serve to encourage students to stretch the boundaries of their thinking and

*continued on page 12*

### MADISON EDUCATOR WINS MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Jill Hale's 25-year professional career includes eighteen years as a teacher and seven years as an assistant principal, all of which have been spent in Madison, CT. She began teaching in 1981, working as a grade 8 teacher at Our Lady of Mercy School in Madison before transitioning to the public schools in 1984. Prior to becoming an assistant principal at Jeffrey J. Milton Elementary School in 2000, Jill served in a variety of roles, teaching grades 1, 2 and 5 at the elementary level and History and Science at the middle level. In 2003, Jill was appointed assistant principal of Polson Middle School; and since November, 2006, she has been serving as the district's interim special education director.

Polson Principal Frank Henderson describes Jill as "dedicated, committed, intelligent, caring, empathetic, and a person of high integrity and moral character." He praises her personal and professional dedication to her work and her single-minded drive to ensure success for every child in her care. "She genuinely cares about the academic, social and emotional well-being of every student in our building," says Henderson.

A tireless instructional leader, Jill keeps careful watch for new research and emerging trends in education and is always presenting new information for her staff to consider and digest. Her extensive knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy is surpassed only by her talent and generosity in sharing that knowledge with others. According to Mark Hershnik, Polson's coordinator of English, Jill's commitment to continued professional growth sets a powerful example for her staff and has a positive influence on instruction. Jill led a successful transition from homo- to heterogeneous grouping in English and mathematics; and her expertise in the area of special education has helped to maximize inclusive learning opportunities for special needs students.

One of Jill's many strengths is her ability to work with staff to use assessment data as a tool to accelerate student learning. Her focus on data-driven decision making has helped teachers to identify and provide support to students who need additional help in a particular skill area.

The hallmark of Jill's leadership is her unwavering belief in the capacity of all children to achieve at high levels. In each of her students, even the most challenging ones, she sees the potential for greatness and is insistent that every child is treated with compassion and respect. When handling discipline matters, she always seeks a resolution that is remedial rather than punitive, as she remains mindful of each student's ability to change and to improve. Says Hershnik, "It is because of people like Mrs. Hale that education retains the potential to enhance and regenerate society – one child at a time."

Jill's leadership has been defined by her passion for learning, her irrepressible optimism, her human decency and her deep love for children. Her profound impact as an educator is best described by one of her former students, Marley Connor, resident of Madison and student at Daniel Hand High School. Says Marley, "It is Mrs. Hale's ability to observe and celebrate each student's strengths and achievements, and to acknowledge what each person has to offer, inside and outside of the classroom, that separate her from every other teacher or scholastic leader."



**Jill L. Hale**  
Middle School Assistant Principal of  
the Year



elementary school news

**CULLEN SELECTED AS ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR**

Donna Cullen's seventeen years in education have all been spent serving the students of the Waterbury Public School District. She began her professional career in 1989 as a resource room and Grade 3 teacher at Michael Wallace Middle School and Margaret Generali Elementary School. In 2001, Donna was appointed to serve as teaching vice principal at Wallace. After two years in this role, she became assistant principal of Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School, the position she now holds.



**Donna M. Cullen**  
Elementary Asst. Principal of the Year

Maloney Principal Maryann Thompson calls Donna a "21st-century leader" and lauds her ability to empower and motivate all those with whom she works. "Donna's passion for teaching, endless love of learning, and impressive leadership skills have made her an instrumental force within the district," says Thompson.

Though an assistant principal at Maloney for only three-and-a-half years, Donna has had a tremendous impact on her students, staff, and community. She has been a catalyst for change in teaching, learning, and assessment; and her efforts have resulted in a multi-faceted educational program which allows all students to achieve at high levels. Donna is credited with helping Maloney to achieve the prestigious 2006 Magnet School of Excellence Award from the Magnet Schools of America. This distinction is awarded to a select group of magnet schools that show a commitment to high academic standards, curriculum innovation, successful diversity efforts, and the consistent delivery of quality services to all school stakeholders.

Since joining the Maloney administration, Donna has streamlined many of the school's day-to-day operations so that more time and resources can be directed to classroom instruction and to meeting the needs of individual students. She designed the Maloney Student Attendance Tracking System to better track absences and, ultimately, reduce truancy rates. She also developed the Maloney Student Discipline Referral Tracking System, an accountability system which helps to ensure that no child "slips through the cracks."

Diane Bakewell, supervising vice-principal of the Carrington School in Waterbury, praises Donna for efforts in fostering a nurturing and supportive school climate with high staff and student morale. "Donna has a wonderful rapport with the students and staff, and this is reflected in the positive atmosphere in her building," says Bakewell.

Donna leads by example, always exhibiting the characteristics of honesty, respect, and kindness that she works to instill in her students on a daily basis. "Mrs. Cullen teaches us how to be a leader by showing us how to always do the right thing," says student Michaela Couture. "She helps the students at our school realize that they are in control of the choices they make."

Donna Cullen is a leader of vision, a role model, and a passionate advocate for children. Her success as a building administrator is reflected in this telling statement by Jessica Haxhi, a teacher at Maloney and parent of a pre-K student: "I had a choice as to where my child would go to elementary school. Donna is one of the major reasons that I chose Maloney."

**You're Invited to Honor Your Volunteers!**

Regina S. Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

The Connecticut Association of Schools' elementary division takes great pleasure in announcing the 7th Annual Elementary Parent/Volunteer Recognition Banquet to be held on March 21, 2007, at the Aqua Turf Club, Southington, at 5:00 p.m. This program is designed to give public recognition to parents or other volunteers who have made major contributions to your schools. Contributions may include volunteering, organizing an event, donations, etc. The event gives you an opportunity to say "thank you" in a very special way.

To participate in this program, we ask that you submit the names of the volunteer(s) you want to recognize. We ask that you select no more than three (3) parents/volunteers. The cost for dinner will be \$36.00 per person. Please note that tickets for family members of recipients, administrators, board of education members, central office personnel, and PTO members must be purchased in advance. NO tickets will be available at the door, nor will anyone be admitted who has not been previously registered by the school principal. We are able to reserve individual tables for schools sending groups of 10. Smaller groups from the same school will be seated with participants from another school.

We expect that the vast majority of our elementary schools will participate. Your early response will both determine your school's seating location and be of help to us in many ways. The Connecticut Association of Schools Elementary Division looks forward to receiving notification of your awardees and to greeting you on March 21, 2007, at the Aqua Turf. We must receive your reservations by **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2007**, in order to arrange for plaques and brochures. At this time, we should also be notified of any special dietary requests.

The co-chairpersons for this event are Mark Proffitt and Renata Lantos. To register, please visit the CAS website at [www.casciac.org/register](http://www.casciac.org/register). Additional information is available by calling the CAS office, 203-250-1111 extension 3001.

**The Connecticut Association of Schools announces three new science workshops. . .**

*Principals' Conversations About: Science for All Children; Preparing Our Students for Life; and Careers and the New Science CMTs*

**Presenter:** Elizabeth Buttner, K-8 Science Consultant  
Connecticut State Department of Education

Each workshop will cover the following topics:

- ★ Framework, curriculum-embedded performance tasks and district science curriculum
- ★ Instructional & budgetary implications
- ★ Science CMT contents and format, followed by Q&A session

Locations for workshops:

- April 26, 2007 / Center School, Litchfield
- April 30, 2007 / CAS Office, Cheshire
- May 7, 2007 / Polson Middle School, Madison

All workshops will be from 4:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Registration at [www.casciac.org/register](http://www.casciac.org/register) beginning in February.

## ciac news

### Court rules against boys on girls teams

When Keith Bukowski, a junior at Stevens Point Area High School in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, could not compete in gymnastics (because his school doesn't have a boys' team and the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association prohibits boys from competing in girls' sports), he sued for gender discrimination. The verdict...Despite the fact that girls have been allowed to compete on boys' teams in football and wrestling, a state appeals court ruled against him, stating that females remain underrepresented in sports. If Bukowski were allowed to compete, the court declared, it would put pressure on WIAA to grant similar requests, which could further jeopardize opportunities for girls.

#### CIAC to Sponsor 15th Annual Golf Tournament

The Chippaukee Golf Club in Bristol will again host the 15th annual CIAC Endowment Fund event to be played on **June 18, 2007**. Pat Ryan, CEO of Ryan Marketing Partners in Farmington, and Randy Edsell, UConn head football coach, will serve as honorary chair of the event.

In its 14-year history the golf tournament has raised close to \$300,000 for our Endowment Fund. Athletic directors and coaches interested in participating are asked to contact Bob Lehr, AD at Southington HS, [lehrathletics@yahoo.com](mailto:lehrathletics@yahoo.com).

“Competitive sports are played mainly on a five-and-a-half-inch court -- the space between your ears.”

-- Bobby Jones, golfer (1902-1971)

### Growth in CIAC Girls Soccer, Girls Lacrosse, Field Hockey

#### FIELD HOCKEY

Year	Teams	Players
1982-83-----	79-----	2,691
1986-87-----	76-----	2,646
1990-91-----	74-----	2,689
1998-99-----	71-----	2,875
2005-06-----	78-----	3,302

#### GIRLS SOCCER

Year	Teams	Players
1982-83-----	67-----	1,674
1986-87-----	97-----	2,837
1990-91-----	119-----	3,406
1995-96-----	137-----	4,279
1998-99-----	143-----	4,552
2005-06-----	148-----	5,400

#### GIRLS LACROSSE

Year	Teams	Players
2002-03-----	56-----	2,584
2003-04-----	56-----	2,585
2004-05-----	61-----	2,812
2005-06-----	65-----	2,903

### NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (The Football Version)

Here's the football version of what is going on in education right now.

1. All teams must make the state playoffs and all **MUST** win the championship. If a team does not win the championship, they will be on probation until they are the champions, and coaches will be held accountable. If, after two years, they have not won the championship their footballs and equipment will be taken away **UNTIL** they do win the championship.
2. All kids will be expected to have the same football skills at the same time even if they do not have the same conditions or opportunities to practice on their own. **NO** exceptions will be made for lack of interest in football, a desire to perform athletically, or genetic abilities or disabilities of themselves or their parents.

**ALL KIDS WILL PLAY FOOTBALL AT A PROFICIENT LEVEL!**

3. Talented players will be asked to workout on their own, without instruction. This is because the coaches will be using all their instructional time with the athletes who aren't interested in football, have limited athletic ability or whose parents don't like football.

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### A STORY OF SPORTSMANSHIP

It was final game of the season for the Framingham State College women's soccer team in Massachusetts, and a playoff berth was on the line. Opposing them was Bridgewater State, which was vying for the conference championship. In the 59th minute of a scoreless game, Framingham freshman forward Kellen

Dougherty scored. Pandemonium. Then despair. The ball had gone into the side of the net, not the goal. As both teams lined up for a goal kick, the officials stopped play to confer. They ruled it was a goal and Framingham took a 1-0 lead.

Instead of taking advantage of the break, which would ensure they would go to the playoffs, Framingham's players ran to their coach and insisted the ball did not go in. He instructed the team's field captain to tell the official. The officials refused to reverse the call.

Deciding to right the error themselves, the Framingham squad stopped playing and allowed Bridgewater a free shot at their own net, which tied the game 1-1.

"Righting the wrong was more important to our players than the lead, even though a win would have put us in the conference tournament," said Framingham Sports Information Director Kathy Lynch. "The young women and their coach displayed exceptional sportsmanship." (Source: *CC! Sports E-newsletter*)

### Is there a link between sports and civics?

The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement has released a fact sheet that explores the effect that sports participation can have on the civic engagement of young people. According to the research, young people who are involved in sports report higher levels of voting, volunteering and engagement in their community than those who do not participate. In particular, the data show that young people who participated in sports activities during their high school years were more likely than non-sports participants to have:

- volunteered (32 percent vs. 21 percent);
- registered to vote (58 percent vs. 40 percent);
- voted (44 percent vs. 33 percent in 2000); and,
- followed news closely (41 percent vs. 26 percent).

The relationship between sports participation and civic engagement was still discernable even after the researchers controlled for other factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, educational attainment, marital status, income, family size. For more information visit [www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS\\_06\\_Sports\\_and\\_Civic\\_Engagement.pdf](http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS_06_Sports_and_Civic_Engagement.pdf).

## TEST TEEN ATHLETES NOW

by Robert Lipsyte

Steroids scandals often focus on pro sports, but the bigger story is in high schools, where kids think the benefits are worth the health risks. Mandatory testing could curb this dangerous trend.

Saving David is going to be very expensive and difficult, especially since David, his parents, his football coach and his school want to keep David just the way he is, swollen with steroids and knocking down other boys on his way to victory.

Even as the investigation of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative takes new turns and pro football and baseball players have recently been suspended for steroid use, the real intervention must be this: mandatory testing for high school football players.

David is a real boy whose name has been changed for obvious legal reasons. He was a 17-year-old high school junior when he was referred last spring to a Detroit-area psychiatrist, Michael Miletic, because of poor grades and depression. David's parents were upper-middle class and divorced, according to Miletic. David's haven was football, at which he excelled; he reveled in his father's pride at his success.

At first, Miletic thought treatment was going well. David's grades and depression were improving. Over the summer, he also grew physically, bigger muscles, better defined. He animatedly described his weight-lifting workouts to Miletic, a former Olympic heavyweight lifter.

### Peer Pressure

Then David's face began to look bloated, and his arms and neck became splotched with acne, signs that he was taking steroids. He was nonchalant when Miletic confronted him. Everybody at his gym was doing it; it was his ticket to a college scholarship and maybe the pros. He was paying his \$1,500 monthly bill for testosterone, steroid Deca-Durabolin and human-growth hormone with his dad's debit card.

David is playing high school football this season, one of almost a million young men in a sport in which the stakes are spiraling upward as colleges and the pros scout for talent down to the middle-school level. More and more high school games are televised locally. ESPN and Fox Sports

will nationally televise at least 21 games. NBC is airing a new drama, Friday Night Lights, based on the movie and bestseller about Texas high school football. MTV is offering Two-a-Days, a high school football reality show. Naming rights for high school stadiums in Texas routinely are sold for \$1 million.

Miletic seethes with frustration. He tried to alert David's parents to the serious health consequences steroids could inflict on the growing adolescent brain and body. But they were in denial and brushed him off. David was furious at what he took to be Miletic's "betrayal." He quit treatment. Because David had turned 18 and was "protected" by patient confidentiality laws, Miletic had nowhere else to turn. He could go no further in alerting people who might stop David's drug use. This is no aberrant anecdote.

"The statistics from surveys show that in your average high school/middle school (grades 6 through 12) with a population of about 1,000 – 30 to 40 kids have cycled (taken more than just one shot) at least once with anabolic steroids," says Bruce Svare, professor of psychology and neuroscience at the State University of New York at Albany. "Steroids are cheap and easy to obtain over the Internet and in local gymnasiums and workout venues. Many bodybuilding web sites have chat rooms and message boards where kids learn about steroids and how to use them. We don't have the luxury of sitting back and doing nothing."

### Adults in Denial

Svare, who also heads the National Institute for Sports Reform, lectures on the subject. When he calls for mandatory testing, parents, communities and coaches first tell him they have no steroids problem; then they cite the high cost of testing and the violation of confidentiality and parental rights. "When they say that," Svare says, "I shoot back, 'But kids are dying from this ... What is the alternative? To see more kids die?'"

There is anecdotal evidence of teens committing suicide after quitting steroids. Reports on the use of performance-enhancing drugs by the now-defunct East German Olympic machine contain dozens of

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## CIAC CHANGES POLICY REGARDING PRE-PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENTS

At its meeting in December, the CIAC Board of Control approved a change in its regulation concerning pre-participation assessments. The amended rule allows a pre-participation physical to be valid for a thirteen-month period, whereas it was previously valid for only twelve months. The change was brought forth in response to complaints from schools, parents, athletic directors, athletes, doctors and school nurses that insurance would only pay for a physical examination once every twelve (12) months. The Sports Medicine Committee discussed the proposed change and determined that a thirteen-month window was acceptable. At its recent meeting, the CIAC board accepted the recommendation of the Sports Medicine Committee and adopted the following language:

*Every athlete who participates in any CIAC-sanctioned activity (practice and/or contest) must be determined physically fit through a pre-participation assessment performed in accordance with reasonable and prudent written protocol as determined by his/her board of education or governing body. A pre-participation assessment will be considered current if it has been performed during the past thirteen (13) months. At no time shall an athlete be allowed to practice or compete if the pre-participation assessment exceeds thirteen (13) months.*

Previously, the regulation read as follows:

*Every athlete who participates in any CIAC-sanctioned activity (practice and/or contest) must be determined physically fit through a pre-participating evaluation performed annually in accordance with reasonable and prudent written medical protocol as determined by his/her board of education or governing body.*

The new rule will be in place for the remainder of the school year and will be brought to the membership for approval at the annual meeting in May.

## ... more ciac news

### Vigor, continued from page 8

feelings. Middle level academics will benefit when students are open to seeing risks as opportunities for growth and challenges as obstacles to overcome.

When examining academic vigor in middle level schools, it is important to look at the entirety of programs, much like middle level teachers look at the whole student. Middle level educators have always embraced the importance of academic vigor; in fact, it is a founding philosophy. They have infused high academic standards and state standards with a clear focus on understanding the whole child.

Developmentally appropriate education is not a "buzz word", it is a necessity! As we look toward the challenge of providing educational programs that truly meet the developmental needs of our students, perhaps providing an overall vigorous educational experience should be our goal.

#### Bibliography:

Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century. The Report of the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1989)

This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents. A position Paper of National Middle School Association (Westerville, Ohio. 2003)

#### Author Note:

The authors have purposely used the word vigor as opposed to rigor. Rigor is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "...harsh inflexibility in opinion, temper, or judgment... the quality of being unyielding or inflexible..." It is preceded in the dictionary by the words ridged and rigmarole and followed by the word rigormortis. These are hardly the words we want to use to describe the learning experience for young adolescents. Vigor is defined as, "...active bodily or mental strength or force...active healthy well-balanced growth...intensity of action or effect..." therefore, this is the word purposely chosen for this article. Copyright © 2007 by NELMS.

### Drug Testing, continued from page 11

examples of long-term reproductive and behavioral problems as well as elevated cancer risks and heart, liver and kidney damage. But long-term studies don't exist.

"It's an outrage," Miletic says, "that we spend all this time and energy moralizing about Barry Bonds and the Tour de France and nothing on finding out exactly what these drugs are doing to our kids. Is it because we don't want to know?"

Jim Thompson, executive director of Stanford University's non-profit Positive Coaching Alliance, says he is not opposed to random testing but thinks the cost makes it unrealistic as a blanket strategy. He would make it mandatory for teams appearing in nationally televised games and would add both education and counseling, for win-at-all-cost coaches as well as their players. "I've been struck by the importance of identity around this issue," he says. Teenagers are so passionate about making the team "that doing something 'irrational' like taking drugs with horrible long-term health effects seems like a reasonable thing to do."

It certainly seemed reasonable to David who, as his senior season progresses, is probably becoming a role model to young athletes who know exactly how he got to be so big and strong.

Meanwhile, Miletic observes uneasily from the sidelines. He says, "We have metal detectors in our schools. Police routinely pull kids over to search for alcohol and drugs. We have a potential national crisis here. Are we just going to sit back and watch it on TV?"

*Robert Lipsyte, author of a young adult novel on football, Raiders Night, is a member of USA TODAY'S board of contributors.*

### NCLB, continued from page 10

4. Games will be played year round, but statistics will only be kept in the 4th, 8th, and 11th game. It will create a New Age of Sports where every school is expected to have the same level of talent and all teams will reach the same minimum goals.

If no child gets ahead, then no child gets left behind.

If parents do not like this new law, they are encouraged to vote for vouchers and support private schools that can screen out the non-athletes and prevent their children from having to go to school with bad football players.

## INVESTORS IN CT YOUTH



- ★ AT&T ★
- ★ Arbella Insurance Group ★
- ★ Baden Sports ★
- ★ Big Y Supermarkets ★
- ★ Bob's Discount Furniture ★
- ★ Coca Cola ★
- ★ CT Lighting Centers ★
- ★ CT Sun ★
- ★ Dove Soap ★
- ★ Grynn & Barrett Studios ★
- ★ Horace Mann ★
- ★ IGA Supermarkets ★
- ★ Kaestle-Boos ★
- ★ Konica ★
- ★ Liberty Mutual ★
- ★ Martin Screen Printing ★
- ★ McDonald's ★
- ★ NBC-30 ★
- ★ N.E. Fitness Distributors ★
- ★ PureTech Water ★
- ★ Rawlings ★
- ★ Spalding ★
- ★ Sports Image ★
- ★ Subway ★
- ★ Teachers' Insurance Plan ★
- ★ U.S. Army ★
- ★ U.S. Marine Corp ★
- ★ Verizon Wireless ★
- ★ Waterbury Republican-American ★
- ★ Westfield Corporation ★