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- Association for Middle Level Education
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Federation of State High School Associations

**FALL/WINTER ISSUE - PUBLISHED JAN. 2014****DAWN HOCHSPRUNG:****Reflecting One Year Later**

By Regina Birdsell, Asst. Executive Director



**A**s we mark the one year anniversary of the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, we reflect on the impact that Dawn Hochsprung, the charismatic and passionate principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School, has had on us all. The underlying beauty of this story is who Dawn Hochsprung was and how she continues to inspire. She was a role model as a mother, grandmother, wife, educator, leader, and hero. Dawn was a dedicated leader who inspired her students to reach their fullest potential by instilling in them the importance of life-long learning. She was admired by her colleagues, students, and parents, particularly for her caring and nurturing nature. She often referred to her students as "her children" and wanted school to be a positive place and a safe haven.

When she first started her principalship at Sandy Hook Elementary, Dawn shared in an interview with her local paper, "I don't think you could find a more positive place to bring students to every day." Everything she did built on that premise. She exemplified a team spirit and personified the qualities of leadership. From dressing up as a book fairy and spinning in a poodle skirt to organizing book fairs and leading new

*continued on page 4***CAS NAMES 2014 ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR**

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce the winners of the 2014 *Assistant Principal of the Year Awards*. Congratulations to these outstanding administrators!



**BETH MESSLER**  
2014 Elementary School Assistant  
Principal of the Year



**ALBERT SACKEY**  
2014 Middle School Assistant  
Principal of the Year



**JOSEPH BLAKE**  
2014 High School Assistant  
Principal of the Year

**Elizabeth Messler**

Elizabeth (Beth) Messler, assistant principal of Coleytown Elementary School (CES) in Westport, has been selected as the 2014 *CAS Elementary School Assistant Principal of the Year*. Nominated for the award by Superintendent of Schools Elliott Landon, Messler was chosen by the selection committee for her purposeful instructional leadership and her uncompromising dedication to her students and school community. A warm, caring and reflective administrator with an unyielding professional focus, she has been a catalyst for change in teaching, learning, and assessment;

*continued on page 6***Albert Sackey**

Albert Sackey, assistant principal of Western Middle School (WMS) in Greenwich, has been named the 2014 *CAS Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year*. Described by WMS Principal Gordon Bernstein as "an organized, hard-working, committed visionary," Albert is a 13-year educator whose successes are founded on his passion for learning, his irrepressible optimism, his human decency and his deep love for children.

Reacting to the news of his award, Albert remarked, "I feel extremely humbled and blessed to be selected for

*continued on page 6***Joseph Blake**

Joseph Blake, assistant principal of Suffield High School (SHS), has been named the 2014 *CAS High School Assistant Principal of the Year*. Though an assistant principal at SHS for only two-and-a-half years, Joe's efforts and influence have dramatically shaped the culture and climate of the school and community. Nominated for the award by his principal, Donna Hayward, Joe is a leader without pretense or self-interest who is known for his equanimity, his unerring professionalism and his resolute commitment to all members of the SHS community. States Guidance

*continued on page 6***CAS-CIAC WELCOMES TWO NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

The central office staff is proud to announce the addition of two veteran school administrators! Tim Breslin, retired principal of Farmington High School, began overseeing the high school division in September; and, Dr. Steve Wysowski, who recently retired from Bristol Eastern High School, joined the CIAC executive staff on January 1st.

**Tim Breslin**

A long-time Connecticut principal and former superintendent, Tim is well known for his achievements in the area of

**Tim Breslin****Steve Wysowski***continued on page 4*

# 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:** We are off and running with the new teacher evaluation system. But our local teacher union president keeps coming up with new issues. First, she proposed that teachers have the right to have one's response to an evaluation included in the evaluation file. Then, she proposed that we hire a "neutral" person to adjudicate disputes. Now, she wants teachers to have advance notice of any classroom visit, even informal observations. I told her that we would not be making these changes and now she is threatening to file a grievance against me and the board. Can I tell her that teacher evaluation is none of her business?

- *Fearing Death by a Thousand Cuts*

**A. DEAR FEARING:** Well, even Legal Mailbag would concede that the teachers union and its president have a legitimate interest in the teacher evaluation system. However, the teachers union has a limited role in the process; and, it certainly may not validly file a grievance concerning the substantive provisions of the teacher evaluation plan. Under Public Act 13-245, responsibility for the oversight and future revision of teacher evaluation plans is conferred on the board of education and the professional development and evaluation committee (which by statute the board of education must appoint). Teacher evaluation plans are to be developed by mutual agreement between these two parties. The law now goes on to say that, should the parties not agree on a plan, they may adopt the model teacher evaluation and support plan adopted by the state board of education, again by mutual agreement. However, if the parties cannot mutually agree to adopt the model plan, then the board of education may adopt (or amend) the plan on its own, as long as the plan is consistent with the state guidelines for teacher evaluation and support plans.

The statutes provide a role for the teachers' union in two ways. First, in appointing members to the professional development and evaluation committee, boards of education are required to include "representatives" (note the plural) selected by the teachers' union. In addition, since 2004, teachers and their unions have had the right to file grievances over the alleged failure to follow the procedures of the teacher evaluation plan. This right to grieve such claims underscores the need to assure that the evaluation procedures are workable and that administrators follow such procedures.

**Q. DEAR MAILBAG:** One of my teachers is a bit of a dope. Over the years, I have received a number of complaints about things he says. Last year, for example, I had to talk with him twice about comments he has made to female students, such as telling one girl that she "looks hot," and telling another that her tight clothes are not flattering. But after talking to him when I received these complaints, I am sure that the teacher meant no harm and was simply trying to be friendly and helpful. This year, I received another complaint from a student. Interestingly, the teacher's comments were directed at another student, and the complainant reported that she heard the teacher tell the other student that she has "nice legs." I talked to the girl to whom the teacher made the comment, and she just laughed it off. Since the girl with the nice legs wasn't bothered, I am reluctant to make a big deal about this. Should I?

- *Just Wondering*

**A. DEAR WONDERING:** You should definitely talk to the teacher, and you should impose discipline if this dopey teacher has crossed the line again. We start with the premise that sexual harassment need not be intentional, and the teacher's state of mind is less important than the impact of his comments. Sexual harassment is defined, in part, as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of creating a hostile, offensive or intimidating school environment. You may and should look at the effect of the teacher's statements, not just that he did not intend to be a sexual harasser.

It is irrelevant that the object of the teacher's comments did not mind. First, given the teacher's role as authority figure, we generally do not ask whether students have consented to teacher conduct, such as consent to a search or consent to comments of a sexual nature. Students under the supervision of a teacher are presumed to be incapable of consent when the conduct is potentially invasive of their personal rights. Thus, a teacher can be guilty of sexually harassing a student even though that student enjoys the attention.

More generally, the issue is whether the statements or actions of a teacher have created a hostile, offensive or intimidating school environment. The classroom environment affects all students. Accordingly, students who are not themselves the target of a teacher's inappropriate comments have every right to complain. You should act promptly to investigate the allegation and to discipline the teacher if indeed he made the alleged comment.

**Q. DEAR MAILBAG:** The fence around the elementary school where I am principal has been broken for months, and with the tough budget times, I have waited in vain for the district maintenance crew to come fix it. The fence is an eyesore, and one parent even told me he thinks that it is dangerous. That seems a stretch, but it gave me an idea. What do you think about my writing the director of maintenance a scary memorandum about the broken fence and the risk that children will slip through a gap in the fence and get run over by a bus? I figure that such a memorandum will get his attention and that his crew will get over here pronto and fix my fence. Do you think that I should copy the superintendent on the memo?

- *Getting Results*

**A. DEAR GETTING:** I am quite sure that your memorandum will get their attention. But unless you are looking for a new job, it is not the kind of attention that you will want. Writing such a memorandum will likely blow up in your face and expose the district to liability. School districts are not insurance companies; and they are liable for injuries only when certain conditions are met. Specifically, school districts will be liable for damages if (1) there is a duty of care; (2) a school official breaches that duty by acting unreasonably; (3) that unreasonable action causes an injury; and (4) that injury is foreseeable. For example, if there is a broken step at the entrance to the school, it would be unreasonable not to take action to fix the step. Moreover, if a student or teacher slips on the broken step and is injured, one can well say that the broken step "caused" the injury, which was foreseeable.

The problem with the "CYA" memorandum (you know the term?) is that it exaggerates the danger for effect. You admit that it is a stretch to claim that the broken fence poses a danger. But by warning the director of maintenance in such dire terms, you have created a problem. A student who is somehow injured in connection with the fence could claim that the district is liable because school officials were aware of the danger the fence posed, but unreasonably exposed students to danger by choosing not to act. Once a student is injured and makes such a claim, good luck in persuading a jury after the fact that your memorandum was overdone and that the fence was not really that dangerous. Whenever you write memoranda like that, you must remember that your words can come back to haunt you and the district.



## ct news & notes

■ According to a new report from Connecticut Voices for Children, the number of students arrested in school in Connecticut has declined in recent years. Of particular note in the report is the finding that arrest rates varied widely between similar school districts and among schools in the same district, suggesting that much of this variation is driven by differences in school practices, not simply differences in the student population or socioeconomic factors.

[www.ctvoices.org/publications/arresting-development-student-arrests-connecticut](http://www.ctvoices.org/publications/arresting-development-student-arrests-connecticut)

■ According to data compiled by the Office of Higher Education, the total number of students attending Connecticut's public and private colleges was down this fall, following three years of slowing growth in enrollment. Statewide college enrollment this fall slipped by 897 students or 0.4% to 202,095 over last year's total, signaling a halt in the annual record highs that have occurred since 2001. The decrease was due mostly to fewer numbers of part-time students both among undergraduates (down 1.8%) and graduate students (down 3.4%). Full-time enrollment, in contrast, held steady, up 0.2% among undergraduates, and 2.2% among graduate students. Other findings include:

- Colleges enrolling record numbers of students were Post University (up 10.5%, nearly all in online enrollment of part-time undergraduates), Sacred Heart University (up 8.5%) Gateway Community College (up 210 to 7,976), the University of New Haven (up 204 to 6,351), the University of Saint Joseph (up 115 to 2,640), Quinnipiac University (up 189 to 8,803), Goodwin College (up 71 to 3,388) and Holy Apostles College and Seminary (up 13 to 385).
- Enrollment at the University of Connecticut rose 0.7% to 30,256, just shy of its peak of 30,525 reached in 2011.
- Enrollment at the four state universities that comprise the ConnSCU system was down 2.2% to 34,062 while enrollment at the state's community colleges fell 2.1% to 56,977, reflecting losses in both full- and part-time enrollment.

<http://www.ctohe.org/News/pdfs/2013/2013FallCollegeEnrollment.pdf>

■ The number of children living in poverty in Connecticut continues to remain stubbornly high, increasing 17% since 2008. Data released by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey showed that more than one in seven Connecticut children lived in poverty in 2012. Last year, 10.7%, 372,000 state residents, had incomes less than the federal poverty level, which is defined as \$23,283 for a two-parent household with two children. In 2002, the rate was 7.5% of Connecticut residents. Other findings include:

- For children under 18, 14.8% of them, 117,000, live in households under the poverty level, an increase from 12.6% in 2008.
- Connecticut is better off than the country as a whole on poverty, with 15.9% of residents living in poverty, while that jumps to 22.6% for all children under 18.
- Poverty in Connecticut continues to be concentrated in the cities with a high of 38% in Hartford followed by 26.1% in New Haven and 25.2% in Bridgeport, although all the figures are only estimates with margins of errors of plus or minus 3% to 4%, according to the census figures.

(Source: *New Haven Register*, "Report shows 17 percent increase in Connecticut children below poverty level," September 19, 2013)

## DISTINGUISHED FRIEND OF EDUCATION AWARDS

Is there an extraordinary individual who has given his/her time, energy or expertise to your school? Has a local business provided services or resources which have resulted in positive experiences for your students? If so, please consider submitting a nomination for the CAS *Distinguished Friend of Education Awards*.

These awards, established in 1983, honor a person and an organization or corporation for outstanding service to education in Connecticut (for specific award criteria, visit <http://cas.casciac.org/?p=2314>).

If you wish to nominate an individual or an organization/corporation for these prestigious awards, please complete the one-page nomination form on-line at [www.casciac.org/nominate\\_dfe.shtml](http://www.casciac.org/nominate_dfe.shtml) by January 30, 2014.

# SAVE THE DATES

## Volunteer Recognition Banquet

March 11, 2014 • 5:00 p.m. • Aqua Turf Club

*Say "thank you" to the volunteers who make your school a special place*

Every school in Connecticut is blessed with parents and other volunteers who contribute to the success of the school. This program is intended to give public recognition to those who have made major contributions to your school. Contributions may include volunteering, tutoring, organizing events, serving as PTO/PTA officers, coaching teams, supporting fundraising, etc. For more information, visit:

<http://cas.casciac.org/?p=2285>



## High School Arts Banquet

April 8, 2014 • 5:30 p.m. • Aqua Turf Club

The annual high school arts recognition banquet is designed to spotlight seniors who excel in either the performing or visual arts. Each CAS member high school is invited to honor two grade twelve students. For more information, visit: <http://cas.casciac.org/?p=2290>



**Dawn Hochsprung, continued from page 1**  
curriculum incentives, she cultivated the school's positive spirit.

Dawn maintained an active Twitter account where she updated followers with news about the school. Her last Tweet expressed her excitement about an upcoming book fair: "Setting up for the Sandy Hook nonfiction book preview for staff...Common Core, here we come!"

Following in Dawn's footsteps, let us all continue to keep our communities aware of all the amazing daily activities in our schools.

The simple, yet impactful, words she lived by continue to resonate in school halls, on sweat-shirts, wristbands, and even coffee mugs: "Be nice to each other; it's really all that matters." As we implement programs and activities to foster positive relationships in our schools, let these words and actions guide us.

When you are looking for inspiration, just think to yourself: "What would Dawn do?" The example she set continues to inspire. Her passion for education and learning lives on through the scholarships set up in her name. Let us remember and emulate how she lived her life, not how it ended.

*Reprinted from the NAESP "Communicator"  
December 2013 / Volume 37, Issue 4*



Left to right: Gail Connelly, NAESP Executive Director, NAESP; Jill Flanders, NAESP Zone 1 Director; Nancy Meador, NAESP President; Regina Birdsell, CAS Assistant Executive Director; Mark Terry, NAESP Past-President; John Stimmel, NAESP Zone 2 Director; Ernie Mannino, NAESP Deputy Executive Director & CEO NAESP Foundation

At the National Association of Elementary School Principals annual conference in July, Dawn Hochsprung was honored posthumously with the prestigious NAESP Distinguished Service Award. This award is the highest given by NAESP. Past recipients have included: Ernest L. Boyer, Hilary Rodham Clinton, Barbara Pierce Bush, Dr. Jonas Salk, The Honorable Richard W. Riley, Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, and Senator Edward

M. Kennedy. Regina Birdsell, CAS Assistant Executive Director accepted the award on behalf of Dawn's family. In her acceptance remarks, Regina called on principals to remember Dawn's service and dedication. "Dawn's last act spoke volumes about her as a principal," she said. "Let us keep Dawn in our thoughts. Let the following question guide us in doing the right thing: 'What would Dawn do?'"

## **New Central Office Staff Members, continued from page 1**

leadership development.

Tim taught English for six years in Baltimore County, Maryland. He then served as assistant principal in Mamaroneck High School in New York and Chapel Hill High School in North Carolina. In addition to his work as principal of Farmington High School, Tim was principal of Gettysburg High School in Pennsylvania and Newtown and Litchfield High Schools in Connecticut. He also served as superintendent for Regional School District #6 in Litchfield.

Tim was a long-time member of the Principals' Center Board of Control and chair of the Career Principals Committee. He was named Connecticut's high school principal of the year in 2009 and was awarded a CAS Letter of Commendation in 2010.

Tim has settled into his duties as assistant executive director and has been working closely with the High School Board of Control to assess the needs and interests of the high school membership and to align its programs accordingly.

### **Steve Wysowski**

Steve began his career in education as a teacher and coach, first at St. Paul High School in Bristol and subsequently at Canton Jr./Sr. High School. After successive stints as an assistant principal and an athletic director at Watertown High School and Canton, respectively, Steve began a long and successful administrative career at Coginchaug Regional High School in Durham. He served as principal there for ten years before assuming the principalship of Bristol Eastern High School, the position from which he retired last month. A strong educational leader, a former athlete and an academician, Steve has been an adjunct professor at the University of New Haven and

Albertus Magnus College and has been active in numerous professional organizations. His contributions to CAS-CIAC during his years as a school administrator were prodigious and far-reaching, earning him the coveted CAS Citation in 2011. In his roles as both a CIAC member and a building principal, he was a true champion of high school athletics, enthusiastically and consistently promoting the important role that sports play in the development of our youth. Steve received his baccalaureate degree from Marist College, his masters from Wesleyan University, his sixth year degree from Central CT State University and his doctorate from Nova Southeastern University.

Steve will work side-by-side with CIAC Associate Executive Director Paul Hoey and will ultimately come on board full-time to replace Paul upon his retirement.



## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP NAMED AFTER BELOVED UCAPP PROFESSOR

As Earle Bidwell '71 sees it, his job as a University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP) clinical supervisor is to lead by example and help students working to become a principal, vice principal, department head or other school administrator see their strengths and "bring out all they have to offer."

This kind of dedication and willingness to always go above and beyond deserve more than a thank-you card or plaque, said former UCAPP student Hannah Ruede, which is why she and the 12 other UCAPP East 21 cohort members who graduated in May established the Earle G Bidwell Educational Leadership Scholarship.

The scholarship provides \$500 to a graduate student enrolled in one of the Neag School of Education's Educational Leadership programs who show both academic achievement and financial need. Priority is given to students enrolled in the rigorous, two-year UCAPP program that provides students with not just classroom and curriculum laboratory learning, but 90-hours-per-semester internships with a mentor administrator.

Like Ruede, more than 80 percent of those who've completed UCAPP give it an "A" for the professional learning, growth, management skills, collaboration tools and intellectual introspection they received from instructors like Bidwell.

"His titles are 'supervisor' and 'advisor,' but he provides students with so much more than what those titles define. He's supportive, compassionate, there whenever you need him, and brings a wealth of information and experience," said Ruede, an alternative education and science teacher at Windsor High School who is still deciding how she wants to use the Sixth-Year Diploma and Connecticut State Certification as Intermediate Administrators (CT-092) she achieved from her UCAPP experience.

"Earle is so committed to education and to helping educators discover their strengths and talents," Ruede continued. "He was always telling us, 'It's OK if you try something new and fail. But if you don't try new things, you're never going to grow.' He made each of us want to achieve our best; to never let him down."

Bidwell said he can't think of many things more rewarding than the work he does with UCAPP or as assistant executive director of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). Both jobs require him to use his close to 50 years in education to help current and emerging administrators inspire and lead, as well as to identify and provide needed supports and services.

"The ability to work with and influence administrators is such a privilege because it's such important work," said Bidwell, who started his career in 1964 as a music teacher. After receiving both his master's and Sixth-Year Diploma from UConn, he spent five years as a high school assistant principal and 19 years as a middle school principal. He's also a former CAS president.

News that the UCAPP Class of 2012 cohort had created the Earle G Bidwell Educational Leadership Scholarship left him speechless, he said.

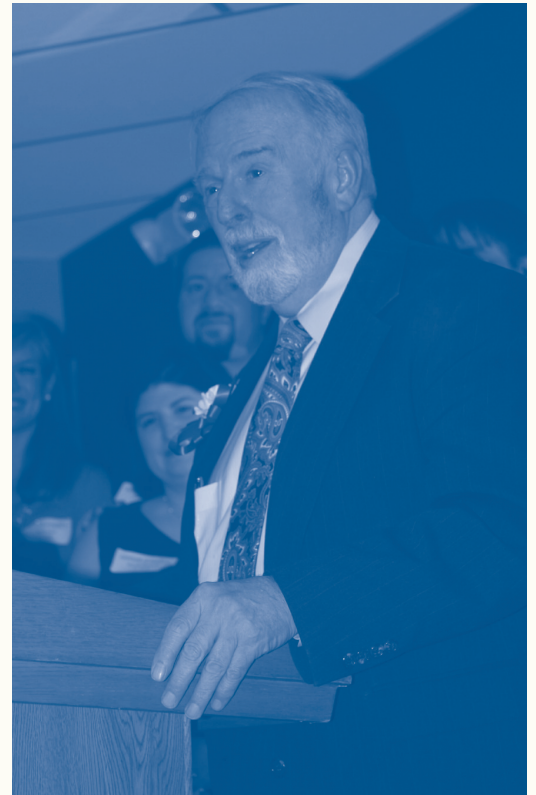
"Generally a person who's honored in this way is no longer living, so this is truly an honor," explained Bidwell, who's taught with UCAPP for eight years. "I get the chance to enjoy it and to see students benefitting from it because for many students enrolled in Neag Educational Leadership programs, the workload and finances can be a struggle. Most

work full time, as well as have family responsibilities. But truly, it's my privilege to work with them. In fact, I still work with many students from previous cohorts, doing everything I can to ensure they continue to grow, develop and succeed. I can't think of too many things more rewarding."

The first \$500 Earle G Bidwell Educational Leadership Scholarship was awarded this past April to current East 23 cohort member Jennifer Geragotelis. Ruede said the goal of the cohort who started the scholarship is to eventually increase the amount given, but, first, an additional \$3,000 to officially endow the scholarship needs to be raised. Fund-raisers organized by Ruede and her cohort helped raise the \$7,000 that currently sits in the Bidwell scholarship account, but for the scholarship to become permanently endowed, it needs to be at \$10,000.

"We're pretty confident we can make it happen and hopeful that others who have been positively affected by Earle and UCAPP will consider giving," Ruede added. "So much of what we learn from UCAPP are lessons that can't be learned in a book. They can only be learned from seasoned educators who, like Earle, tell it like it is, are tough when they need to be, and make you want to do your best. Earle emulates everything a teacher and administrator should be."

For more information on, including how to contribute to, the Earle G. Bidwell Educational Leadership Scholarship, contact Heather McDonald at [hmcDonald@foundation.uconn.edu](mailto:hmcDonald@foundation.uconn.edu) or (860) 486-4530.



*Press release provided by the Neag School of Education*

**Beth Messler, continued from page 1**

and her efforts have helped build an engaging, supportive and professional learning community where all students can achieve at high levels.

"It is an honor to be named Connecticut's 2014 Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year," said Beth upon learning of her award. "I am deeply thankful to all of the students, parents, teachers and administrative colleagues that I have worked with over the years in my district. I am inspired by the passion and dedication of those around me, and I look forward to continuing to grow as an educator."

Praised by Principal Janna Bell for her "enthusiasm, dedication, intelligence and professionalism," Messler 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 enthusiasm and generosity in sharing that knowledge with others. Beth's commitment to continued professional growth sets a powerful example for her staff and has a positive influence on instruction at CES. Says Bell, "Beth is truly a reflective practitioner and lifelong learner. She is always reading professional literature on leadership, curriculum and community building and sharing ideas of how to utilize her learning in practice. Beth has high expectations for her own practice and actively seeks feedback to improve her work at Coleytown. I cherish our lively debates and discussions as they help to strengthen our leadership team."

A tireless instructional leader, Beth serves as CES' Response to Intervention (RTI) and Curriculum Administrator. With an ever-present focus on teaching and learning, she has helped staff to use assessment data as a tool to accelerate student learning. She instituted data teams which meet regularly to monitor the progress of individual students - as well as the school as a whole - so that curriculum and instruction can be tailored to address weaknesses and capitalize on strengths. Her skilled use of data-driven decision making has helped ensure that all CES stakeholders are consistently engaged in efforts and activities that ultimately lead to increased student achievement. Beth has been a prominent leader and educational pioneer not only at CES but within the district as a whole. She serves on several district committees and helped spearhead the successful district-wide implementation of new reading and writing units. She was also a key member of the committee which lobbied for and led the district's transition to full-day kindergarten this school year. Remarks Cynthia Gilchrest, director of elementary education,

*continued on page 11*

**Albert Sackey, continued from page 1**

this prestigious award given the amazing and talented administrators in the state of Connecticut. I am thankful to God for this opportunity and fortunate to work in a district such as Greenwich that has some of the hardest working, skillful and incredibly dedicated administrators, staff and students as well as supportive parents and community. I share this recognition with my wife Anna, our three wonderful children, Konotey, Korkor and Lartiokor, all my students, staff, parents and colleagues."

Albert is a valued source of guidance and professional support for his teachers, consistently promoting a culture of ongoing learning, cooperation and excellence. States Bernstein, "Al understands that his job is to help teachers improve their practice. While demanding of their best efforts, he is unconditionally supportive." Jarret Pepe, also a fellow assistant principal at WMS, adds, "In today's educational setting, clarity is a tough objective to maintain. Mr. Sackey has provided focus to the staff at WMS through the major changes that have occurred in education over the past years. Mr. Sackey has become the anchor of the building, the person whom everyone feels comfortable approaching because not only does he validate concerns, he solves problems."

Always looking to develop future leaders, Albert embraces the premise that an important function of leadership is to produce more leaders. He is attuned to the demands of the profession and expertly identifies and encourages staff with strong leadership potential. He has mentored several aspiring administrators, providing study sessions for their 092 exams, bringing them to professional development events, and helping them navigate the certification process.

A lively and purposeful leader, Albert is committed to providing staff with the support and resources needed to ensure that all students are educated in classrooms where learning is fun and where their individual and collective potential is maximized. With a goal to always be better tomorrow than he is today, he engages daily in an industrious pursuit of new learning opportunities for himself, for his staff and for his students. In the words of 8th grade student Rene Jameson, "Mr. Sackey is a role model to all in the Western community and every year continues to enlighten the students, inspire the teachers and create a cheerful climate at school. Additionally, Mr. Sackey is a passionate vice principal determined to make WMS the best and safest learning facility it can be."

*continued on page 8*

**Joe Blake, continued from page 1**

Department Chair Ned Sullivan, "Sometimes I forget that Joe has only been here for a few years. His easy-going manner and poise under pressure have impressed me from the start, but his natural people skills - the ability to poke fun at himself and deflect credit for a job well done onto others - is where he really stands out." Joe leads by example, always exhibiting the characteristics of integrity, respect, and kindness that he works to instill in his students on a daily basis. "Joe is honest and ethical, maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct at all times," says Hayward.

Joe is a quietly powerful administrator, as ever ready to learn and listen as to guide and instruct. He empowers his staff to be partners in the decision-making process and works side-by-side with them to develop and implement a vision for improved educational opportunities. He possesses both a strong mind and a compassionate heart, delicately balancing a warm personality with a drive for academic excellence and an insistence on high standards. According to interim assistant principal Dr. Matthew Wlodarczyk, "Joe models personal excellence, collaborative leadership, high regard for curriculum, instruction and assessment, and strives to create a climate embedded with rigor as well as personalization."

Highly visible and wholly immersed in the lives of his students, Joe is a constant presence in the corridors, classrooms and cafeteria. He can also be found at most every school play, concert and sports event, using all available opportunities to interact with and build relationships with his students. Says Hayward, "Joe connects with kids and parents naturally, as his genuine concern for and commitment to students are visible and unwavering."

When handling discipline matters, Joe always works with students and their families to find a resolution that is remedial rather than punitive. He makes sure that every encounter with a student, even if it stems from an adverse incident, is an opportunity for new learning. Says Dr. Wlodarczyk, "Joe sees the need for consistent discipline with students, but keeps a strong focus on the reason for the discipline - the student's holistic education - and always stresses the learning opportunities in life." Adds SHS Senior Benjamin Gee, "Immediately upon meeting Mr. Blake I thought how comfortable he made me feel as he treated me with singular attention during our conversation, giving me all the respect that one would normally reserve for an adult rather than a young sophomore. This respect is extended not just to me, but to every student, regardless of the nature of his or her interaction." Since

*continued on page 11*



## CAS RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

by Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

The Connecticut Association of Schools' *Recognition of Excellence in Education* celebration was held at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington on November 19, 2013. Over 600 guests were in attendance to honor deserving schools, programs and individuals.

Wolcott's Alcott Elementary School and Windsor's Sage Park Middle School were recognized as the *CAS Elementary School of the Year* and the *CAS Middle School of the Year*, respectively (see related item page 7). Also recognized were the *CAS Outstanding*

*First Year Principals* and *Exemplary Educators* for 2013-2014 (see related items page 11 & 12).

Hena Daniels from Channel 3 WFSB Eyewitness News was the master of ceremonies; and Dr. Karissa Niehoff, CAS Executive Director, gave the welcome address. The culminating event of the evening was the presentation of the CAS Recognition of Excellence in Education Awards to teachers and staff from schools across the state. These individuals were selected for public recognition for the time

and talents they have shared and for the commitment to excellence they have demonstrated.

In her opening comments, Dr. Niehoff stated, "At CAS, we believe recognition of excellence is so important, not only to highlight outstanding individuals and school teams, but also to promote best practices and to encourage others to strive for excellence-to follow your example on their own path to excellence. So CAS is recognizing you, our honorees, not so much for being 'excellent

*continued on page 8*



L to r: CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff; WFSB's Hena Daniels, Exemplary Elementary Educator Alicia Schiavo; and Elementary Board Chair Karen Fitzsimmons



L to r: CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff; WFSB's Hena Daniels, Exemplary Middle Level Educator Robert Rose; and Elementary Board Chair Karen Fitzsimmons



L to r: CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff; WFSB's Hena Daniels, Exemplary High School Educator Joleen Pillar; and Elementary Board Chair Karen Fitzsimmons



L to r: CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff; WFSB's Hena Daniels, Outstanding First Year Elementary Principal Elsie Torres-Brown; and High School Board Chair Andre Hauser



L to r: CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff; WFSB's Hena Daniels, Outstanding First Year Middle School Principal Anthony Menard; and High School Board Chair Andre Hauser



L to r: CAS Executive Director Karissa Niehoff; WFSB's Hena Daniels, Outstanding First Year High School Principal Alan Strauss; and High School Board Chair Andre Hauser



## Recognition of Excellence, continued from page 7

people' and 'excellent schools' but more for being 'people of excellence' and 'schools of excellence.' Congratulations again, for all that you have already accomplished, and for the great work, the excellence, that you are continuing to inspire!"

The CAS Recognition of Excellence in Education celebration was made possible by the generosity of Horace Mann Insurance.



Alcott Elementary Principal Holly Wrenn proudly accepts the 2013 Elementary School of the Year Award banner.



Sage Park MS Principal Paul Cavaliere, Jr., proudly accepts the 2013 Middle School of the Year Award banner.

## Albert Sackey, continued from page 6

The hallmark of Albert's career is his belief in every student's capacity to achieve excellence. He displays a deep love of and respect for all of his students, even the most challenging ones. "Mr. Sackey believes that all students can succeed, and this message is echoed through all of his actions," says Pepe. As supervisor of WMS' special education department, Albert has worked with staff to ensure that all students have an assessment-driven individualized success plan. Says science teacher Leeford Dufe, who nominated Albert for the award, "As a special education expert, Albert's efforts have resulted in improved Individualized Education Programs and more accountability for student achievement. The impact is now our special education students have a much brighter academic future and are better able to achieve their potential."

Albert graduated from Guilford College (NC) in 1998 with a bachelor of science degree in justice and policy studies. He went on to earn two master's degrees, one in special education from Manhattan College (NY) and the other in school administration and supervision from Mercy College (NY). In 2000, he became a special intervention teacher in the New York City Public Schools and continued there as a special education teacher, supervisor and assistant principal until 2008 when he was appointed to his present position in Greenwich. Albert is currently completing his work for a doctorate degree in educational leadership, management and policy from Seton Hall University (NJ) with an anticipated graduation date of later this year.

Albert 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. Albert, 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.

## A PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE:

### Sexting - A Serious Issue

By John Dodig, Principal  
Staples High School, Westport



**S**EXTING is a very serious issue, one that warrants continued attention and dialogue. I urge you to read a very well-written article by Nina Burleigh that appeared in the September 17 issue of Rolling Stone (available online at <http://casci.ac/841>). It is that good.

At the ripe old age of 69, I have seen a lot of change in America. I remember seeing "whites only" water fountains and bathrooms on a trip to Florida when I was eleven years old and feeling uncomfortable at the sight. I lived through the battles against the Vietnam War, the Hippie revolution, the sexual revolution, the fight for women's rights, racial equality, gay rights and more. I remember an ashtray in every home and driving in my parents car so thick with smoke that I couldn't see past the front seat. Speaking of the front seat, I remember standing up on the back seat leaning over to talk to my mother. Now we wouldn't think of not buckling up. Ashtrays are gone from everyone's home, teenagers often have designated drivers thanks to the work of SADD, MADD, and mandatory health classes in public schools. So much has changed for the better and, yet, many of our girls still feel the need to please boys by behaving in ways that even they find shocking when they see themselves in compromising positions on display somewhere on the Internet.

The last paragraph and the last line of Burleigh's article are emotionally devastating to the reader as the mother of a child who committed suicide over sexting describes her daughter's last days. Mom shared the messages her daughter sent to one of the boys who was sharing naked photos of her with his friends. The messages show her pleading with Joe to delete the pictures. Among her last words were, "You have no idea what it's like to be a girl."

I have a wonderful and successful adult daughter but lived through years of drama that made her parents' lives difficult at times. But, I have to admit that I do not know what it is like to be a girl. Having lived with thousands of teenagers of both sexes for 43 years in public schools, I do know that not much has changed as to what many girls perceive is how they must behave to be accepted by their peer group. Our girls may now play varsity level sports, win science and math competitions, and understand that they can be whatever they choose to be as adults. They know it, but perhaps don't believe it enough to prevent them from being drawn into the pull of pleasing boys in order to fit in, to be accepted, or to validate their existence as female. We have a lot more work to do.

This is a tough topic to bring up at the dinner table, but it is a discussion that must be had somewhere. If your children are reluctant to talk about it, don't give up. We need to continue talking about this to prevent any one of our girls from ever saying: "You have no idea what it's like to be a girl." Other than body parts, there should be no difference in the self-image of every young person, male or female. They should all be proud of who they are simply because they exist. They are ours and we love them all.

Happy New Year.



## CAS HOSTS TWELFTH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

On Thursday, October 17th, CAS hosted its twelfth annual celebration of educational leadership at Saint Clements Castle in Portland. The event was conceived thirteen years ago following a resolution by the CAS Board of Directors to find ways to recognize and pay tribute to individual school leaders as well as to "celebrate" the profession of school administration. Five individuals from the ranks of Connecticut's school administrators were honored at this year's event:

- Julio Duarte, Principal  
Conard High School, West Hartford  
*2013 High School Asst. Principal of the Year*
- Tom Moore, Principal  
Wethersfield High School  
*2013 High School Principal of the Year*
- Chris Palmieri, Assistant Principal  
DePaolo Middle School, Southington  
*2013 Middle School Asst. Principal of the Year*
- Joseph Scheideler, Principal  
Canton Middle School  
*2013 Middle School Principal of the Year*
- Tracy Youngberg, Principal  
Carmen Arace Inter. School, Bloomfield  
*2013 Elementary Principal of the Year*

More than one hundred sixty educators, friends, and family members packed the Waterford Ballroom at Saint Clements to join in honoring CAS' 2013 Distinguished Administrators. Guests were greeted at the door with the stirring sounds of the

Glastonbury High School Resident String Sextet featuring Yerim Lee, Stacey Youn, Colby Johnson, Nikhil Menon, Manushi Patadia, Giana DiNatale and director Nola Campbell.

Robert Hale, Jr., principal of Westbrook High School and chair of the committee which organized the event, warmly welcomed guests and introduced the evening's master of ceremonies, Mr. Scott Gray, 42-year veteran sports commentator for WTIC AM 1080. In his opening remarks, Mr. Gray praised the accomplishments of the five honorees. "Your exemplary work not only benefits the children you serve, but encourages those around you to consider school administration as a worthy career," said Mr. Gray. "In the midst of declining resources, accountability pressures and the myriad demands of your profession, you continue to bring innovation, inspiration and dignity to the work of educating our children."

Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Connecticut's chief academic officer, delivered articulate and inspiring remarks on behalf of the state department of education. She congratulated the honorees and praised their successes in an ever-changing and ever-challenging role.

Following the welcoming speeches, each of the five distinguished administrators was entertained with a short slideshow containing pictures and quotes from friends and colleagues. All honorees received a plaque; an engraved desk clock; a copy of "The Other Wes Moore" by Wes Moore; and a proclamation from Governor Dannel Malloy lauding their dedication and tireless efforts in raising the standards of excellence in the state of Connecticut. Thanks to the generos-

ity of Jostens, one of CAS' corporate partners, all honorees also received a custom-designed ring to commemorate their achievement.

*continued on page 10*



Middle School Principal of the Year  
Joe Scheideler



High School Principal of the Year Tom Moore



Dr. Dianna Roberge-Wentzell, Chief Academic  
Officer, Department of Education



Master of Ceremonies Scott Gray



CAS President Fran Kennedy, Principal of Berlin  
High School

## CAS EXEMPLARY EDUCATOR AWARDS

by Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director



High School Exemplary  
Educator Joleen Pillar



Middle School Exemplary  
Educator Robert Rose



Elementary Exemplary Educator  
Alicia Schiavo

The CAS Exemplary Educator Awards recognize outstanding educators who have had a positive impact on their school and/or district. Nominees for these awards must have demonstrated excellence in education, involvement with students, staff and parents in and out of the classroom, and leadership in their profession.

**Joleen Pillar**, library-media specialist at The Gilbert School in Winsted; **Robert Rose**, English teacher at Smith Middle School in Glastonbury; and **Alicia Schiavo**, fifth grade teacher at Washington Elementary in Waterbury have been selected from a competitive field of educators from across the state to be named the Connecticut Association of Schools' Exemplary Educators for 2013-2014.

### Joleen Pillar

Joleen Pillar is the recipient of the CAS Exemplary High School Educator Award. She is an outstanding teacher who believes that all students can learn and should love learning. She skillfully combines rigor with an enjoyment for her subject.

In his letter of recommendation, Principal Alan J. Strauss stated that "Joleen has a thirst for knowledge and intellectual insight that I have rarely seen. This in combination with a work ethic and moral code that are of the highest order make her one of the truly unique people I have had the pleasure of working with." He states further that "...any administrator could build his entire school around her immense talent and her desire to move all students forward and empower all teachers."

As the library media specialist at The Gilbert School, Joleen has the best job

in the building and enjoys a positive working relationship with every single member of the faculty and staff. No one is safe from being involved in her programs, initiatives, or lessons; not the cafeteria staff, the custodial staff, the technology staff, the paraprofessionals, or the administrative team. Best of all, every single student at Gilbert School passes through the doors of the library several times every year and Joleen is constantly visiting classrooms, co-teaching, assisting with projects and assignments, or simply available to students for daily one-to-one help. Joleen is a visible and constant presence for all of her students, and she has the luxury of interacting with them all.

Cynthia J. Geiger, Social Studies Department Chair, describes Joleen as "...an outstanding educator who loves her job and profession and who is passionate to spread her enthusiasm for learning to everyone. The media center, where Joleen works, is really the 'heart' of the school because she has made it a place of learning, growth, and excitement. People know that when they go to the media center they can get help, support, new ideas, and encouragement." Along similar lines, Debra Lewis, English Department Chair, writes, "The work that Jody does every day impacts so many here at our school that it is virtually impossible to pinpoint her influence."

Joleen shared that despite her passion for technology, it is still a love of reading and the desire to infect others with that joy that brings her the greatest pleasure in her work. "Selecting and recommending books that will make the kids want to come back for more is the most important task I perform. My

*continued on page 12*

### Celebration, continued from page 9

By all accounts, the twelfth annual "celebration" was a rousing success! Many thanks to the members of the organizing committee - Bob Hale, Donna Schilke and Karen Fitzsimmons - and to our official photographer, G&B Studios.



2013 Elementary Principal of the Year Tracy Youngberg (center) with Elementary Board Chair Karen Fitzsimmons (l) and Executive Director Karissa Niehoff (r)



High School Assistant Principal of the Year Julio Duarte (center) with CIAC Chair Bob Hale, Jr. (l) and Executive Director Karissa Niehoff (r)



Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year Chris Palmieri (center) with President-Elect Donna Schilke (l) and Executive Director Karissa Niehoff (r)



## CAS OUTSTANDING FIRST YEAR PRINCIPALS

by Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director



Elementary First Year Principal  
Elsie Torres-Brown



Middle School First Year  
Principal Anthony Menard



High School First Year Principal  
Alan Strauss

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce that **Ms. Elsie Torres-Brown**, principal of John Barry Elementary School in Meriden, **Mr. Anthony M. Menard**, principal of East Hartford Middle School, and **Mr. Alan Strauss**, principal of The Gilbert School in Winsted, have been selected as the recipients of the William Cieslukowski Outstanding First-Year Principal Award for 2013-2014. These awards recognize first-year principals who have had a positive impact on their school and/or district and have demonstrated exemplary instructional and organizational leadership, a willingness to take risks, and the ability to overcome adversity.

Elementary award recipient **Elsie Torres-Brown**, principal of John Barry Elementary School in Meriden, was nominated for the William Cieslukowski First-Year Principal Award by Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, performance evaluation specialist, and Ms. Lynda Gelineau, instructional associate. In their nomination, they cited, "In addition to the measurable indicators of success, the intangibles that cannot be measured are also why we have chosen to submit Ms. Elsie Torres-Brown as the most deserving candidate. If there were tangible ways to measure hope, inspiration, and the ability to represent all that is good about one's school community, Elsie would top the scale. Elsie's love of education can be best described in one word - kids. Elsie is a visionary and a risk-taker, willing to blaze new trails for her students even if it disrupts conventional practices."

As a risk-taker, Elsie Torres-Brown entered the building as a young novice and embarked on a new K-3 literacy partnership with UCONN. In addition, she strengthened the collaborative team approach to data driven processes and bolstered the intervention and enrichment offerings for her students. As if that were not enough for a first-year principal, she quickly developed and completed the process of an extended day for all students at John Barry Elementary School. She

focused heavily on improving the processes aimed at promoting student success and the results are very promising.

Middle Level award recipient **Anthony M. Menard** is the principal of East Hartford Middle School. In her recommendation, Math Coach Jamie Pitkin cited, "Mr. Menard's leadership has had a profound impact and influence on me personally and on our entire school. We are very fortunate to have Mr. Menard as our leader. In the short period of time that Mr. Menard has assumed the role of principal at our school, he has exceeded the limits of ordinary performance and has proven to us that he truly is our Super Leader. Mr. Menard's strong message and demand that our students receive a world-class education were followed by action steps - action steps that were characterized by boldness, exactness, and follow through. He serves as an inspiration to all of us in the pursuit of excellence in education."

Through Mr. Menard's efforts and action steps, he restructured schedules, improved a school-wide writing initiative, improved communication, fostered focus on school pride, facilitated extensive school/ family /community connections, and reconfigured the middle-school team model.

Anthony is described as a man of conviction and is dedicated to making the middle school experience a tremendous one for each and every student. According to David Caruso, assistant principal, "He listens and takes time to make decisions that are best for students. He understands the challenges that staff and students face and is sensitive to their needs. The passion and inspiration he brings to the school is contagious and has resulted in a staff that is eager to come to work and students that love being here".

High School award recipient **Alan J. Strauss** is principal of The Gilbert School in Winsted and was nominated for the William Cieslukowski Outstanding First-Year Principal Award for 2013-2014. *continued on page 12*

**Beth Messler**, *continued from page 6* elementary education, "Beth has not only distinguished herself as an excellent assistant principal, she has established herself as a leader in district initiatives through her extraordinary work on various committees."

Beth graduated from Union College (NY) in 1996 and went on to earn a master's degree in elementary education from Manhattanville College (NY) and a sixth year certification from Sacred Heart University (CT). She has been serving the Westport Public Schools for the past ten years, first as a classroom teacher, then as a math and literacy coordinator and, ultimately, as an assistant principal. She began her career in education in 2002 after leaving a successful career in business to pursue her passion for working with children..

**Joe Blake**, *continued from page 6* his arrival at SHS in 2011, Joe has introduced a number of new technologies to streamline building management and improve classroom instruction. This past year, he worked with colleagues to guide the staff through a comprehensive technology competencies assessment. The results were used to design individualized online learning activities which helped each teacher to more effectively integrate technology into his/her classroom. Furthermore, he spearheaded the school's transition to online scheduling, resulting in a 29% decrease in scheduling conflicts. Joe's success as a building administrator is perhaps summarized best in these words by Benjamin Gee, "To me, Mr. Blake's greatest quality is the example he sets for others, particularly the students who have yet to enter the professional world. In Mr. Blake, we see a person we can admire, respect and hope to emulate in the future - I know I do."

Joe received both his bachelor and master of science degrees from Southern CT State University. He went on to earn his sixth year certificate from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. He began his career in education in 1997 as a teacher at Lafayette Elementary School in Shelton. He quickly transitioned to the high school where he taught social studies for three years and, in 2001, was appointed assistant principal at Torrington High School. In 2004, he became housemaster at Fairfield Ludlowe High School and remained there until 2011 when he assumed the assistant principalship of SHS, the position he now holds.

### Exemplary Educators, *continued from page 10*

mantra is "readers are achievers" and I hope that my enthusiasm is infectious. I only hope that I can be a positive voice for my students and one that is loud enough to stay with them as long as they need it."

#### Robert Rose

Robert Rose, English teacher at Smith Middle School in Glastonbury, is the recipient of the CAS Exemplary Middle Level Educator Award. He is an outstanding educator, a tireless worker, and a strong advocate for all children. He is the kind of teacher that any parent would want for their children. According to Principal, Donna Schilke, "Rob's myriad of contributions to Smith Middle School's students, staff, technology, and climate are considerable and far reaching." He has also been described as the go-to person for technology, pioneering and promoting such tools as iPads, clickers, blogs and Google Drive. Rob Rose is a gifted motivator, a mentor for struggling students, and a role model for his colleagues.

Mr. Rose, in his reflective essay, stated that... "as a middle school teacher my greatest contribution to education happens inside the walls of my classroom. I try to change my students' perceptions of education. I want students to realize that learning is a process and, at times, they will be successful and at other times they may struggle. It is my job to show them that the struggle is just as important as the success. I try to foster a belief in my students that success is not always easy, but it is possible. The students are taught to believe in themselves and in their ability to learn because I believe in them. Ultimately, it is always my job to find a way to reach each student and incorporate their interests into my teaching."

Robert believes that when a student leaves his classroom, it is his hope that they depart with better academic skills and a love of learning, but he would also hope that they have a desire to succeed and a strong sense of character, community, and responsibility.

John Landry, Smith Middle School Library Media Specialist, calls Rose "...the complete package. He is a consummate professional who meticulously plans his lessons and then unselfishly shares the end product of his work with colleagues." He goes on to state that Rose would be a leader in any group because "he listens first and leads by example."

The following quote is one of Robert's favorites, and describes him so well: "Everything you say and do every single day may be recorded in your students' hearts forever" --LouAnne Johnson

#### Alicia Schiavo

Alicia Schiavo, fifth grade teacher at Washington Elementary School in Waterbury is the recipient of the CAS Exemplary Elementary Educator Award. According to Principal Roxanne Augelli, "Alicia is one of the brightest, most articulate teachers I have ever worked with. Her experiences as a fifth grade math leader have highlighted her competencies as a teacher, leader, and advocate for students. She has an innate ability to reach students at their individual levels using assessment skills that are beyond reproach. Students in her class have developed into independent learners and thinkers."

For the past decade Alicia has been an educator. She loves and cherishes every moment, challenge, and victory she, her students, and her school have had together. She is proud of being able to work in grades one, two, and five. As a lifelong learner she has grown professionally under the guidance of her principal, district, professional development, and students.

When she greets the smiling faces of her students, she is reminded of their challenges, struggles, successes, failures, quirks, and needs. She reviews IEP's, 504's, CMT's, RTI's, CFA's, and personal histories formulating ways and strategies to meet each individual's needs--she teaches the whole child. If they are sad, she consoles them. If they are proud, she celebrates with them. If they are hungry, she helps to feed them. If their family is struggling, she investigates ways to help them.

In her reflective essay Alicia stated, "As a classroom teacher, my greatest contributions and accomplishments are directly related to the success of my students. My constant self-evaluation, continued personal learning, and school and community involvement provide me with the tools needed to maximize my students' potential. With the challenges facing today's educators including large classes, lack of funds, the changing nature of family, and the destructive media influences, the job asked of us is overwhelming. I take this responsibility very seriously."

Lori Kramarz, the teaching vice-principal at Washington Elementary School, describes Alicia's positive learning environment "...where all students will be challenged to become the best student they can be. Her classroom management is extraordinary even when working with the most challenging students, and she models this knowledge to help improve others around her. With a vast knowledge of content matter and teaching experience, she creates a safe and loving learning environment."

### First Year Principals *continued from page 11*

Cieslukowski First-Year Principal Award by Dr. Anthony Serio, Superintendent of Winsted Schools. Dr. Serio, in his recommendation, cited, "Mr. Strauss has demonstrated his ability to motivate students to believe in themselves by initiating a number of campaigns to build self-esteem. Mr. Strauss believes that one must practice what he/she teaches. Mr. Strauss is by far the best instructional leader that I have encountered. He is the most innovative and forward thinking educator that I have had the pleasure to work with. His understanding of educational philosophy has been brought to life in The Gilbert School."

Alan Strauss is described as having high expectations, demands respect, promotes student success, and is a team player who is also dedicated to students. In his first year, Alan has reorganized the school schedule, participated in a NEASC accreditation, secured a grant for iPads for all staff and students in grades 11-12, and secured an agreement with Niki University and the school store run by DECA Club students, all in the name of improvement which included improved AP, CAPT, and CMT results.

Mr. Strauss, according to Joleen Pillar, library media specialist, is a man "having the energy of a tornado, the excitement of a roller coaster, the enthusiasm of a fanatic, and willpower I have never seen before. His "Yes-We-Can and We-Will" attitude has changed the culture and climate of this school forever. We look forward to coming to school each day."





## OLD SAYBROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL RECEIVES 2013 ARTHUR DIRECTOR LEADERSHIP AWARD

By Stephanie Ford, Director of Marketing

Old Saybrook Middle School (OSMS) was the recipient of the 2013 Arthur Director Student Leadership Award. This award is given annually to one Connecticut middle school for outstanding application of the themes of the CAS Middle Level Student Leadership Conference.

The CAS 2013 conference, which was attended by over 600 students and advisors, focused on creating a climate of acceptance and inclusion for all students in all schools. The title of the conference was "Making Acceptance Acceptable," and OSMS clearly models this theme in exceptional ways. Not only is this the second time that OSMS has been the recipient of this award, but they were also twice selected as the CAS Middle School of the Year.

At OSMS, both the student and teachers work closely together to create a climate of acceptance and respect in their school. One of the newest initiatives that the school has implemented is the Advisor-Advisee Program where every student has a teacher/advisor with whom they can talk. This program provides students with a safe environment to discuss issues that may come up during the school day as well as anything that they feel uncomfortable about. A program that goes hand in hand with the Advisor-Advisee Program is RESPECT. This is an initiative which encourages students to have RESPECT not only for their teachers, but for their peers as well.

A new required class at OSMS this year is called FOCUS. This acronym stands for Friendship, Organization, Communication, Understanding, and Study Skills. This class aids in promoting a climate of acceptance by teaching the students that diversity and being unique is

okay. Because this is a weekly class, students are consistently reminded to be kind and respect the differences in others. Students utilize these skills both in and out of school in the hopes of decreasing the incidents of bullying in their school and their community.

On a regular basis throughout the school year, OSMS holds school meetings called Recognition Days during which they celebrate and recognize students' success and achievements. On Recognition Days, students and teachers also take the time to discuss problems that may have come up in their particular grade. This is helpful because there is open dialogue; everyone is made aware of any issues; and together they work to resolve any problems.

At OSMS, students and teachers are working hard to create a climate of acceptance. By holding Advisor-Advisee meetings, incorporating the RESPECT initiative, creating FOCUS, and holding Recognition Days, they are clearly working to achieve the goal of making acceptance acceptable and are highly deserving of the 2013 Arthur Director Leadership Award.

The Arthur Director Leadership Award was created by David Director to honor his father, Arthur Director. Arthur Director is the founder of the Connecticut Lighting Centers, corporate partners with CAS in sponsoring the annual Middle Level Student Leadership Conference. It is due to their generosity that all students in all middle schools, regardless of their circumstance, can attend the CAS leadership conference. CAS is proud of its association with the Director family and it is most fitting that the award is named for a man who symbolizes civic responsibility and philanthropic endeavors.



A student leadership team at OSMS is presented with the 2013 Arthur Director Student Leadership Award. Arthur Director, founder of Connecticut Lighting Centers and after whom the award is named, is pictured in the back row left. Next to him is his son, David Director, owner of Connecticut Lighting Centers.

## ON BECOMING CONNECTED PRINCIPALS

By Dr. Rosie Vojtek, Principal, Ivy Drive School, Bristol



CONNECTED  
EDUCATORS

**Editor's Note:** The following article has, regrettably, been shortened considerably due to space constraints. Readers are strongly encouraged to read the article in its entirety on the CAS website at <http://casci.ac/845>.

The classroom walls of isolation have crumbled. Teachers work together through inquiry, collaboration and PLC's to share lessons, analyze data, and make informed decisions

to help their students learn. Yet, the office of the principal, especially in elementary and small schools with only one administrator in the building, remains a lonely isolated place!

Principals are finding it more difficult than ever to crawl through the rubble and get out of their offices to network and learn with colleagues and peers across Connecticut. The demands and expectations on principals have increased exponentially due to major initiatives such as Common Core State Standards, teacher and principal evaluation and Smarter Balanced Assessments, to name a few. Often the thought of driving even 20 - 30 miles for an educational conference, workshop, or meeting at CAS seems like a luxury that most of us find more and more difficult, if not impossible, to afford.

Yet, just when we need each other more than ever, it has become next to impossible to find the time to "reach out and touch someone."

It's not just enough to simply "reach out and touch someone," although we all need our friends. In these trying times of intense stress and high stakes accountability, we need the collective wisdom of each other so we can work together, smarter - not harder - to make a difference for ALL Connecticut students.

Technology is now ubiquitous. We have the ability to connect anytime, anywhere via our desktops, laptops, smartphones and other mobile devices. But, for some strange reason, many of us don't find the time to do the one thing that can help us the most. That is, use the technology we have at our fingertips to connect with each other in meaningful and purposeful ways without leaving our offices or homes.

So, how can we, CAS principals, harness technology to connect with our colleagues and peers across Connecticut to share stories, learn together, grow professionally, work smarter, network, inspire and support each other and maybe even vent a little, when we can't even find time during the day to eat lunch?

*continued on page 17*

*Dear Dave,*

*During the past six years, you have shared, inspired, coached and laughed about all things "Student Activities." The enormous help that you have provided has helped me to be a better advisor and support my kiddos. Yesterday was just another example of the excellent experiences that CT advisors and students are exposed to thanks to your leadership. The advisor workshop is one of my favorite days as it always provides new ideas that we can bring back to our schools. Thank you for your vision and dedication to student activities. You make a huge difference in the lives of CT youth.*

*Enjoy your day,  
Terry*

Reprinted above is a note sent by Griswold High School Student Council Advisor Terry Cholewa following the annual conference for student activity advisors last fall. A much-deserved pat-on-the back for our director of student activities, Dave Maloney!

## Gates to Receive National Recognition



Don Gates, past-president of CAS and legend in the Connecticut education community, will receive the prestigious Membership Star Award from the National Association of Secondary School Principals at its conference next month in Dallas, TX. Don will be honored for his thirty-nine years as a dedicated member of NASSP and a tireless advocate for students. Congratulations, Don!



## ADVISORY SURVEY GARNERS HUGE RESPONSE

Over 230 responses were received from the CAS Advisory Survey! Considering that middle and high schools were invited to respond to the survey's twelve questions, the response is nothing short of sensational!

Here's a quick, analytical summary:

- 95% of respondents stated that their school has an advisory program
- Close to 75% state that advisory meets either weekly or bi-weekly
- 66% of the advisories meet for 20 to 30 minutes in length
- The average class size for advisory groups is 11-15 students
- 92% of responders have a locally designed advisory curriculum
- Only 57% use advisory to implement Student Success Plans
- Over 100 schools responded that they'd be interested in attending a CAS sponsored regional advisory forum

Clearly, the emergence of advisory as a vehicle to personalize the educational experience is rooted within the structure of secondary school reform. Drawing from the NEASC accreditation standards that state, "there is a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations", advisory programs are engaging students in using their knowledge to plan and develop their own pathway through the secondary grades. It is somewhat surprising that 43% of reporting schools are not administering Student Success Plans through advisory programs, given that the three core components of SSP's are Academic, Career, and Social, Emotional and Physical Development.

With an average class size of 11-15 students it would appear that advisory has answered the call to reform our schools into smaller, personalized settings where students do not remain anonymous and unaccounted for. It also appears that advisory is approaching what national experts have called for - personalized schools - places where students discover their own pathway to their future - and where all members of the school community work together to help each member succeed.

As noted author and education guru Carol Ann Tomlinson once said, "it is virtually impossible to make things relevant for, or expect personal excellence from, a student you don't know."

CAS stands ready to assist our schools to continue with the process of dialogue across the issues at hand with advisory programs. Regional workshops are being planned after the New Year for this purpose.

For additional information regarding the advisory survey, please direct inquiries to CAS Assistant Executive Directors Earle Bidwell and Dave Maloney.



# SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT ACTIVITIES

## Can High School Students Have A Positive Impact On School Climate?

*By Dave Maloney, CAS Director of Student Activities*

Imagine turning the hallway and walking into 100 students with the word 'NO' scrolled on their outstretched palms facing you! You are kind of thrown back a bit until you continue to walk and a poster confronts you with an anti-bullying message. The demonstration was orchestrated as part of National Bullying Awareness Month by members of the Center For Youth Leadership at Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk.

"We really wanted to make an impact, said Nic Solano, a CYL member. "And since we had over 100 students sign up for the demonstration we decided this was the time and place to make a statement." The point of the activity was to urge students at McMahon to keep the hallways bully-free because members of CYL know that bullying happens everywhere, especially in areas where adults are not always visible. "The hallways are tough, added Millie Cunningham, one of the leadership officers in CYL, because teachers and administrators are in their rooms preparing for their next class or meeting. That's where students come in. We strongly believe that students need to play a prominent role in stopping hallway behavior that is mean, insulting, or emotionally harmful." CYL members have a long history and accomplished record of such demonstrations.

The Center For Youth Leadership club at McMahon is the largest youth activism organization in the greater Fairfield County if not the whole state of Connecticut. Its mission is clear: promote and support youth activism. The organization achieves its purpose through public awareness, volunteer programs, and social change campaigns. Formed in 1999 when six students asked for help in examining the connection between academic achievement and where students live in Norwalk. CYL's membership currently is composed of over 200 students! Under the direction of Bob Kocienda, a Social Worker at Brien McMahon, the club's mission has evolved into what he and his student leaders call socially engaged philanthropy.

In response to an August 27th suicide of a student at Greenwich High, CYL students joined forces with Stamford and Greenwich High Schools to take a stand against bullying.

How did they create their awareness?

On a balmy, sun bathed morning over fifteen students walked the six miles to GHS to show their support and caring, unveiling a banner along with members of Greenwich's anti-bullying club.

Elias Frank, a senior club member at Greenwich, noted, "What you guys did - is truly an inspira-



tion. You walked six miles in the middle of the school day to show that you guys care. Words cannot express it. We are so grateful that so many high school students want to see change."

Those examples pale in comparison to the initiatives CYL (and Stamford High School) have recently undertaken to stamp out mean spirited behavior. They are becoming trained "mental health first aid teams" who reach out to at-risk students with the hope of fostering a more inclusive, respectful school climate. Several CYL and Stamford students have completed a ten hour training program designed to give them the tools to assist faculty members in proactively reaching out to students who might be suffering from various mental health issues. "We want to do everything possible to ensure that all students have the resources to make the very best of the high school experience, noted Patricia Rodican, a another member of the CYL executive committee.

At a recent CAS sponsored high school student leadership conference, Griswold High School's Student Council Advisor, Terry Cholewa remarked, "teens today truly want to be involved in their world within and outside school boundaries. They have an incredible drive to take positive action. Yet, the media portrays all the negative behaviors and we don't hear about the good work that teens do." The current State Student Council President, Nick Bendas-Giano, a senior at Plainville High, is hoping to orchestrate a "Connecticut Connects" campaign this spring where high school teens join forces and implement an action plan to build a more positive school community.

Maybe CYL leaders can help CAS sponsored student activities. They seem to have the skill set to tackle the tough issues creating public awareness,

volunteer programs, and social change campaigns. "We're not afraid to push the boundaries by creatively orchestrating displays that draw attention to the undiscussable issues!" added Kocienda.

So what's on the CYL agenda for this school year?

Fresh off their popular 'High School 101', an eight session orientation program for incoming freshmen that features "F.R.O.G.S." (Freshman Orientation Guides), CYL will structure its work in two domains: The Peace Project and S.C.F. (Senators Community Foundation).

In short, both divisions of CYL will design action plans in four main areas:

- ☐ Dating Violence and Sexual Harassment
- ☐ Bullying and School Climate Matters
- ☐ Immigration Reform
- ☐ Child and Animal Abuse

A graduate of CYL, Sarah Krause, perhaps summarized it best, "Our version of philanthropy has a lot of benefits. We focus on just a handful of issues which unites over 200 kids. The public awareness demonstrations educate people and sharpen our advocacy skills. The volunteer programs add real faces to our work. And the social change campaigns influence policies, laws, and the way people think about the issues that we address like child abuse, human trafficking, dating violence and the rights of day laborers."

It is noteworthy to report that last year CYL lobbied the Norwalk Board of Education to pass provisions of an anti-bullying policy that encompasses adult to student bullying as well as the more traditional forms of bullying.

By all accounts, the seeds of the Center For Youth Leadership's action plans have and continue to germinate into positive awareness throughout the greater Brien McMahon community. Clearly, teens DO CARE and CAN have a profound, positive impact on the school climate. It is no wonder that CYL has garnered several awards, grants, and recognition over its fifteen year existence.

For more information on the Center For Youth Leadership log onto their website: <http://www.gocyl.org> or email Bob Kocienda at [bkocienda@yahoo.com](mailto:bkocienda@yahoo.com).

This article was completed thanks, in part, to a conference call with Millie Cunningham, Samiha Julahka, Komal Gulati, Leticia Sanchez, Andrea Barros, Nic Solano, Nicole Lue, Melanie Patino, Erin Iovinelli, Patricia Rodican, Kaela Teele and Freni Campos, members of the CYL Executive Committee.

## ALL THINGS POSSIBLE AT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By Jenn Buckley, Assistant Director of Student Activities

Gather talented students, dedicated advisors, and dynamic presenters in a creative venue and all things are possible. Such was the convergence of factors at the Connecticut High School Student Leadership Conference held at Waterbury Arts Magnet School on November 22 and 23. Students from twenty-two Connecticut high schools participated in the packed 24 hour experience which featured national speakers and student facilitated workshops.

The CASC Student Advisory Board began the planning process last spring, making the bold choice to move the conference from the spring to the fall. The board recognized the importance of the conference as a catalyst for action back at school. Not only would participants be better able to use the momentum generated by the conference to implement programs and activities at their schools, but they would also be able to contribute to the development of a 2014 spring statewide community service week.

Waterbury Arts Magnet School set the tone for the conference providing a tremendous backdrop as an institution with a mission built upon creativity, risk taking and the development of one's passion. Student facilitated workshops prompted students to think about themselves as leaders. Day one featured student led exercises and a presenter that fostered understanding of who participants are, what they value, how they see their community, and what they believe about change. Dr. Michael (Mykee) Fowlin presented his extraordinary "You Don't Know Me Until You Know Me" program to a rapt audience. Students were on the edge of their seats watching as he transformed into six distinct characters crossing age, race, gender and identity lines. Students delved deeply into their understanding of others beyond acceptance to appreciation of the beauty within each individual, the celebration of difference and embracing shared experiences. The day would not have been complete without the evening social; complete group dances, crowd surfing and some spectacular impromptu performances. Students and advisors were bussed back to The Crowne Plaza in Southbury for overnight.

Day two switched from the "who we are, what we value" focus to the action oriented questions of what do we want to do with it and how are we going to do it. Andy Thibodeau, a popular Canadian presenter, challenged student leaders to "Make Care Contagious" with a focus on being the model, taking the lead, paying attention to the wide range of needs and adopting an "if not me, then who?" attitude.

Participating students were challenged to take that message straight back to their school / communities. The conference ended with action planning sessions in which participants devised strategies, specific projects and activities that would put the conference themes into direct action.

The conference closed with an artistically crafted video highlighting each agenda item of the conference. Look for the video to be available on the Student Activities page of the CAS website soon.

And, look for the "We Are CT" theme to emerge in 2014 with a host of regionally based workshops at various high schools throughout Connecticut.

## | By The Numbers | CAS-CIAC Fall Programs . . .

**627**

Student-athletes attending the CIAC sportsmanship summit

**65**

Schools represented at the sportsmanship summit

**400**

Connecticut administrators trained in S.E.E.D.

**518**

Debaters participating in the CDA November debate tournaments

**37**

High schools represented at November debate tournaments - a new record!

**300**

On-site support days provided by CAS executive coaches

**5**

Colleges hosting student leadership conferences in January

**17**

Aspiring administrators participating in New Haven Future Leaders Academy

**49**

Advisors attending the CSAC fall conference

**40**

First-year administrators in New Leaders Academy

**66**

Aspiring UCAPP administrators mentored by CAS Principals

**42**

School Climate Committee Members attending the December 16th workshop

**6**

High school teams attending the NEASC two-day workshop at CAS

**20**

Aspiring administrators participating in Meriden Leaders Academy

**213**

High school student leaders attending the two-day leadership conference

**21**

Consecutive years of CSAC-hosted student leadership conferences

**4**

Skills - decision making, thinking, communicating, problem solving - highlighted at the student leadership conferences

**210**

High school students attending the diversity summit workshop

**18,849**

Number of girls participating in CIAC fall sports

**21,064**

Number of boys participating in CIAC fall sports



## Connected Principals, *continued from page 13*

It all comes down to priorities. What's important gets done! For all of the above stated reasons, I can't think of anything more important than making time each day to use technology to connect with colleagues. It's easier than you might think.

### Why Connect?

Many of you reading this article are probably already connected with family and friends through popular social media sites such as Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube, Linked-In and Twitter. Why? To share pictures and experiences; stay informed and in touch with each other; and, to build friendships and relationships with family and friends. I bet during this past Thanksgiving holiday many of you, like me, shared text messages, emails, photos, and videos including face-time with your friends and family who were separated by distance.

Reaching out to touch someone has taken on a whole new meaning in 2013! Social media makes it easy to share, build relationships, stay informed and in touch with those we love. Doesn't it make sense to harness these same technologies to help us stay connected with colleagues and friends across Connecticut so we can share strategies to help us work more effectively and efficiently and to learn with and from each other virtually? What if there was a way to do this without spending an hour each way traveling to and from the meetings?

### Harnessing the Technology

Those of you who know me (and/or my avatar Roxie Neiro) know that connecting virtually and achieving the same quality of experience without traveling to get there is my ultimate goal. Roxie can teleport to any number of venues in Second Life in a few seconds. Rosie, on the other hand, spends way too much time sitting in traffic jams trying to get from point "A" to point "B."

The good news is that the number of ways to connect and learn from educators (experts and novices alike) anywhere around the world without leaving the comfort of your own home increases daily. In fact, one of my favorite times to be connected with others is early Saturday morning in Second Life while I am having my first cup of coffee. Or, in my comfy slippers and bathrobe at 8:00 pm doing Tweet Chats, reading my personal Tweeted Times Newspaper <http://tweeted-times.com/> or watching archived Google+ hangouts. (For information about how to use Google+ Hangouts in the classroom see <http://goo.gl/2kEEyK>.)

I know that all of this, including tweeting, may sound a little strange and even a little geeky. But, be sure to read "Chatting With Connected Principals" online at <http://goo.gl/G5G3az> so you can click on the links and find the golden nuggets embedded in the URLs in the tweets from other principals during the #cpchats. There is so much to learn from those 140 character tweets!

### Join the CAS Professional Learning Network (PLN)

In October, CAS held a workshop by National Digital Principal Award winner Patrick Larkin on how to tweet. Later in October, members of the workshop participated in the first CAS Tweet Chat using the hashtag #CASchat.

CAS has planned several activities such as Tweet chats in the new year to begin leveraging the use of technology and building a Connecticut principal-centered PLN. We hope you will start to follow CAS in Twitter @CAS\_CT!

If you aren't sure if tweeting is for you or if you want to learn more about how to get started tweeting, check out "To Tweet Or Not To Tweet?" at <http://goo.gl/8lxDb0>. There are also videos on YOUTUBE only a Google search away to help you learn how to tweet.

Likewise, another great resource for getting started as a connected educator is the CEM (Connected Educator Month) Starter Kit and the CEM District Toolkit <http://goo.gl/481BRw>. Both Kits are free. The CEM Starter Kit is loaded with helpful links and embedded videos that can help you get connected. The CEM District Toolkit is designed for administrators and teacher leaders to help others in their school or district stay connected all year long. Both are full of ideas, resources, and video links.

*continued on page 28*

## CLEANING CLOSETS

By Dr. Dale Bernardoni

This promises to be a year of significant change in schools all across the state and the nation. The Common Core State Standards have inspired curriculum changes in virtually all areas and on all levels. The transition to new and more rigorous standardized tests have driven schools to design new common formative assessments. The revised evaluation systems now require that teachers should view their instructional practices with a deeper understanding of making more purposeful choices.

All of these changes have caused the need to create or purchase new materials. This has left administrators with the dilemma of how to dispose of retired and replaced instructional and assessment materials. Closets in schools statewide are brimming with no longer used books, texts and tests. At the same time, there are schools in other parts of the world where there are no textbooks, library books or teaching materials. The teachers use a workbook with outdated lesson plans and are expected to provide all of their instruction orally to their students.

For the past two years, the United States-Africa Children's Fellowship (USACF), a non-profit organization started by USA educators, has collected books from schools in Connecticut to send to schools in South Africa. To date, two shipping containers carrying approximately 30,000 cases of books from Connecticut schools have been transported to schools and one room community libraries in rural areas of South Africa. The third container is half filled and could be ready to ship as early as January 2014 with your help. All you need to do is box up your books and teaching materials. The USACF takes care of picking up your donations, loading the shipping container, providing the overseas transportation and making the distributions to the South African schools and libraries.

The following schools have made donations to date for the third container:

ACES	Wintergreen School K-8 Magnet School
Avon	Avon Middle School
Derby	Irving Elementary School
East Haddam	Hale Ray Middle School
Hamden	Hamden High School
Lyme	Lyme Consolidated School
Manchester	Manchester Middle School
New Fairfield	New Fairfield Middle School
New Haven	King-Robinson K-8 Magnet School
North Branford	Totoket Valley Elementary School
North Branford	North Branford Intermediate School
North Branford	North Branford High School football team
Wallingford	Parker Farms Elementary School
Westbrook	Daisy Ingraham Elementary School

Please consider donating the retired/replaced materials that are filling the closets in your school. For more information or to make arrangements for a donation pick up, please contact Dale Bernardoni, the USACF CT donations coordinator, at 203-671-3052 or at [dbernardoni@comcast.net](mailto:dbernardoni@comcast.net). Thank you.

Dale Bernardoni / 203-671-3052 / [dbernardoni@comcast.net](mailto:dbernardoni@comcast.net)

## PALACE THEATER OFFERS AFFINITY DISCOUNT PROGRAM TO CAS MEMBER SCHOOLS

The Palace Theater is delighted to welcome all Connecticut Association of Schools members into its exclusive Affinity Discount Program! Becoming an affinity member is a great way to purchase tickets to the Palace's rich array of performances at a specially discounted rate.



As an affinity member, CAS member schools receive a minimum 10% discount off most Palace events with the opportunity to receive even larger discounts on certain performances. For more information on show specific discounts, please contact the Palace Theater Box Office at 203-346-2000.

Here's how to take advantage of the Palace Theater Affinity Program:

- Purchase tickets by phone at 203-346-2000, or in person at the Palace Theater Box Office, 100 East Main Street in Waterbury. (Discount not available for tickets purchased online)
- Mention your CAS membership to the sales and service representative before the point of purchase and ask to take advantage of the Affinity Discount.
- Enjoy the benefits of being a member of the Palace Theater Affinity Program!

Some restrictions may apply and discounts may only pertain to certain seating sections based on performance restrictions. Affinity Discounts can not be used on previously purchased tickets or combined with other offers.

For more information on the Palace Theater Affinity Program, purchasing tickets or upcoming Palace Theater events, please call the Box Office Monday through Friday from 10am – 5pm and Saturdays from 11am – 2pm at 203-346-2000, or visit us online at [www.palacetheaterct.org](http://www.palacetheaterct.org)

The future is full of entertaining new possibilities!

## ciac news

### CIAC HOSTS SEVENTH ANNUAL SPORTSMANSHIP CONFERENCE

The CIAC hosted the 2013 sportsmanship conference, featuring teen leadership specialist A'ric "The Dream Achiever" Jackson, at the Aqua Turf Club on November 21st. Now in its seventh year, this annual event is one of the largest that the CIAC sponsors. More than 620 student leaders, team captains, athletes, coaches, athletic directors and school administrators were in attendance.

The conference kicked off with a keynote address from renowned speaker A'ric Jackson, whose mission is to "T.I.E." – Teach, Inspire, and Encourage – all those who hear him. Jackson wowed the audience with his "Fearless Leadership" presentation, asking the student leaders and adults in attendance, "Do you know how juicy life can be when you are unapologetically you?"

Following the address, students participated in two 45-minute breakout sessions, one directed by Mr. Jackson, the other by the Positive Coaching Alliance, a national non-profit organization focused on developing competitors and teaching life lessons through sports. Adult attendees had the opportunity to take part in a two-hour workshop from the Alliance titled "Leading Your Athletic Department: Developing a Positive Coaching Culture."

Immediately following lunch was the presentation of the Michael's Cup Exemplary Program awards to seventeen outstanding schools. Bloomfield, Brookfield, Bunnell, Cheshire, Daniel Hand, East Catholic, East Hampton, Fairfield Ludlowe, Gilbert, Haddam-Killingworth, Ledyard, Lyman Memorial, Northwestern, Notre Dame-Fairfield, Sacred Heart, Shepaug Valley, and Weston High Schools were the schools that received recognition as exemplary programs. They were selected based on achievement in seven distinct areas: sportsmanship, participation, athletic scholarship, athletic personnel, equity, chemical free initiatives and athletic achievement.

The highlight of the afternoon was the unveiling of the 2012-13 overall Michael's Cup recipient. Congratulations to Weston High School!

The program concluded with entertaining and inspiring remarks from Mr. Jackson.





## ... more ciac news

### CAS-CIAC TEAMS UP WITH CT DOT TO PROMOTE SAFE DRIVING

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce a new partnership with the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Office. The Highway Safety Office will be bringing their "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" and "One Text or Call Could Wreck it All" messages to numerous CIAC state tournament events throughout the year. The goal of the new partnership is to encourage all students, athletes, families, fans and entire communities to drive sober and without distractions in the hopes of keeping all drivers, passengers and pedestrians safe while on the road. Banners, public address announcements, and other advertisements will be prevalent both at state tournament games and in CIAC newsletters in an effort to achieve these goals.



"We are extremely proud to announce the Department of Transportation's safe driving partnership with the CIAC," stated Joseph Cristalli, Transportation Principal Safety Program Coordinator of the Highway Safety Office. "Every single driver has a role in keeping our roads as safe as possible. We all know that using cell phones when driving or driving impaired is dangerous, but it doesn't stop everyone from doing it. This effort is intended to educate teens and their communities about the potential consequences of these behaviors. We hope that by bringing these messages to young drivers and their families that they will change their driving habits to help protect themselves, their families, and others on the road."

The main goal of the Connecticut Highway Safety Office and its programs are to prevent roadway fatalities and

*continued on page 24*

### UNIFIED SPORTS RECEIVES MUCH-DESERVED RECOGNITION

At the Celebration of Excellence in Education banquet last November, the CAS-CIAC Unified Sports® Program was honored for its twenty-two years of dedicated efforts to promote inclusion on the state's athletic fields and in its classrooms. The program began in 1992 when a partnership was created between two major stakeholders: CAS-CIAC and Special Olympics Connecticut. In the program's first year, there were two schools involved. Today, there are 192 elementary, middle and high schools that sponsor a Unified Sports program.

At the pre-school and kindergarten levels, the program is called Young Athletes, focusing on gross motor skills. The elementary level program is designed to build sports specific skills to prepare students for the next two levels. Both the middle and high school programs expose students to athletic competitions in the sports of soccer, basketball, volleyball and track. In all of these levels, students with and without disabilities work together as partners and achieve success in an inclusionary environment.

In the past six years Unified Sports has broadened its scope through Project UNIFY initiatives. Project UNIFY grants have provided seed money for new schools to start Unified Sports teams; and the annual Unified Sports Youth Leadership Summit has expanded dramatically, with 380 attendees from 60 middle and high schools in attendance at this year's event. The introduction of a youth leadership component has led to widespread positive school climate initiatives including R-Word Campaigns, inclusive sports banquets and positive school climate assemblies. Furthermore, the Unified Sports program has added Unified Bowling, Unified Dance and Unified Cheerleading; and it now organizes exhibition Unified basketball games during the half-time of the CIAC State Basketball Finals.



CAS Assistant Executive Director Mike Buckley (left) presents the "Recognition of Excellence in Education Award to Kate Careb (center), vice president of advancement for Special Olympics Connecticut, and Lou Pear, director of the CAS-CIAC Unified Sports Program.

Each spring, Unified Sports teammates, parents, coaches and school administrators are recognized for their hard work at the annual Michaels Cup banquet. At last year's event, 150 athletes and partners from 60 middle and high schools were honored in front of 750 guests.

Unified Sports opportunities are already expanding in CIAC leagues where athletic directors have established Unified Sports as a sanctioned student activity. This has given teams the opportunity to play interscholastic games and league tournaments.

Connecticut has been called on to assist interscholastic athletic associations from other states in developing Unified Sports programs. As the Connecticut model spreads to other states, more and more students will have a chance to be a part of their school's athletic program and, more importantly, be accepted as a respected member of their school.

The CAS-CIAC Unified Sports Program currently boasts a participation of more than 3500 athletes and partners, and 190 schools throughout the state. It has had and will continue to have a dramatic impact on the number of school age children who now have the opportunity to participate in organized team sports through their school.

## ... more ciac news

# Sports News & Notes

■ The National Athletic Trainer's Association has released best practices guidelines for sports-medicine management at the secondary and collegiate levels. The guidelines focus on decisions regarding student-athlete eligibility before and after an injury, as well as administrative duties related to hiring and dismissing athletic trainers, creating a system to provide quality medical care, and developing a performance-evaluation system for athletic trainers and sports-medicine team members working at schools. The guidelines can be downloaded at <http://casci.ac/846>.

■ The NCAA's initial-eligibility academic standards are changing for student-athletes enrolling at an NCAA Division I university on or after August 1, 2016 (this year's high school sophomore class and younger). A brief summary of the changes can be found at <http://casci.ac/850>. To assist in getting the message about the changes out to students, parents, coaches, etc., the NCAA has developed the "Initial-Eligibility Resource Index." The Index, an electronic tool that contains links to the NCAA Eligibility Center's resources and presentations, is available free of charge at <http://casci.ac/851>.

■ The *Pharos-Tribune* reports that the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana (ACLU-IN) has dropped its suit against the Eastern Pulaski Community School Corp. (EPCSC) after the school district agreed to allow a female student to play on the all male middle school football team. The agreement came about following a meeting between EPCSC Superintendent Dan Foster and the student's parents to resolve the dispute. The girl will be able to play in a game after 10 practices. ACLU-IN contends that before filing suit, the girl's father asked the athletic director if she could try out for the team but was told participation was limited to male students. Foster claims he was not consulted prior to the suit being filed and that the matter could have been resolved without resort to a lawsuit. (Source: *Pharos-Tribune*, 9/21/13, By Amie Sites)

■ Extracurricular activities make a positive difference in the lives of rural youth, but the impact of those experiences are different for boys compared to girls, according to a new study. That means, for example, rural male adolescents who are involved in church and arts/music are more likely to have a higher

GPA than girls in those communities who are involved in those same activities, but girls who participate on sports teams are more likely to have a better GPA than their male counterparts. According to the study, "Organized Activity Involvement Among Rural Youth: Gender Differences in Associations Between Activity Type and Developmental Outcomes," regardless of participants' gender, those who were part of school clubs generally had a higher grade point average, while those who were involved in church had lower problem behavior. But among those involved in sports, girls tended to have better grades, while boys who participated in church tended to have stronger test scores. Participation in some activities, such as community clubs (for example, 4-H groups), weren't associated with either problem behavior or GPA. The research looked at the activity involvement, academic achievement, and problem behavior from a sample of 456 middle and high school students in a rural community in a mid-Atlantic state. The county in which students lived was considered rural by the U.S. Census, and 66.2 percent of those involved in the study lived in or near a town with about 7,000 residents. To view the study in its entirety, visit <http://casci.ac/847>. (Source: *Organized Activities Provide Distinct Benefits for Boys, Girls*, Diette Courrégé Casey, January 8, 2014)

## New Jersey bans taunting, profanity, biased trash talk during athletic competitions

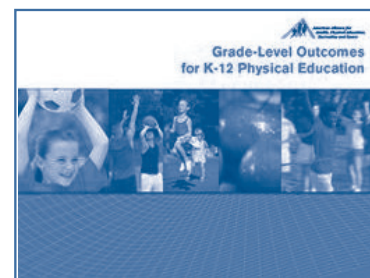
New Jersey has adopted new rules for high school athletes that require game officials to eject players for using taunts, profanity, or biased language. The rules are part of an anti-bullying initiative that athletic officials believe could serve as a model for other states.

According to Larry White, an assistant director at the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association, since the state implemented the rules in September, 20 students have been disqualified from play, one for using a racial slur. Under the new rules, referees are required to enforce a list of banned words. They are also required to report an athlete to the state governing body of high school sports should his or her language cross the line from competitive banter to profanity.

A player's use of expletives will result in ejection from the game. Use of sexist, homophobic, or racial epithets will result in ejection, and also could be referred to the state attorney general's civil rights office for additional action. "Biased language is not, and will not be, tolerated in the classroom," said White. "Interscholastic sports is an extension of the classroom and thus that language must not be tolerated on the fields, on the courts, on the mats, on the rinks, wherever high school sports are played."

Theresa Wynns, the director of sports and officials education at the National Federation of State High School Associations, believes New Jersey's tough new enforcement could serve as a model for other states. (Source: *Chicago Tribune*, 9/23/13, By Reuters)

## New PE Standards & Outcomes Offer More Guidance Than Ever Before



Physical education teachers across the country now have access to the fundamental tools they need to provide their students with quality physical education programs. AAHPERD has released new **National Standards & Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education**. The five national standards are designed to develop "physically literate individuals" who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity. The grade-level outcomes serve as benchmarks that identify what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. They provide a roadmap that PE teachers can use to track students' progress toward becoming physically literate. Two free documents are now available to help PE teachers start incorporating the new National Standards into their teaching:

- A flyer listing the new National Standards for K-12 Physical Education is available at <http://casci.ac/848>.
- An extensive chart detailing grade-specific outcomes for students under the new National Standards can be downloaded at <http://casci.ac/849>.



# FALL 2013 CIAC SPORTS CHAMPIONS

## GIRLS SOCCER

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL: St. Joseph	Suffield
Class L: Guilford	Branford
Class M: Waterford	Haddam-Killingworth
Class S : Portland/Old Saybrook - CO-CHAMPS	

## BOYS SOCCER

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL: Glastonbury/Ridgefield - CO-CHAMPS	
Class L: Farmington	Joel Barlow
Class M: Suffield	Ellington
Class S : Cromwell	Bolton

## GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL: Cheshire	Staples
Class L: RHAM	Farmington
Class M: Woodland	Foran
Class S : Morgan	Lyman Memorial

## FOOTBALL

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class LL: Southington	Fairfield Prep
Class L: New Canaan	Darien
Class M: St. Joseph	Brookfield
Class S : Ansonia	Woodland

Photo credit: Matt Dewkett



Class LL Girls Soccer - Suffield v. St. Joseph

Photo credit: Kathy Hickling



Class LL Boys Soccer - Glastonbury v. Ridgefield

## GIRLS FIELD HOCKEY

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Class L: Darien	Cheshire
Class M: Wilton	Lauralton Hall
Class S : Stonington	Granby

## BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Open: Ridgefield	Darien
Class LL: Ridgefield	Danbury
Class L: Darien	Hall
Class MM: New Fairfield	Guilford
Class M: Brookfield	Ellington
Class SS: Old Lyme	Haddam-Killingworth
Class S: Capital Prep	Bolton

## GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Open: Tolland	Glastonbury
Class LL: Glastonbury	Ridgefield
Class L: Wilton	Mercy
Class MM: Branford	New Fairfield
Class M: Tolland	Suffield
Class SS : Griswold	East Hampton
Class S : Immaculate	Bolton

## GIRLS SWIMMING

<i>Champion</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>
Open: Darien	New Canaan
Class LL: Greenwich	Amity
Class L: Darien	New Canaan
Class M: Pomperaug	Brookfield
Class S: Weston	Lauralton Hall

Photo credit: Jonathan Bloom



Class S Field Hockey - Granby v. Stonington

Photo credit: Kevin Pataky



Class LL Football - Fairfield Prep v. Southington

Photo credit: Ken Rutt



Class L Girls Volleyball - RHAM v. Farmington

## ... more ciac news

### 55 STATE FINALS AND COUNTING: EX-TERRYVILLE COACH HAD UNIQUE HONOR THIS YEAR

By Roger Cleaveland

Reprinted from the *Republican-American*, July 22, 2013

**F**inally, all the years of dedication, passion and honing of his skills came together for Terryville native Art Hamm in a way seldom, if ever, seen before for a high school official in Connecticut.

The 68-year old former math teacher and coach experienced a rare accomplishment this past school year as his commitment to athletics earned him the right to officiate a state championship game in three different sports: soccer, basketball and baseball.

"We all have pride so you try to do the best you can," Hamm said. "To officiate three state championship games in one year I don't know that it has been done before. Not that I am comparing myself to anybody else, but it is definitely a matter of personal pride for me to be able to do something like that."

The CIAC, which oversees high school athletics in Connecticut, couldn't confirm if Hamm's feat was unique, but executive board member and director of officials Joe Tonelli said Hamm was the only one to pull off such a trifecta this past year and is very deserving of recognition for his work as an official.

"Art is certainly a quality official who has done a lot for high school athletics," Tonelli said. "He serves on the CIAC sportsmanship committee. He is the interpreter for the Western Connecticut Soccer Officials Association. He is a person who loves high school athletics and is willing to go out of his way to help promote them in Connecticut."

Hamm said officiating high school and college games has always been much more than just a hobby or a part-time job for him. It's a passion that he's enjoyed most of his life.

Last year he officiated 157 games among the three sports, and he estimates that since he started with soccer and baseball in 1963 he's officiated "approximately 7,230" games among the three sports.

Of those, 55 have been state championship games as he has done seven baseball finals, nine basketball finals and 39 soccer finals. In fact, he's done a championship game in soccer 39 straight years.

"He is a veteran official that has the experience and has worked at games at that level

before in several sports," Tonelli said, "so any assigner would feel comfortable having him on a championship game."

Hamm loves the state tournament because the players and coaches are more excited, determined and focused since there is more on the line building up to the championship game.

"It's always been important to me to respect the game as an official and service these schools as best as I can," Hamm said. "I take it very seriously, and I enjoy it. It never gets old. Each time you get a final, it is just as exciting as the first one you did because you never know when it is going to be your last one."

Hamm's favorite sport growing up was baseball. He went to the University of New Haven to play under legendary coach Frank "Porky" Vieira and attended a couple major league tryout camps figuring he would play in the majors.

When a pro baseball career didn't work out, he returned to Terryville to teach 6th grade math, coach and officiate.

He may be known best in his hometown as the highly successful Terryville High basketball coach. And his favorite sport is men's college basketball, enough so that he's gone to the Final Four for 40 years now.

But when it comes to officiating, soccer is his favorite, thanks to the pace and timing of the game.

"Part of that is definitely the level that I have done in soccer on the collegiate level," Hamm said. "Another part is being interpreter (of rules) on our board. It is also a great time of the year. The kids are just getting back to school. The fall weather is nice, and you get to run around and get some exercise."

He started officiating soccer in 1968 when friend Jack Perkins told him about a test to become a high school referee. He knew little about the game but loved the challenge of watching others officiate it and teaching himself.

Hamm became good quickly and was officiating in college by 1971. He's refereed college soccer Final Four games at the Division I,

Division II and Division III levels. While he's cut back on his college schedule, one of his favorite events remains the College Club National Soccer Championships each November.

He works out every day to keep in shape so he can continue enjoying his passion at the highest level.

"A lot of guys I have worked with have retired at a younger age," Hamm said. "I think about that, but I'm still enjoying it as well as the camaraderie with the other officials. So as long as I have my health and my legs allow me to do it, I don't have an end in sight."

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#### THE BULLETIN

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## ... more ciac news

### FOOTBALL QUARTERFINAL INSPIRES GOODWILL AMONG ALL PARTIES

By all accounts, the December 3rd quarter-final football game between Newtown and Ridgefield High Schools was a thrilling display of both great skill and great sportsmanship, great competition and great conduct. The game took place just eleven days before the one-year anniversary of the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting; and emotions ran high. The game was an intense, hard fought contest between two well-matched opponents. In the end, Ridgefield held off an inspired second-half comeback by undefeated Newtown to win 35-33. The email messages below, which were exchanged between officials and athletic administrators involved in the game, reflect the professionalism, fairness and sportsmanship that were amply displayed throughout the game.

From: Chris Librandi  
Date: Wed, Dec 4, 2013 at 11:30 AM  
To: Gregg Simon (Newtown AD), Carl Charles (Ridgefield AD), Joe Tonelli, Steve Narracci; John Manzi

Good morning Mr. Simon & Mr. Charles,

Even though the outcome of last night's game was not in Newtown's favor, I, along with all the members of my crew last night, would like to complement the coaching staff, the players and support staff from Newtown High School for a very professional and supportive experience.

From the time we arrived to the time we were escorted off the campus, Mr. Ed Alicea saw to our every need. It made our experience a completely positive one.

To a man, the members of my crew expressed their pleasure with being part of such a highly competitive, well-played, well-coached game. The players and the coaches from both teams are to be complemented for conducting themselves in a truly sporting manner. They played hard, clean and fair. There was not a single time during the game that anyone on the crew needed to speak with a player or coach about their actions or behavior. The fact that the game came down to a try for point to tie the game with 16 seconds left on the clock is indicative of how well-played and competitive the game was. It was a memorable experience for all.

Lastly, my hope is that the coaches' and players' experience with us, as members of the New Haven Football Officials Association, was equally satisfactory. We did our best to give them a fairly and consistently called game. I believe we succeeded in that effort.

Again, my thanks to everyone involved at the game site for making this such a positive experience. Good luck to the Ridgefield Tigers in the next round of games and congratulations to the Newtown High School football team for a very successful season.

Respectfully,  
Chris Librandi  
Head Referee NHFOA.

-----  
From: Carl Charles  
Date: Wed, Dec 4, 2013 at 12:22 PM  
To: Chris Librandi, Gregg Simon, Joe Tonelli, Steve Narracci, John Manzi

Hi Chris,

Thank you for your email. Last night's game was truly an outstanding high school sporting event! Gregg Simon did an outstanding job as site director. His staff at Newtown could not have been more supportive or

better hosts for this event. The teams played very hard and it was a great game right to the end! The officiating crew and sideline crew were very professional and gave an outstanding effort as well. They treated the players and coaches with respect at all times; and they called a very fair and consistent game allowing the players on both sides to determine the final outcome.

On behalf of our coaching staff and myself, we want to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to Gregg, his staff at Newtown and the officials for an outstanding event! I know CIAC would be very proud of the way this quarterfinal game was conducted!

Best regards,  
Carl Charles  
Director of Athletics  
Ridgefield High School

-----  
From: Joe Tonelli  
Date: Thu, Dec 5, 2013 at 5:16 AM  
To: Chris Librandi  
Cc: Gregg Simon, Carl Charles, Steve Narracci

Chris,

Thanks for taking the time to express your appreciation to Gregg Simon and his staff at Newtown for their hospitality and professionalism, and to commend the players and coaches from both teams for their outstanding sportsmanship. Things like this are always great to hear and epitomize high school athletics at its best. Thanks again.

Joe T



PHOTO: Richard Harbus for the NY Daily News

Prior to kick-off, the Newtown Nighthawks, whose helmets were adorned with the No. 26 in tribute to the teachers and students killed last Dec. 14, clasped hands and bowed their heads in silent remembrance.

## ... more ciac news

**Safe Driving Partnership, continued from page 19** injuries as a result of crashes related to driver behavior. This partnership with CIAC allows the HSO another opportunity to impact communities and provide a reminder that everyone plays a role in keeping Connecticut's roads safe. With the ever-changing landscape of technology in our society, the challenge of preventing drivers from using their cell phones while they are on the road has emerged as an extremely dangerous roadway safety issue.

While improvements in technology have done great things, such as made it much easier for family and friends to stay connected, it has also increased drivers' willingness to use their phones while driving and endanger themselves and others. In today's fast paced world, the time it takes to get from one place to another can seem like an opportunity to call or text with someone, check social media or email, or accomplish a task you have been meaning to get done. While these urges can be difficult to resist, the distractions they pose have proven to be extremely dangerous - and often deadly.



The recent studies and statistics regarding distracted driving have been troubling. In 2011, 3,331 people were killed nationwide in crashes which were reported to involve a distracted driver. It has also been determined that sending or receiving the average text takes a driver's eyes from the road for 4.6 seconds. If driving at 55 MPH, this is the equivalent of traveling the length of an entire football field - blind. Using a cell phone while driving, whether it is hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reaction just as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. Therefore, these studies have shown that driving distracted is just as dangerous as driving impaired.

To combat the dangers of distracted driving, the Highway Safety Office has been working with partners such as CIAC to change attitudes and behaviors while educating drivers and their communities. While the main messages of the partnership between the CIAC and the Connecticut Department of Transportation Highway Safety Office will be focused on driving sober and without distractions, the overall goal is to encourage responsible driving behavior to both teens and adults in all communities throughout the state.

## caad news

### GLASTONBURY'S TRISH WITKIN NAMED TO NATIONAL POST

**T**rish Witkin, athletic director at Glastonbury High School, was elected National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) President-elect at the annual athletic directors conference in California last month. She is only the second athletic administrator from Connecticut to ascend to the position of NIAAA President-elect, following in the footsteps of CAAD Executive Director Fred Balsamo, who was NIAAA's president in 1990.

Trish will serve in her current position until the end of 2014 and then will assume the reigns from current NIAAA President Andy Chiles (Orlando, Florida). Trish has been the director of athletics at Glastonbury High since 2007 and currently oversees thirty-two varsity athletic programs. Her extensive experience in athletic administration includes eight years as coordinator of athletics and intramurals for the Enfield Public Schools.

Trish holds both a bachelor's degree in communication and a master's degree in administration and supervision from the University of Hartford. In 2007, she earned her certification as an athletic administrator (CAA) and, three years later, achieved the designation Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA).

Active at both the state and national levels, Trish is a past-president of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) and former member of the CIAC Board of Control. She continues to serve CAAD as its past-president and season limitations consultant and is presently a member of several CIAC committees. She has represented Connecticut at the NIAAA Delegate Assembly for four years, and currently serves Section 1 on the NIAAA board.

Trish's many professional achievements include the NIAAA State Award of Merit for Connecticut and induction into the Wappinger Central School District (Wappinger Falls, NY) Hall of Fame. Under her leadership, Glastonbury High School was selected as the state's most exemplary athletic program for two consecutive years.



**Photo left:** Trish Witkin, who will serve as NIAAA President-elect in 2014, is shown seated at the NIAAA closing general session at the National Federation Conference for High School Athletic Directors with Andy Chiles of Orlando, FL, who will serve as NIAAA President in 2014.

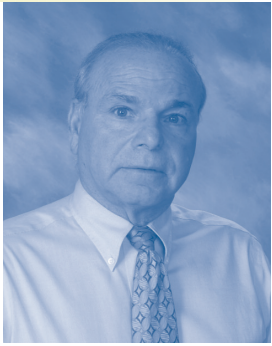
**Photo right:** Trish Witkin is pictured at the NFHS National A.D. Conference closing general session with Fred Balsamo, CAAD's Executive Director.



## ... more caad news

## ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD CAUTION COACHES WHEN USING ELECTRONIC MEDIA

By Fred Balsamo, CMAA

*Reprinted from "Interscholastic Athletic Administration," Winter 2013*

There are still those of us who resist the electronic invasion and struggle sending a simple text message; but, for the modern coach, the use of electronic media to communicate

has become standard practice. Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Skype and many other similar programs have all found their way into our athletic programs across the country. The uses of these mediums can easily become a double edged sword for a coach. On one hand the ability for coaches to instantly communicate with the players and parents on their teams can be a tremendous benefit but it can also be a nightmare. The use of electronic media without some caution can make coaches too easily accessible, can expose coaches to student behaviors they may not want to know about and can have coaches caught up in accusations of inappropriate behavior. The information highway works both ways. While it's a convenience for coaches to be able to contact parents and athletes, it also works in reverse and allows those same student-athletes and any unreasonable parents easy access to the coach. Coaches who have students added to their social media site as a "friend" can be exposed to activity they are morally and legally bound to report, even if it is not one of their athletes. More importantly, students that are considered "friends" on a coach's social media site can be exposed to actions and pictures which may seem harmless but could easily be deemed inappropriate. It would be prudent for athletic directors to take some time in a pre-season meeting to find out exactly which coaches on their staff already utilize electronic media and to discuss the following appropriate methods for their use.

**Texting, Emailing, Etc. -** A coach should not be communicating with any student-athlete one-on-one. Sending out a text or email blitz to everyone on the team is a great way to instantly communicate with the team but coaches should refrain from engaging in a one on one discussion via text or on the computer. It is recommended that someone of authority,

such as the athletic director or another coach, be copied on all responses or communications to an individual student-athlete. This insures that someone else is seeing both sides of the communication and nothing can be taken out of context.

**Cell Phone Use by Student Athletes -** The cell phone is a very powerful and useful tool in communication. Just about everyone has a cell phone and most cell phones have a variety of options which makes them all portable computers as well as a camera. Athletic departments should establish guidelines for the use of cell phones by students. At minimal athletic departments should ban cell phone usage in the locker room and during practice. We would never allow anyone to bring a camera into our locker rooms and we should hold that same standard here. Cell phones at practice can be a distraction and can be disruptive to the harmony of the team. Parents and student-athletes should understand that restrictions on cell phones are for their own safety and protection.

**Using Social Media Sites (Facebook) -** Before we explore the use of social media sites it is important we understand how a person's first amendment rights may come into play. Coaches and athletes may think their right to free speech provides them with a blanket protection on what they do on their own personal page on their own time. Everyone is afforded protection under the first amendment; however, when a coach is communicating with the students-athletes he/she is subject to oversight by the school district even if the communication is done on his/her own personal time. School districts can regulate the use of social & electronic media by employees, including personal use of media when such use:

- interferes with the work of the district,
- is used to harass coworkers,
- creates a hostile environment,
- breaches confidentiality of employees,
- disrupts the work of the district,
- harms the reputation of the school,
- violates the law or board of education policy.

The following "best practices" should be established by school districts and should be utilized by coaches to help guide them in using social media sites such as Facebook.

1. If any coach seeks to use electronic or social media sites as an educational tool or in relation to extracurricular activities or programs of the school district, the coach must seek and obtain the permission of his/her supervisor prior to setting up the site.

2. If a coach wishes to use Facebook or other similar social media sites to communicate meetings, activities, games, responsibilities, announcements, etc., for a school-based club or an official sports team, the coach must also comply with the following rules: a. the coach must set up the team as a group list which will be "closed and moderated"; b. members will NOT be established as "friends", but as members of the group list. **NEVER add a student to your personal page;** c. anyone who has access to the communications conveyed through the site may only gain access by the permission of the coach. Persons desiring to access the page may join only after the coach invites them and allows them to join; d. parents shall be permitted to access any site that their child has been invited to join; e. access to the site may only be permitted for educational purposes related to the club, activity, organization or team; f. the coach responsible for the site will monitor it regularly; g. the coach's supervisor shall be permitted access to any site established by the employee for a school-related purpose; and, h. coaches are required to maintain appropriate professional boundaries in the establishment and maintenance of all such district-sponsored social media activity.

3. Coaches are required to use appropriately respectful speech in their social media posts on district-sponsored sites and to refrain from harassing, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, threatening or other inappropriate communications.

4. Coaches are required to comply with all school policies and procedures and all applicable laws with respect to the use of computer equipment, networks, or devices when accessing district-sponsored social media sites.

5. The school will reserve the right to monitor all employee use of district computers and other electronic devices, including employee blogging and social networking activity. An employee should have no expectation of

*continued on page 27*

## CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

# 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Athletic Directors Conference

March 27-28, 2014 / Sheraton Hartford South (formerly the Rocky Hill Marriott)

## EARLY BIRD SCHEDULE

**Thursday, March 27, 2014:**

- 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. Donut Derby - Gift Redemption
- 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. CIAC Workshop - *Paul Hoey, Associate Executive Director*
- 12:00 - 1:15 p.m. Luncheon / CAAD General Meeting -  
*Brian Fell, CAAD President*
- 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. General Session
- 3:15 - 4:15 p.m. Workshop Sessions
- 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Social Hour
- 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Awards Banquet

**Friday, March 28, 2014:**

- 8:00 - 9:30 a.m. CAAD Annual Breakfast
- 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. CAAD Coaching Education Modules  
*By CAAD State Faculty*
- 11:15 - 1:45 p.m. Buffet Luncheon and CAAD Closing Meeting

**CEU'S WILL BE AWARDED EACH DAY**

### 2014 C.A.A.D. AWARD RECIPIENTS

- ◆ *CAAD Distinguished Service Award* ◆  
(Athletic Administration)  
**DAVE SOUSA**  
Waterford High School
- ◆ *NIAAA State Award of Merit* ◆  
**DAN SCAVONE**  
Berlin High School
- ◆ *Duncanson Meritorious Service Award* ◆  
**JON CAPONE**  
West Haven High School
- ◆ *Community Service Award* ◆  
**PAUL DAVIS**

### PRE-REGISTRATION INFORMATION

#### Early Bird Conference Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Payment enclosed is to cover:

Registration: CAAD Member -- \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Non-member -- \$255.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed -- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Turfer Gift (circle size):

Unisex sizes: S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Make checks payable to: **CAAD**

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

OR register online at: [caadinc.org/conference.html](http://caadinc.org/conference.html)

No one-day fees ◆ No refunds after March 14, 2014  
Conference gift not guaranteed after March 7th

#### Hotel Registration

Group: Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ American Express

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: ☐ 2 Double Beds ☐ King Bed  
\$109 per night plus 15% tax

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

**Hartford Sheraton South**  
100 Capital Boulevard  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067  
Attn: Katie Gonzalez

OR register online at: [caadinc.org/conference.html](http://caadinc.org/conference.html)  
Room Rate NOT guaranteed after March 14th



## 44th NATIONAL ATHLETIC DIRECTORS CONFERENCE

By John Krot, Athletic Director, Killingly High School



Anaheim, California was the site of the 44th National Athletic Directors Conference. The Conference was held at the Anaheim Convention Center. The proximity of the hotels to the convention center and the spacious convention center itself made this site an excellent place to host this national conference. Weather was just perfect - 75-80 degree temperatures, bright blue skies, and very comfortable nights. For the New England Athletic Directors, this was weather at its best, especially when you consider that many of these ADs left bitterly cold temperatures and very snowy conditions to make their way to the conference.

The National Conference attracted ADs from across the United States and outside the U.S. Connecticut was well represented as 24 ADs attended including CAAD president, Brian Fell, CAAD Executive Director, Fred Balsamo and many members of the CAAD Executive Committee.

Why the attraction to this National Conference? One could simply answer - for professional development. But it goes well beyond that. The conference provides endless opportunities to network with their

peers gaining much insight and motivation to return home to administer programs with new knowledge and enthusiasm. Athletic directors can take LTI courses (Leadership Training Courses) which enable athletic directors to better serve their school districts. Workshops on current topics addressing the concerns of athletic directors are also available. Exhibitors from A - Z are waiting to have a few minutes of your time to talk about new products, new programs, and new fund-raising ideas - all designed to help the athletic director in some way or form. The conference offers motivational and inspirational speakers who send a message out to the listening audience. This year, Bill Walton, former NBA standout and basketball analyst, and Pat Haden, USC athletic director, were the main speakers.

If this isn't enough, there are committee meetings, a conference luncheon and a conference banquet to attend. Each in its own way provides athletic directors additional opportunities to network and to learn more about their profession. After attending a national conference, athletic directors to the person would say it was time well spent and really a must if an athletic director is trying to provide the best athletic programs for his or her own district. For any athletic director that has not been able to attend a national conference, make it your number one professional priority. Next year the conference will be held at National Harbor, Maryland from December 12-16. Start making plans now. You won't be disappointed.

One additional conference news item that Connecticut can take great pride in is the NIAAA announcement that Trish Witkin is the new president-elect of the NIAAA. She will serve in this position through next year's conference and then will take over as NIAAA President. Trish is very grateful for this opportunity and looks forward to the challenges that the top leadership role will demand. As she put it, "I will be ready because I have been blessed to work with an incredible CAAD board and know so much of what I bring to the NIAAA comes from that experience and the people I serve with." We offer congratulations to Trish Witkin and wish her the best of luck.

### Electronic Media, *continued from page 25*

personal privacy in any communication or post made through social media while using district computers, cellular telephones or other data devices.

6. All posts on district-sponsored social media must comply with the school policies concerning confidentiality, including the confidentiality of student information. If any coach is unsure about the confidential nature of information the coach is considering posting, the coach shall consult with his/her supervisor prior to making the post.

7. A coach may not link a district-sponsored social media site or webpage to any personal social media sites or sites not sponsored by the school district.

8. A coach may not use district-sponsored social media communications for private financial gain, political, commercial, advertisement, and proselytizing or solicitation purpose.

9. A coach may not use direct-sponsored social media communications in a manner that misrepresents personal views as those of the school district, or in a manner that could be construed as such.

In summary, the world of electronic media has been thrust upon us with great speed and enthusiasm. We have been so busy learning how to use it and keep up with its newer and faster methods that we have not taken the time to learn how to use it correctly. Electronic media can be a great tool but it can

also be used as a weapon if not used correctly. Like any other new trend that has come our way, we need to get ahead of it and begin a discussion with our coaches about the potential hazards that exist and perhaps educate them on how best to stay out of harm's way.

### References List:

1. Thomas B. Mooney, Shipman & Goodwin, LLP, (February 16, 2011) Seminar on "High School Social Networking Update", (2011)"Regulating Speech in Social Network"
2. Amity Regional School District, Board of Education Policy 4118.51(a), 4128.51 - Personnel-Certified/Non Certified
3. Woodland Regional School District Board of Education Policy 4118.51(a).
4. Connecticut Coaching Education Program Module 16, "Appropriate Use of Electronic Media by Coaches©", (2011)

### Connected Principals, *continued from page 17*

Finally, CAS is starting an online Book Club in February. We want to hear from you about which book we should read and discuss. Please take a minute to answer the questions at <http://goo.gl/MMzqnd>. We will vote on the most popular book nominees during the first week in January. The book with the most votes in January will become the first CAS Book Club selection.

### GIVE Yourself A Gift

Becoming a connected principal gives you the power to become that self-directed, self-actualized learner. What are you waiting for? It's a new year. Forget the diet! Instead, give yourself the powerful gift of becoming a connected principal! Together, let's share ideas, stories, pictures, strategies, and thoughts as we learn and grow together to make a difference for ourselves and for ALL Connecticut students.

### Articles/Blogs

- Vojtek, Rosie O'Brien. October 31, 2013. "To Tweet Or Not To Tweet? A Principal's Perspective." Epic-ed: Empowering Digital Transitions. <http://goo.gl/8lxDb0>
- Vojtek, Rosie O'Brien. October 16, 2013. *Principals: We've Got to Walk The Talk*. **ISTE Connects Blog**. <http://blog.iste.org/principals-weve-walk-talk/>
- Vojtek, Rosie O'Brien. November 2013. *Chatting with Connected Principals*. **The Communicator**. NAESP: Volume 37, Issue 3. <http://casci.ac/852>

*Rosie Vojtek is currently the editor for the Virtual Education Journal (VEJ) <http://virtualeducationjournal.com/> for ISTE's (International Society for Technology in Education) Special Interest Group for Virtual Environments (ISTE SIGVE). She is also the president for ISTE's Special Interest Group for Administrators (ISTE SIGAdmin). She also served as the social committee chair for the Virtual World's Best Practices in Education Conference (VWBPE) for several years. During the 1990's, she and her husband, Bob Vojtek, co-authored the technology column for the Journal of Staff Development published by the then National Staff Development Council. They also co-authored the Corwin Press book (2009), "Motivate! Inspire! Lead! 10 Strategies for Building Collegial Learning Communities."*



## INVESTORS IN CT YOUTH



- ★ Aetna ★
- ★ Bearingstar ★
- ★ Brine ★
- ★ Bob's Stores ★
- ★ CT DOT ★
- ★ CT Lighting Centers ★
- ★ CT National Guard ★
- ★ Connecticut Sun ★
- ★ Dattco ★
- ★ Digital Back Office ★
- ★ ESPN ★
- ★ Empower ★
- ★ G&B Studios ★
- ★ Horace Mann ★
- ★ IGA / Bozzutos ★
- ★ Jostens ★
- ★ Liberty Mutual ★
- ★ MaxPreps ★
- ★ McDonald's ★
- ★ New Balance ★
- ★ PureTech Water ★
- ★ Servpro ★
- ★ Sodexo ★
- ★ Spalding ★
- ★ Subway ★
- ★ Team IP ★
- ★ U.S. Marine Corp ★
- ★ Wilson Sporting Goods ★