



# BULLETIN

The Connecticut Association of Schools  
The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference



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

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## GOVERNOR RELL ANNOUNCES ONLINE COURSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

On December 27th, Governor M. Jodi Rell announced the launch of the CT Virtual Learning Center, a statewide program for high school students to take online courses. Enrollments are being accepted now for students to begin coursework in January 2008.

"We want to use online courses to increase access to high quality content so that every student in Connecticut will have access to the courses they need when they need them," said Governor Rell. "In preparing our young people for the 21st century workforce, it is necessary that we employ these same powerful tools to improve access, equity and employment readiness."

Funded by the general assembly within the 2008 budget, this pilot project will be available at no cost to school districts. Students will remain enrolled in their current schools, but will have the option to take online courses that meet their academic needs. (See <http://www.ctvirtualearning.com> for listing of available courses).

"The state has created a high speed optical computer network, called the Connecticut Education Network that connects all the school districts in the state," said Governor Rell. "The Connecticut Virtual Learning Center will be using this state resource in the delivery of its online content."

The primary focus for the program will be twofold:

1. Courses for students at risk of falling behind or failing will be offered in Algebra, Geometry, English, Civics or Health. Students can avoid summer school and recover credit by taking these online courses during the school year.

*continued on page 5*

## CAS NAMES 2008 ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR



**Andre Hauser**

High School Assistant Principal of the Year



**Amy Clarke**

Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce the selection of the **2008 Assistant Principals of the Year!** Each year nominations are submitted 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 the *CAS High School Assistant Principal of the Year*, **Andre Hauser**, assistant principal of Coginchaug Regional High School in Durham; and to the *CAS Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year*, **Amy Clarke**, assistant principal of Clarence Rogers and Katherine Brennan Schools in New Haven. No *2008 Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year* was named.

### Andre Hauser

Andre Hauser began his career in education in 1995, working as a high school English teacher in Bethel, CT, and Palmer, MA, before joining the staff of Enrico Fermi High School in Enfield, CT. In 2003, after three years as an English teacher and department chair at Fermi, he became assistant principal of Coginchaug Regional High School in Durham, the position he now holds.

Nominated for the High School Assistant Principal of the Year Award by his principal, Dr. Steve Wysowski, Andre was chosen by the selection committee for his

*continued on page 6*

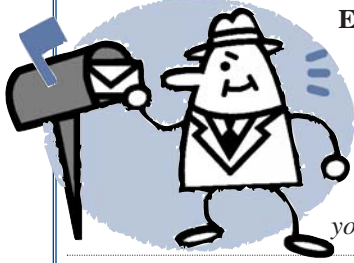
### Amy Clarke

An educator for twenty-four years, Amy Clarke has spent all but three of those years serving the students of the New Haven Public Schools. She began working in the New Haven school district in 1987 when she joined the staff of East Rock Magnet School as a special education teacher. In 2004, after seventeen years as a classroom teacher, Amy assumed her current role as assistant principal of Katherine Brennan, which serves grades 3-8, and its feeder school, Clarence Rogers, which is located directly across the street and serves grades K-2.

*continued on page 10*

# 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:** I don't know what is going on at my school, but it seems like every woman of child-bearing age has decided that now is the time to add to her family. I understand that we have to give teachers their six weeks leave with pay, but I just got a request that threw me. One of my teachers is due to return from her childrearing leave next week, but she just sent me a doctor's note saying that she needs another six weeks. I would be willing to give her the time off without pay, but she wants paid leave. I don't have to agree to that, do I?

- *Enough is Enough*

**A. Dear Enough:** As with so many other legal issues, the answer is that it depends. Women are entitled to sick leave for the period of disability associated with childbirth, and that leave is with pay to the extent that paid sick leave is available. We generally adopt a presumption that a woman is disabled for a period of six weeks from the birth of her child. However, this six-week period is just that - a presumption. If there are complications that cause the teacher's disability to continue beyond the six-week period, she is entitled to the leave.

**Q. Dear Mailbag:** Right after the winter vacation, I was walking through the building when I saw a board of education member sitting in a classroom. I politely asked him what on God's green earth he thought he was doing, and he explained that he wanted to see firsthand how the new fourth grade curriculum was being implemented. To make matters worse, he confided that he chose the classroom intentionally to see if the teacher was as bad as he had heard. I gently tried to tell him that his actions were inappropriate, but he got all officious on me, telling me that I should not presume to give direction to an elected member of the board of education. Can I tell this jerk to stay out of my building?

- *Ready to Blow*

**A. Dear Ready:** I would count to ten and then call your Superintendent. You are right to be concerned. Apparently, the board member does not understand a basic premise -- school board members have no greater rights than any other members of the public. If visitors are required to sign in and/or get permission to visit classrooms, for example, these rules apply to school board members as well. Presumably, the school board member means well, but the Superintendent must explain that basic protocol requires that he go through the Superintendent to schedule a visit to any of the district schools, including yours. Then, the board member should report to the office and sign in. With any luck, the board member will get the picture and follow the rules.

**Q. Dear Mailbag:** There was a fight at my school, and the assistant principal did an excellent job in investigating and writing it up. However, when we suspended the instigator, we got a letter from his lawyer demanding copies of all related documents, including any incident reports. I want to comply with legal requirements, but I presume that I don't have to give over the report because it mentions twelve different students by name. Please tell me that I can tell the lawyer too bad, so sad, but the report is confidential because of student names.

- *Confidentially Yours*

**A. Dear Confidentially:** Given that the report contains student names, in the first instance you do not have to release the information. To be sure, if there is some related court proceeding, the lawyer could issue a subpoena. However, even then you would have to inform the parents of the subpoena to give them a chance to object before you provide the information. In any event, if the lawyer is clever, you are not off the hook. Specifically, the prohibition in FERPA is against the disclosure of personally-identifiable information. The lawyer can require that you provide a copy of the report with the names redacted as long as extrinsic information would not otherwise cause the students to be identified. If he or she makes such a request and you have to provide the report, you will be glad that the assistant principal did such a good job.

## ct news & notes

■ Now available on the Connecticut State Department of Education website is a copy of Education Commissioner Dr. Mark McQuillan's December 5, 2007, memorandum summarizing the Ad Hoc Committee's Proposal for Secondary School Reform which was presented to the State Board of Education last month. The memo contains the commissioner's own commentary on the proposal's objectives and implications for the future. The memo can be downloaded at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/comish/CommissionerUpdate.pdf>. See related item page 5.

■ According to Morgan Quinto's Education State Rankings for 2006-2007, Connecticut was the nation's third smartest state, behind Vermont and Massachusetts, ranked number one and two, respectively. States were assigned a score based on 21 factors ranging from graduation rates to average class size. For more information, visit <http://www.morganquinto.com/edrank.htm>.

THE  
FLANAGAN  
GRANTS  
ARE BACK!



CAS is pleased to announce that Big Y World Class Market® is again funding the Flanagan Memorial Grants Program, sponsored by the Connecticut Student Activities Conference (CSAC). Big Y will award funds to school programs that encourage leadership, community service, or the development of academic, artistic, or communication skills in students. Applications have been mailed to all schools and can be accessed online at [www.casciac.org/pdfs/FlanaganApplicationPDF.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/FlanaganApplicationPDF.pdf). The deadline is Friday, February 29, 2008. Winners will be notified in April and the awards will be presented at the Flanagan Awards Reception at CAS on May 7, 2008. For additional information, contact Dave Maloney at 203-250-1111, ext. 3936 or [dmaloney@casciac.org](mailto:dmaloney@casciac.org).

**national news & notes**

■ A new report from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) examines the effect of a renewed policy focus on teacher quality by comparing the academic qualifications of teacher candidates who took Praxis assessments for licensure from 2002 through 2005 with the qualifications of a cohort of test takers from eight years prior. Praxis assessments (developed by ETS) provide educational tests and other services that states use as part of teacher certification. In conducting this comparison, ETS found that teachers are more academically qualified than they were a decade ago, and the academic profiles of candidates have improved. Additionally, SAT-Verbal scores for Praxis test-passers increased by 13 points, while SAT-Math scores increased by 17 points. Going beyond test scores, the study notes that today's teacher candidates have higher college grade point averages (GPAs), as well -- 40 percent of candidates report a GPA higher than 3.5 relative to 27 percent a decade ago, while the percentage reporting a GPA lower than 3.0 has decreased from 32 to 20. Access the report at [http://www.ets.org/Media/Education\\_Topics/pdf/TQ\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/TQ_full_report.pdf).

■ On December 29, 2007, President George W. Bush signed into law legislation extending the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) through March 2009. Created 10 years ago, SCHIP is a state-federal partnership intended to provide health coverage for children from low-income families not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid. Twice, Congress passed legislation significantly expanding the program, passing legislation increasing SCHIP's annual funding from about \$5 billion to \$12 billion annually for the next five years. President Bush vetoed both bills, saying that the legislation would expand the program beyond its initial intent. Congress was unable to override the vetoes. In order to keep the program's authorization from expiring, Congress crafted a simple extension of the law, pushing a full reauthorization into the next Congress.

■ Studies connect high drop-out rates with increased health costs, welfare dependency, lower income—and even shorter life spans. And according to the recent study *School or the Streets: Crime and California's Dropout Crisis*, we can now add crime to the list. Sim-

ply increasing the graduation rate by 10%, the study says, would prevent 500 homicides and more than 20,000 aggravated assaults each year in California. (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/26/07)

■ With a bit of obedience training, Spartan, a one-time stray dog, could well be on his way to being the Burlington (Ia.) School District's first certified therapy dog. The oh-so-cute white Labrador retriever-mix visits school each afternoon to maintain daily contact with children to sustain his child-loving temperament -- a critical trait of a therapy dog. The goal is to train him so he can spend every school day providing special-needs students with a calming and huggable presence. In addition, playing with and walking Spartan will become an incentive for students to do their work and behave. So far, Spartan is off to a good start, as he has calmed behavior disorder students, tagged along on a home visit to a family whose three children lost their mother and given a truant girl an incentive to return to school. It appears man's best friend is quickly becoming a school's best friend as well.

**Head Start Program Reauthorized**

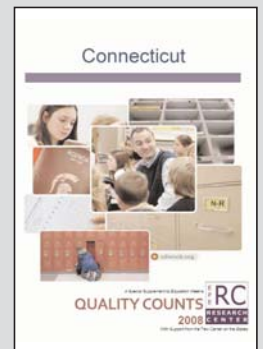
On December 12, President George W. Bush signed into law legislation reauthorizing the Head Start program. The *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act* of 2007 concludes a four-year effort to reauthorize the law. The bill will broaden Head Start's income-eligibility requirements by permitting families that make up to 130% of the federal poverty level, or \$26,800 for a family of four, to participate in the program. In the past, the program only served children whose parents' incomes were at or below the federal poverty level, or \$20,600 for a family of four. The legislation will also:

- dedicate \$2 million in fiscal year 2008 to Head Start agencies for local training and improvement efforts;
- set a goal that half of all Head Start teachers and curriculum specialists earn a bachelor's degree within six years;
- expand Early Head Start by \$83 billion to serve additional low-income infants and toddlers;
- eliminate the National Reporting System, a controversial test given to all 4- and 5-year-old Head Start students.

(Source: *This Week in Washington* e-newsletter, PTA, January 9, 2008)

**QUALITY COUNTS 2008**

Education Week has released *Quality Counts 2008*, the twelfth annual report card on public education in the 50 states. This year's report grades the states on, among other indicators, their efforts to create an educational continuum beginning with preschool and ending with post-secondary education and/or the workplace. In this year's report, states were awarded overall letter grades based on their ratings across six areas of performance and policy: chance-for-success; K-12 achievement; standards, assessments, and accountability; transitions and alignment; the teaching profession; and school finance. Some states performed consistently well or poorly across the full range of categories. Last year, Connecticut ranked second, behind Virginia, at the top of the chance-for-success index. Connecticut's 2008 report card appears below.



OVERALL GRADE	Connecticut		How did the average state score?
	Chance for success	A-	
<p>A state's overall grade is the average of the scores for the six graded categories.</p> <p><b>Connecticut: C+</b></p> <p><b>Nation: C</b></p> <p>For details on CT's grades in the six major categories, visit <a href="http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2008/18shr.ct.h27.pdf">http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2008/18shr.ct.h27.pdf</a></p>	K-12 achievement	D	D+
	Standards, assessments, and accountability	C	B
	Transitions and alignment	C	C
	The teaching profession	C-	C
	School finance	B+	C+

## ... more national news & notes

■ The Bush administration issued a new rule last month that eliminates Medicaid reimbursement for certain transportation and administrative tasks undertaken by schools on behalf of students with disabilities. A wide range of medical services are furnished to students in schools, including speech and physical therapy. Medicaid, the government's health insurance program for the poor, helps pay for those activities for low-income children. It will continue to pay; however, the new rule will restrict when schools can bill the federal government for clerical duties associated with providing health care. For example, schools can no longer expect Medicaid reimbursement for the planning of student immunizations. Schools also won't get paid for transporting students getting speech or physical therapy to school or back home. The savings to the federal government is projected at \$3.6 billion over the next five years. During that same period, the federal government will spend an estimated \$1.2 trillion on Medicaid. Lawmakers were so concerned about the rule that they passed legislation that placed a six-month moratorium on it.

■ Recently the U.S. Department of Education launched a new and improved version of the much acclaimed web site, Federal Resources for Educational Excellence (FREE). The new site makes it easier for users to find teaching and learning resources by offering, for the first time, a list of 500 educational topics and a redesigned home page. FREE provides educators with lesson plans, primary documents, science visualizations, math challenges, literary works, paintings, music manuscripts and many other vital classroom resources. The tool also combines important educational elements culled from the Library of Congress, Smithsonian, National Science Foundation, NASA, National Archives and other federal agencies. By integrating these important agencies and resources, FREE is able to provide comprehensive lesson plans. For example, one such plan helps teachers integrate 100 of the most important documents in U.S. history into class by providing a timeline covering the milestone documents along with in-depth descriptions. Visit <http://www.free.ed.gov/>.

### FY 2008 Education Budget Approved

President Bush has signed into a law a bill that will increase federal education spending by 2.9% in fiscal 2008. The measure will provide \$13.9 billion to the Title I program for disadvantaged students, an 8.6% increase over the \$12.8 billion appropriated for the program in fiscal 2007. By contrast, the Reading First program was cut significantly under the legislation, dropping from \$1 billion last year to \$393 million in fiscal 2008. For K-12 education, most of the total \$59.2 billion appropriation will finance programs for the 2008-09 school year. In addition to the major increase for Title I and the cut to Reading First, the measure will appropriate:

- \$10.9 billion for K-12 state grants under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, a nearly 1% increase over the fiscal 2007 level of \$10.8 billion;
- \$2.93 billion to help states improve the quality of their teachers, a 1.7% increase; and
- \$1.2 billion for career and vocational education programs, a 0.5 percent decrease.

(*Education Week, December 27, 2007*)

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### THE BULLETIN

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## legal news & notes

On the eve of the *No Child Left Behind Act's* 6th anniversary, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit revived a lawsuit challenging how the federal *No Child Left Behind* law is funded. The court ruled in *Pontiac v. Spellings* that the federal government was in violation of the Spending Clause of the U.S. Constitution for not providing clear notice as to who bears the additional costs of compliance. The lawsuit, brought by school districts in Michigan, Texas and Vermont, the National Education Association and nine of its state affiliates, contends that the Department of Education violated the Constitution in enacting the law by requiring states and school districts to spend local money to administer standardized tests and to meet other federal requirements. At issue is Section 9527(a) of the law which states "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to... mandate a State or any subdivision thereof to spend any funds or incur any costs not paid for under this Act." [20 U.S.C. § 7907(a)] The lawsuit was initially filed in April 2005 with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. The District Court dismissed the complaint on procedural grounds for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Plaintiffs subsequently appealed to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals. In the ruling on January 7th, the appeals court sent the suit back to the lower court and reversed the lower courts ruling arguing that the Spending Clause of the Constitution requires Congress to give states clear notice of their financial liabilities when they accept federal financing that may fall short of the full costs of complying with requirements from Washington. (*Source: This Week in Washington, PTA, January 9, 2008*)

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## CAS TO HOST LISTENING FORUM ON SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM INITIATIVE

On January 23, 2008, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., CAS will host one of the listening forums for the Connecticut State Board of Education's "The Case for Secondary School Reform in Connecticut." Commissioner of Education Mark McQuillan and other members of the Ad Hoc Committee will be on hand to answer questions and solicit feedback on the proposals for secondary school reform and changes in state graduation requirements.

The session is one of many forums being planned at locations around the state for school administrators, teachers, boards of education members, parents, and other interested individuals. A full schedule is printed below.

To register for the January 23rd forum, visit [www.casciac.org/register](http://www.casciac.org/register) or contact Dennis Carrithers at [dcarrithers@casciac.org](mailto:dcarrithers@casciac.org).

The "The Case for Secondary School Reform in Connecticut" can be downloaded in its entirety from the CAS website at [http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/high\\_school\\_reform\\_proposal.pdf](http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/high_school_reform_proposal.pdf).

### Secondary School Reform: A Conversation

Commissioner of Education, Dr. Mark McQuillan, and the State Board of Education have formed an Ad Hoc Committee to study secondary school reform. The Committee is now conducting a listening tour and is seeking your input on its recent draft proposal. This conversation is taking place throughout the state during the months of January and February. Please see the list of dates and locations below.

January 30	Plainfield	Plainfield High School	7:00 p.m.
February 7	No. Branford	No. Branford High School	6:30 p.m.
February 11	Torrington	Torrington High School	6:30 p.m.
February 13	Hartford	CREC Central Office	6:30 p.m.
February 14	Newtown	Newtown High School	6:30 p.m.

A brief presentation on the following topics will be followed by time for questions and comments:

- > The Context Underlying the Ad Hoc Committee's Recommendation
- > The Data Supporting the Need for Statewide Action
- > A Proposed Framework of the Steps Needed to Effect Secondary School Reform
- > An Outline of the Implementation Steps Needed to Bring the Reform Proposal to the Legislature by December 2008



*Plan on attending and making your voice heard \* Learn what's being proposed \* Share your concerns*

### Virtual Learning, continued from page 1

2. Interesting electives that may not be available at many schools, such as Mandarin Chinese, Biotechnology and International Business.

The curricula for these dynamic, fully interactive online courses have been approved by the CT State Department of Education's Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction and will be taught by CT certified teachers.

"Online learning is an option for students that need the flexibility to learn something at their own pace," Governor Rell said. "The online experience is relevant and transferable to future opportunities."

That necessity is recognized by Michigan, the first state to require every student to take at least one online experience in order to graduate high school. Other states across the country are actively working to implement policies and programs for online learning options that open educational choices to their students.

The CT Virtual Learning Center is being run by the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC). Ed Klonoski, President of the CTDLC said, "Over the past six years, the CTDLC has been developing programs and services that support education through online learning, centrally developed and distributed content, and resource sharing. These programs include the Connecticut Adult Virtual High School and other partnerships with the Connecticut Department of Higher Education to develop online college preparation courses."

### Do you know an outstanding high school educator?

Every high school in Connecticut has its share of outstanding educators! Consider nominating one of yours. The High School Board of Control is accepting nominations from CAS member high schools for "CAS High School Exemplary Educator of the Year." The deadline for nominations is **February 28, 2008**.

Nominations may be made by any present or former member of the school staff or district central office personnel. Candidates must be a practicing teacher at a CAS member high school and must demonstrate excellence in teaching, involvement with students, staff, and parents in and out of the classroom; and leadership within the profession.

The candidate should be in at least her/his fifth year as a practicing high school teacher in Connecticut and in at least the third year in his/her present position. Each of the three areas on the accompanying nomination document must be addressed individually.

Nominations must be accompanied by three (3) letters of recommendation by any persons who are qualified to judge the professional performance of the candidate. Either the nomination or one of the three letters of recommendation must be from the building principal. Incomplete nominations will not be considered.

Finalists will be asked to write a one to two page reflective essay about his/her beliefs, motivations and/or experiences.

Nomination forms and selection criteria are available at <http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/ExemplaryEducatorApp07-08.pdf>.

*For additional information, please contact Dennis Carrithers (203-250-1111, x. 3920 or [dcarrithers@casciac.org](mailto:dcarrithers@casciac.org)).*

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.”

-- John Wesley

### Andre Hauser, *continued from page 1*

purposeful leadership and uncompromising dedication to his students and school community.

A gifted instructional leader, Andre keeps careful watch for new research and best practices to present to and share with his staff. His commitment to continued professional growth has set a powerful example for his teachers and has had a positive influence on instruction. Says Superintendent Susan Vicaro, "Andre is remarkably skilled in coaching teachers and staff to improve their instruction, behavior management and interpersonal skills so as to better interact with students and help them improve their learning." Adds Dr. Wysowski, "Andre's strength is his understanding of the dynamics of classroom teaching. He has improved education at Coginchaug by undertaking insightful work with staff members who have needed help."

Andre leads by example, always exhibiting the characteristics of respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness and courage that comprise the "Core Ethical Values" established by Regional School District #13. He is credited with building a cohesive school community which is responsive to the educational needs of all of its students. Since joining the Coginchaug staff, he has introduced several programs designed to create a nurturing, safe community where each member feels valued. Under Andre's leadership, CRHS staff have been introduced to the *Capturing Kids Hearts* program which builds positive, affirming relationships between teachers and students.

Highly visible and engaged, Andre is a constant presence in the cafeteria, in the corridors, and in the classrooms. The Reverend Dr. Elven Riggles, Jr., a leader in the Durham community and a former CRHS parent, calls Andre a "vital part of the character and complexion that makes our school district a marvel of education and a comfortable home for students and their families," says Rev. Riggles.

A self-described "data nerd," Hauser developed a data management system for student discipline that has led to a significant decrease in CRHS's expulsion/suspension rate. Furthermore, he worked with staff to compile, study and analyze data on at-risks students as a means to monitor their academic progress and, ultimately, help them feel more "connected" to the school.

Andre has been a prominent instructor and leader not only at the high school, but within the district as a whole. In addition to serving on the district's Strategic Plan 5-Year Renewal Committee, he recently oversaw the revision of the district's Crisis Response Manual which outlines emergency policies and procedures that will be implemented in all six of the district's schools.

Andre 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. Andre, 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.

## WORKSHOPS HELP SCHOOLS WITH NEAS&C ACCREDITATION PROCESS

On November 26th and 27th, CAS sponsored a two-day seminar designed to help schools in preparing for NEAS&C accreditation. Fifty-two participants from nine schools throughout the state received practical guidance on meeting NEAS&C standards from Dr. Scott Brown of LEARN and CAS Assistant Executive Director Dennis Carrithers. Both are experienced visiting committee chairs who work with the full cooperation and support of NEAS&C to further the school improvement goals of accreditation. The seminar focused on strategies for building a mission-driven school and provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the revised NEASC standards and the three phases of the evaluation process. Teams were given instruction on the implementation of rubrics and had the opportunity to engage in guided work to facilitate planning in their schools.



CAS Assistant Executive Director Dennis Carrithers (above) helps schools understand and prepare for the accreditation process.





## A Principal's Message

by John Dodig,  
Staples High School,  
Westport

Starting anew in January is part of the culture we have developed over time in America. We have created the idea that a new year brings the potential for new or modified behavior. We will go to the gym and lose weight. We will spend more time with our children. We will tell our spouse out loud that we love her/him. We will get our financial house in order. We won't use our credit card so often. Although studies show that these resolutions rarely work, there is no harm in trying and sometimes we succeed.

As we begin a new year and move toward ending the first semester, I suggest that you try starting something new each night or once a week at the dinner table. Make a list of questions you always wanted to but were afraid to ask your son/daughter. Here are some examples of questions that I think would be great to ask:

- Do you like to learn or is school simply a vehicle to get you into a good college?
- Tell me more about your friends. What are they like as people?
- Are you happy?
- What do you enjoy most at school?
- Do you like to read?
- If you could change one thing about your day what would it be?
- What is your favorite movie? Why?
- If we weren't available, is there someone you could turn to in a crisis?
- Do you know that we love you for who you are and not for what you accomplish?
- What are you passionate about?
- If money were not an issue, what would you really love to be as an adult?
- Is it really possible for you to promise that you will NEVER drive after having had something to drink or get in a car with a driver who has been drinking ?
- Are you comfortable/secure/happy with yourself at this point in your life?

There are so many more questions I could suggest that seem obvious but, in my experience, rarely get asked either because they may elicit a response we don't want to hear or just make us feel uncomfortable. I truly believe almost every parent has asked these questions privately in our minds or perhaps shared them with a spouse. They are difficult to ask our kids. Getting our children to respond is even more difficult. Some of these questions can be answered in one word or a grunt. In that case, you would have to ask a follow-up question: "Do you like to read?" "Yup." "What have you read lately that you really enjoyed?" "The Odyssey." "Why did you like it?" "Tell me something that you learned from the reading." "Run up and get the book

and show me some of the passages that caused you to think."

Please understand that some of our ordinary, popular new year's resolutions are still worth making year after year. I'm still going to the gym five years after I made my resolution to get in shape and lose weight. I am simply asking you to take this resolution idea a step further into territory that may seem dangerous but, in the end, will pay huge dividends. Knowing more about what your child is really thinking can be startling, but worth the effort. If you decide to try it this year, maybe this resolution is one that will continue for a lifetime.

Have a great new year!

### The Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy

The Michael H. Abelon Building  
857 Forbes Street  
East Hartford, CT 06118



December 12, 2007

Dave Maloney  
Connecticut Association of Schools  
30 Realty Drive  
Cheshire, CT 06410

Dear Dave,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with our staff to present information on student advisories. As we discussed, CIBA is in the process of establishing an advisory program for the upcoming school year. Your presentation helped us to focus on how to approach this process, and as a result we are well on the way to using advisories to make our students feel more connected to our school and more committed to our mission of producing highly successful students.

I have to tell you that, last week at our staff meeting, as we continued the discussion of advisories, several references were made by teachers to your presentation and the information you provided for us. Clearly, you informed and inspired us to move forward with this endeavor, which actually has been something the staff has wanted to do for years.

Again, thanks for your help. It was great to see you, and it certainly seems that your new venue has not dampened your spirit and enthusiasm for helping Connecticut's students. I look forward to working with you on other endeavors through CAS.

Sincerely,

Art Arpin

cc: Mike Savage, Executive Director, CAS

## middle school news

### MIDDLE LEVEL EMERGING FROM OBSCURITY

By: Earle G. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

Readers of this column over the last eight years are probably familiar with this writer's occasional rants about the anonymity of middle level education in relation to its better known (better publicized) "siblings", elementary and high school education. One has had to look long and hard to even find mention of middle level education at the United States Department of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education. The middle grades are alternately folded into elementary education (K-8) or secondary education (7-12). Add to this the confusing array of grade levels that are considered middle level in Connecticut (twenty-four different grade configurations at last count), and overlapping teacher certifications that virtually ensure a dearth of middle level teacher preparation programs, it is quite understandable that the middle has been misunderstood and mismanaged.

Now the good news; there are encouraging signs that the middle level is emerging from obscurity in Washington and with one of the premier national principals' associations, the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Furthermore, Commissioner Mark McQuillan is committed to redesigning secondary school education in Connecticut and has repeatedly stated that middle level education is part of this effort.

On June 26, 2007 U.S. Representative Grijalva of Arizona brought forth legislation called "The Middle Schools Improvement Fund" (H.R. 3406), designed to help the neediest middle schools in the country. This first ever middle level initiative to be tied to the Elementary and Education Act provides both federal funding and the flexibility to implement strategies that specifically address the needs of each school.

Following on the heels of this legislation was the introduction of "Success in the Middle" by Senator Barack Obama. This senate bill (S. 2227) is almost identical to the house bill. In his introduction to the legislation, Senator Obama stated, "For far too long, our educational system has overlooked our nations' middle schools and failed to provide them the resources they need for our kids to succeed. The middle school experience is vital to success in high school and college, and the lack of attention to middle school on the federal level is reflected in the rising high school dropout rate... If our country wants to remain competitive in math and science on the global level, we must break down any barriers that are preventing our kids from getting the world-class education they deserve."

NASSP has also been busy promoting middle level education. Among other initiatives was its unveiling of "Breaking Ranks in the Middle" in 2006 and the subsequent training sessions to help middle school leaders engage in systemic reform to improve student performance. Modeled after the high school publication, "Breaking Ranks II," this reform model provides a seamless opportunity for middle grades and high school educators to effect change over many grade levels. Additionally, NASSP has joined forces with the National Middle Level Association and the Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform to form the Middle Grades Coalition on No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This coalition is promoting recommendations for NCLB reauthorization based on Senator Obama's senate bill. Finally, NASSP has secured the services of one of the nation's top middle level educators, Patti Kinney, to head its National Center for Middle Level Leadership. An experienced middle level principal, Kinney was the 2002 Oregon Principal of the Year, the 2003 MetLife/NASSP Middle Level Principal of the Year and the 2005-2006 National Middle School Association's president. She not only brings credibility to the position, but a wealth of knowledge and a gift for inspiring and teaching school leaders.

On the regional front, The New England League of Middle Schools is preparing for the third annual New England Middle Level Symposium

designed to improve middle level education in the six state region. The purpose is based on the assumption that working together middle level educators and state policy makers can create policy to improve learning for young adolescents across New England. The symposium will take place in New Hampshire on February 12th and 13th.

This event is in collaboration with the National Middle Level Association, New England League of Middle Schools, Connecticut Association of Schools, Maine Association for Middle Level Educators, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Middle Level Educators, New Hampshire Association for Middle Level Education, Rhode Island Middle Level Educators, and the Vermont Association of Middle Level Education.

While middle level educators can take heart from the encouraging signs in Washington, New England and Connecticut, there is no room for complacency. Middle level educators must "seize the moment," and be advocates for what is best for early adolescents. You are urged to consider some personal initiatives among your New Year's resolutions. Some suggestions are:

- Write an advocacy article for your school newsletter;
- Send an op-ed piece to your local newspaper;
- Present a middle level awareness program to the local board of education;
- Log on to the NASSP website, click of the "Principal's Legislation Action Center" and co-sponsor "Success in the Middle" legislation.
- Plan to attend one of Commissioner Mark McQuillan's presentations and "listening sessions" on "The Case for Secondary School Redesign;"
- Publicize your successes.

The opportunity to put middle level education firmly on the map in Connecticut, the region and the nation is here, and the time is now. Take advantage of it.

## SAVE THE DATE!

### *The Seventh Annual* MIDDLE SCHOOL ARTS CONFERENCE

**Tuesday, May 20, 2008**

University of Hartford's Art School  
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



This hands-on workshop will:

- ★ Give statewide visibility to the fine arts and promote the arts among middle school students;
- ★ Provide opportunities for art students from diverse backgrounds to work together;
- ★ Offer middle school art students a high caliber artistic challenge; and,
- ★ Give art teachers an opportunity to create their own work.

## SAVE THE DATE!



elementary school news

**FIFTEENTH ANNUAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES**

By Lou Pear, Assistant Executive Director

The New Year welcomed two very informative and exciting leadership conferences for over 500 elementary school students from around the state. These conferences took place at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and at the Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury on January 3rd and January 10th respectfully. This year as in previous years students were active participants in a variety of activities with the focus on three themes; Productive Thinking, Problem Solving and Communication Skills. Our presenters were volunteer teachers and principals from various Connecticut schools and a distinguished group of high school leaders from Fermi, Masuk, Manchester, East Hartford, Holy Cross, Canton and Plainville High Schools. A special thank you goes out to these leaders who provided our students with positive role models so they can be the next generation of exemplary leaders in their schools and communities.

In addition to a full day of very meaningful workshops for our students, over 150 parents were treated to a presentation on how to support their child's interest in being a leader. These presentations

were led by Michele Femc-Bagwell, Coordinator for the University of Connecticut's Administrator Leadership Program and Mallory Bagwell, Educational Consultant For National and International Education Programs. Parents were treated to very informative presentations and left with a greater sense of enthusiasm to support the interests of their children.

This year also included a round table forum where adult school leaders met to share successful school projects and leadership responsibilities. Our leadership committee plans to develop a leadership booklet and distribute it to all schools in attendance.

Rounding out these leadership workshops Mallory Bagwell, who is also a mime performing artist, entertained all in attendance and then explained how he used leadership attributes to encourage students to be active participants in his presentation and beyond.

CAS is very appreciative of the planning staff and committee members have put into this project and wish them a Happy and Healthy New Year!



## ...more elementary school news

### Amy Clarke, continued from page 1

Assistant principal of two urban schools where minorities comprise ninety-seven percent of the student population, Amy has succeeded in boosting the academic achievement of a diverse and challenging student body while at the same time enhancing the social and cultural climate of the school. Amy was nominated for the Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year award by Superintendent Dr. Reginald Mayo, who calls her a "powerful advocate and voice for quality urban education." During her tenure as assistant principal, students at both Katherine Brennan and Clarence Rogers have made significant gains on district, state and national literacy tests.

Fifth grade teacher Jennifer Olson describes Amy as a "highly motivated, collaborative leader" and attributes Amy's successes to her inherent belief in every student's capacity to achieve excellence. Amy displays a deep love of and respect for all of her students, even the most challenging ones. "Ms. Clarke truly believes – and instills in the faculty – that all students can attain high levels of achievement," says Olson.

Celeste Davis, principal of Katherine Brennan and Clarence Rogers, praises Amy's ability to be both a building manager and instructional leader. While skillfully handling the tasks of student discipline and staff development, Amy still finds time to implement new school improvement initiatives, interact with students, assist staff in reviewing and revising curricula, and create a professional climate where there is a clear focus on activities that enhance the learning process. Says Davis, "Amy does an excellent job in balancing her various roles, while never losing sight of the reason we are all working together, student achievement."

Amy has excelled at making personal connections with all members of the school community - students, teachers, and parents alike. Says Dr. Mayo, "Ms. Clarke connects easily with parents, children and staff members as she involves them in achieving goals that embrace the entire school community." According to Dr. Maravene Taylor Roscow and Maryann Ullmann, professors at Southern Connecticut State University where Amy served as an adjunct faculty member, "Amy creates a respectful and open school environment that encourages growth in all members of the school community." And she shares a close bond with her students, knowing every student by name and making each one feel special and important. Says Olson, "Amy has developed a rapport with students because she takes the time to hold meaningful conversations with even the youngest of our children."

As a former special education teacher, Amy has made significant inroads in working with special needs students. In 2004, she was honored locally with a TAPS (Teachers, Administrators, Support Staff) award for her efforts to implement models of inclusive education.

Amy Clarke's efforts at both Clarence Rogers and Katherine Brennan prove that, despite the obstacles of poverty, limited English proficiency and student mobility, progress can be made in improving student learning in low income urban schools.

## ciac news

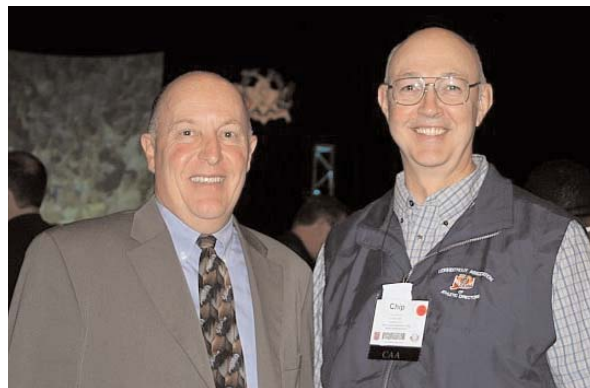
### AMITY HIGH'S PAUL MENGOLD HONORED BY NIAAA

Paul Mengold, athletic director of Amity Regional High School in Woodbridge, was the recipient of the prestigious National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Distinguished Service Award. The award was presented at the NIAAA's 38th annual conference held in Nashville, TN, last month.

Paul has devoted more than 30 years to high school athletics at the local, state and national levels.

Within his school district, Paul expanded the athletic program offerings from 35 to 78 teams and implemented a full-time staff athletic trainer position. In 1994, he was a founding member of the Southern Connecticut Conference, and subsequently became secretary in 1995-96 and president in 2004-05. He has been committee chairperson in the sports of boys basketball, boys and girls cross country, and boys volleyball, and tournament site director in girls basketball, wrestling and boys volleyball.

At the state level, Paul has had a significant presence in the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). He has been the site director for numerous state tournaments, including boys and girls basketball and soccer, field hockey and baseball. He formerly was a consultant to the boys bas-



Paul Mengold (l) and Chip Dorwin at the 38th Annual National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics.

ketball and boys cross country committees, and currently is a consultant to the CIAC Board of Control.

For the past 23 years, Paul has been a member of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) and served as its president from 2002 to 2004. He currently is chairman of the New Athletic Directors Mentor Program as well as the CAA test coordinator. In 1998, he received the CAAD Distinguished Service Award.

A 23-year NIAAA member, Paul has served on the Awards Committee, the second Strategic Planning Committee and the Membership/Services Committee. He has attended 17 national conference and has been a workshop speaker or moderator on three occasions.

*Reprinted from NIAAA Interscholastic Athletic Administration, Winter 2007*

### Georgia's Athletic Director Is a Bulldog on Attendance

Contrary to what many people believe, Division 1 and II student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than the general student population (62% to 60% and 54% to 46% respectively), according to the latest government figures. NCAA President Myles Brand was ecstatic. "It's very heartening," he told *The Dallas Morning News*. "In the athletic culture, the idea of academic performance is taking hold." Georgia's Athletic Director Damon Evans, however, was fuming. Among all Division 1-A football programs, Georgia's graduation rate (42%) was third from last, so Evans implemented a simple new policy: Miss class time, miss court time. An unexcused third absence from class cost a player 10% of his season. Any miss thereafter was an additional 10%. "We're not asking them to do anything out of the ordinary," Evans told Foxsports.com. "Just go to class." Today the team is rolling at 8-3 and, more important, missed classes and tutorial appointments have decreased by nearly 95%. All 13 of its players are on track to graduate and nine are ahead of schedule. Evans is less concerned about his team's win-loss record than his players' academic success. "I don't want to sacrifice education just to win games," Evans said.

*(Source: CC! Sports e-Newsletter, Jan. 2008)*

... more ciac news

**BOTTOM TEN MOMENTS IN SPORTS, 2007**

*The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) annually releases the "Bottom 10" list of the worst behavior in sports from pee-wees to pros to stimulate discussion among parents, coaches, players and educators. Here is this year's list.*

10. Michael Vick, a marquee NFL star whose jersey is worn by thousands of children, pleads guilty to his role in a dogfighting operation that resulted in cruelty and death to many dogs.
9. Six hockey players and two coaches are suspended following a brawl between two teams of eight-year-olds in Guelph, Ontario.
8. A Chicago-area man is caught on tape hurling his son's wrestling opponent off the mat.
7. An Allentown, PA-area middle school lacrosse coach is dismissed after pleading guilty to hitting a 13-year-old opponent in the face in the post-game handshake line.
6. NBA referee Tim Donaghy pleads guilty to felony gambling charges and admits he gambled on games in which he officiated.
5. Two Long Island brothers, apparently enraged over the benching of their son and nephew for cursing, receive a cell-phone call from the disgruntled boy, arrive at his game and eventually are arrested for allegedly beating the team's coach in front of the coach's son and the other 11-year-olds on the team.
4. Lincoln, NE police issue a ticket to a woman for leaving her daughter alongside Interstate 80 because of her unsatisfactory performance in a soccer game.
3. Northern Colorado University punter Mitch Cozad is convicted of attempted murder for knifing the punter ahead of him on the depth chart in a bid for playing time.
2. An Orlando-area man pleads guilty to charges from 2004 that he supplied his then-14-year-old son with steroids and human growth hormones to improve his speedskating results.
1. Release of the Mitchell Report on use of performance-enhancing drugs in Major League Baseball, implicating such heroes of youth athletes as Roger Clemens, Miguel Tejada and Andy Pettitte.

**FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...  
My Passion Has Been Validated**

I have been passionate about the importance of high school sports for most of my life. I have expressed that passion on many fronts, in many speeches and in most of my writings. But not until last night did I truly experience the importance of what I have been feeling and saying these many years. High school athletic experiences can and do change lives in significant ways.

While attending the Litchfield Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, I had the opportunity to witness Tom O'Dell, a former student-athlete of mine who excelled in baseball, receive his award. I remember him well, growing up in a family of eight very athletic siblings with very caring and supportive parents. What I didn't know is that this young man is suffering from throat cancer and is presently undergoing radiation and chemotherapy treatments in the effort to beat this dreaded disease. He spoke softly with a bottle of water to his left and his teenage son to his right. The water was there to lubricate his sore and tender throat; his son was there to finish his speech for him if his voice became too weak to be heard. It's what he said that evening that I will never forget. His words validated, in three minutes, why I have been so passionate about what I do and have done for my career. After the ceremonies, I asked him for his speech. I wanted to let my audience know what he had to say. I wanted others to understand, as I do, that it is important that we do what we can to advocate for the advancement of quality high school athletic programs in our schools. I know that his words, without his presence, pale in comparison to what I experienced. However, they are his personal, heartfelt words and need to be heard by as many as possible. His message was simple. He believes it is because of the support of his family and the lessons he learned through athletics that he is able to fight and win his personal battle with cancer. This is what he had to say, in part: "I would like to start by thanking the Litchfield Sports Booster Club for this tremendous honor of voting me into the Litchfield Athletic Hall of Fame. I will forever remember the day I received the news. I was recently diagnosed with throat cancer and had gone through a rather painful and

difficult radiation treatment. It was a very low point in my treatment, feeling pretty discouraged when my wife came running up the stairs with the notification letter in her hands.



You will never know how much this boosted my spirits and turned just an awful day into a wonderful one. For that, I will always be grateful. Athletics have always played a major role in my life from the time I was a little kid. I remember my father, who was a sports fanatic, emphasize the importance of sports and the values that athletes must have to be successful. He probably attended every ball game my brothers and I played in, not just because he enjoyed the games but to make sure the values he and my coaches were preaching in their lectures were being followed by his sons..... I've always believed that sports help build strong character and values in people, ones you carry throughout your life. Values like perseverance, dedication, commitment, not accepting failure, working hard to achieve something, and never giving up. For me, these values grew out of a closely knit family where playing sports was the norm, and from associating with a group of dedicated coaches, a few who are here today in my honor and for whom I have great respect. And I can honestly say that during my recent battle with cancer, I've drawn on those values to pull me through some tough times, I firmly believe my ultimate victory over this illness will have a lot to do with the values I learned as a high school athlete - handling adversity, the importance of staying physically healthy and strong, not giving up even when you feel overwhelmed, and focusing all your energy on the task at hand. Sports lessons are forever, and if the values taught are positive ones, as they were in my case, their impact can be life altering." Tom is facing the biggest game of his life. His determination to win the "big one" will make him a winner once again. I know that his many fans will be there to support him all the way.

- Michael H. Savage

## . . . more ciac news

### ONLINE ELIGIBILITY CENTER UPDATE FOR ADS

#### ■ Disqualification Notification

Remember that any time you have an athlete or coach disqualified from a game on any level, you are responsible for reporting it immediately (within 24 hours) to the CIAC and notifying your next opponent that the disqualified person will not be eligible to participate in your game against them. We have enhanced the disqualification form (available under the options for each sport in the eligibility center) to allow you to notify your next opponent at the same time you submit your report to us. Please use this system to submit the report immediately after you have a disqualification. Officials boards have also been reporting DQ's to us using an online system this year.

#### ■ Coaches' Data Entry

As you have been previously notified, there are new requirements regarding data entry for some winter sports. Gymnastics and indoor track now have weekly entry requirements - in gymnastics individual event results for competitors must be entered for each meet (so we can determine qualifiers for the new format open individual tournament), while in indoor track performances qualifying individuals for their state divisional meet must be entered by the Monday following the week in which they were attained. In order to help ease the workload on athletic directors and their secretaries we are allowing entry of the new gymnastics and indoor track data either via the eligibility center or using a coaches access code created by an AD. Earlier we opened up the wrestling weight control data system to allow for entry and retrieval of info

using a coaches' access code. We are working with the CAAD leadership on looking at other items that may be appropriate for submission in this manner.

#### ■ Changes to Reports and Data Links

1) The system for tracking coaches modules now allows for entry and reporting of modules 7-14.

2) Two updates have been made to the wrestling weigh-in form. It now sorts in weight order and now includes a column showing the lowest weight class for each wrestler for the week.

3) We have added a few new options for retrieving reports or developing links for your own websites:

- The listing of game workers and officials now allows you to filter by level in addition to sport.
- You can now create a listview schedule link that has a starting date of "current day" and a defined or open end date. This will be helpful if, for example, you want to have a winter sports calendar on your site that only shows upcoming events and not those in the past. Note the difference between this and the option you already had to create a schedule that only shows "today's" events.

4) Due to the large number of events some schools have on their miscellaneous events schedule, we are now allowing you to filter (by date range, event name and/or note) the events you retrieve for editing when making changes to that schedule or to add events to that schedule without having to retrieve those already on file to edit.



### INVESTORS IN CT YOUTH



- ★ AT&T ★
- ★ Baden Sports ★
- ★ Bearingstar™ Insurance ★
- ★ Big Y Supermarkets ★
- ★ Coca Cola ★
- ★ CT Lighting Centers ★
- ★ CT Sun ★
- ★ Dove Soap ★
- ★ Dick's Sporting Goods ★
- ★ eEsports ★
- ★ Grynn & Barrett Studios ★
- ★ Horace Mann ★
- ★ IGA / Bozzutos ★
- ★ Konica ★
- ★ Liberty Mutual ★
- ★ Macy's ★
- ★ Martin Screen Printing ★
- ★ McDonald's ★
- ★ NBC-30 ★
- ★ Nationwide Insurance ★
- ★ N.E. Fitness Distributors ★
- ★ Pfister Energy ★
- ★ PureTech Water ★
- ★ Rawlings ★
- ★ Spalding ★
- ★ Subway ★
- ★ Teachers' Insurance Plan ★
- ★ U.S. Army ★
- ★ U.S. Marine Corp ★
- ★ Waterbury Republican-American ★
- ★ Westfield Corporation ★
- ★ Wilson Sporting Goods ★