

BULLETIN

The Connecticut Association of Schools
The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference



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

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MARCH 2006

ELEMENTARY ARTS FESTIVAL FUN FOR ALL

Dr. Robert Carroll, Assistant Executive
Director

The Seventh Annual Elementary Arts Festival sponsored by CAS and Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. was an enjoyable event for the hundreds of parents, students and educators who attended. The Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville was transformed into a three ring circus that included clowns, jugglers, face painters, stilt walkers, games, caricaturists and balloon sculpting. With circus music filling the air and children feasting on popcorn and cotton candy, the scene was reminiscent of a Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey production!

Aside from the fun and games and professional circus entertainment provided by Center Ring Productions of Bridgeport, there was a very serious side to this important annual event - that of honoring elementary students who excel in the arts. Each honoree, and there were two per participating school, was presented with an award certificate to acknowledge his or her achievements in either the visual or the performing arts.

The formal part of the program consisted of a welcome by Dr. Gary
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Amy Brenneman, former Glastonbury resident and star of the popular TV drama "Judging Amy," will receive the 2006 *Celebrity*

Arts Award at the Eleventh Annual Connecticut High School Outstanding Arts Awards Banquet.

This year's banquet will be held on April 5th at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington.

Visit www.casciac.org for more information

CAS NAMES 2006 PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce the selection of the *2006 Principals of the Year!* Each year nominations are solicited for the elementary, middle, and high school *Principal of the Year* awards. The winners are chosen by the CAS Awards and Recognition Committee, a selection committee consisting of active and retired principals and assistant principals. Congratulations to Granby Memorial Middle School Principal **Shellie Pierce**, the CAS Middle School Principal of the Year, and Westbrook High School Principal **Robert Hale**, the CAS High School Principal of the Year! The principal of the year at the elementary level will be named in April.



Shellie Pierce
Middle School Principal of the Year



Robert Hale, Jr.
High School Principal of the Year

Shellie Pierce, Granby Memorial M.S.

In only her fourth year as principal of GMMS, the length of Shellie's tenure belies the depth and breadth of her contributions to the school and its community. She is credited with increasing parental support for and involvement in school programs; creating a culture of adult learning where staff feel intellectually engaged and challenged; and using test data to refine curricula and improve student achievement. Thanks to Shellie's focus on differentiated learning, teaming, and interdisciplinary instruction, GMMS has evolved into a learning community which exemplifies the precepts of an effective middle school.

Upon learning of her award, Shellie remarked, "I am humbled and honored to
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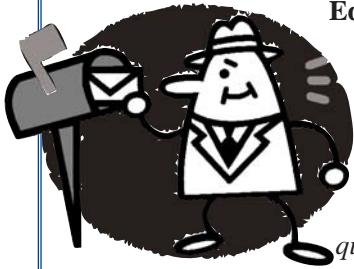
Robert Hale, Westbrook H.S.

A 30-year veteran educator, Bob has demonstrated a single-minded commitment to high levels of student achievement. He was nominated for the award by Westbrook Superintendent Dr. John Sullivan and Special Services Coordinator Chester Bialicki. Says Sullivan, "Bob has boundless energy and is totally dedicated to the success of his students and their school."

"I am both honored and humbled to receive this award.," says Bob. "Connecticut is lucky to have so many skillful and inspirational principals in its schools. It is a privilege to be able to represent them in 2006. It is also a privilege to have a school filled with wonderful people, all of whom helped earn this honor. I have learned that without the dedication and hard work of
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LEGAL MAILBAG

By Attorney Thomas B. Mooney, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut



Editor's Note: *Legal Mailbag* is a regular feature in the CAS BULLETIN. We invite readers to submit short, law-related questions of practical concern to school administrators. Each month we will select questions and publish answers. While these answers cannot be considered formal legal advice, they may be of help to you and your colleagues. We may edit your questions, and we will not identify the authors. Please submit your questions to: legalmailbag@casciac.org.

Q. Dear Mailbag: At the high school, we have been asked to post job opportunities on the website. We think that our website could be a good clearinghouse for such information. However, with all the bad-news stories these days, we are concerned that we not somehow create liability for the district by providing this courtesy to employers and students. Do you recommend that we just say "no"?

- *Better Safe Than Sorry?*

A. Dear Safe: Any time you get out of bed, you are taking a risk of liability. However, there are steps you can take to reduce the likelihood of a claim against you or the school district. In liability cases, the first question is whether and what duty the defendant has undertaken. When people have no duty of care to another person, they are not liable if a third party injures that other person. Here, the key point is to make clear that you are simply listing names and are not attesting to the suitability of any of these employers. A simple disclaimer to that effect should suffice. You may also wish to include in the disclaimer an admonition that students and their parents are responsible for making their own decisions about prospective employers. Such a disclaimer, made conspicuously on the website, should suffice to dispel any notion that the school district is somehow vouching for the listed employers.

Q. Dear Mailbag: Can you share with me the rules / guidelines / protocol governing the scheduling of CIAC athletic competitions for Connecticut public schools? I am specifically concerned with the scheduling of competition during "Exam Times." It is my understanding that the NCAA does not allow or strongly suggests that competition NOT be scheduled during student exam timeframes. Does the CIAC adhere to such guidelines or rules?

- *Books First, Sports Later*

A. Dear Books: Each local CIAC school district develops its own exam schedules and regulations regarding limitations of athletic competition during that period of time. Some athletic leagues have league policies governing games during examination periods, and you may wish to check with CIAC on whether any such rules have been adopted by your league. In scheduling CIAC tournaments, the CIAC limits time taken from classroom instruction to the extent possible. However, there is no hard and fast rule on this point.

Q. Dear Mailbag: One of my teachers just sent out a notice to other teachers through the school mailboxes, announcing a prayer group meeting in her room early in the morning before school. Some other members of the faculty have told me privately that these invitations make them uncomfortable, and they have asked me to tell her to knock it off. When I asked them whether this teacher is importuning them to come to her meetings, they said no. But they are upset because they do not think that the public schools are the appropriate place for religion. Do I have to tell this teacher to knock it off with the invitations to her prayer group meetings?

- *Caught in the Middle*

A. Dear Caught: Given the limited facts you presented, I must give you the traditional legal standby - it depends. One thing is clear. If this activity is limited to the adults in your school, you are not required to tell the teacher to stop inviting colleagues to prayer meetings. The courts have been increasingly tolerant of religious activity in our schools as long as school officials are not using their positions to promote religion. If this teacher's sending invitations to her prayer meetings is a matter of her private choice, you do not have to prohibit her from sending the invitations. The more difficult question is whether you would have the right to do so. You are free to decide that the school mailboxes are not to be used for any private communication. However, if you permit teachers to use the mailboxes for any private communication (e.g., advertising a used car for sale), you may not discriminate against this teacher simply because her invitation involves religion.

ct news & notes

■ Congratulations to Elizabeth Americo of Guilford and Jack Applebaum of Greenwich, Connecticut's winners of the 2006 Prudential Spirit of the Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Elizabeth, a junior at Guilford High School, is the founder and president of a school club that raises awareness and funds to assist needy people both in her community and in Third World countries. Jack, an eighth-grader at Central Middle School in Greenwich, is a founding member of his school's chapter of "Building with Books," a national organization that raises money to build schools in developing countries.

Connecticut Vital Signs

	2000-2001	2004-2005
Per pupil expenditures	\$10,525	\$11,893
Ave. teacher salaries	\$53,507	\$56,516
Pupil/teacher ration	13.7	13.1
Total enrollment	562,179	576,474
Total education expenditures		\$7.67 million
Per-capita income		\$45,506
No. of high school graduates		35,430
% minority enrollment*		31.5%
% of students with IEPs*		12%
% of graduates taking SAT®		86%
% of students scoring 3 or above on AP exams		72.7%

* 2003-2004 figures

(Source: American School Board Journal: 2006 Education Vital Signs)



"I think it's about a school principal..."

Reprinted from NAESP Principal, Jan-Feb 2006

national news & notes

■ Does television rot children's brains? A new study by two economists from the University of Chicago taps into a trove of data from the 1960's to argue that when it comes to academic test scores, parents can let children watch TV without fear of future harm. The study was based on what the authors call a "natural experiment" that resulted from the way television was introduced in the United States in the late 1940's and early 1950's, when some cities got TV service five years ahead of others. Data from cities where preschoolers were exposed to the new technology, and data from cities where they were not, were correlated with test scores from about 300,000 students nationwide in 1965. The result showed "very little difference and if anything, a slight positive advantage" in test scores for children who grew up watching TV early on, compared to those who did not, reported one of the lead researchers. In nonwhite households and those where English was a second language or the mother had less than a high school education, TV's positive effect was more marked.

■ After four years of complaints from parents, teachers and administrators about President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* education reform plan, a bipartisan commission has been created to take a "hard, independent look" at the law's problems and its promises. The commission, announced last month, will travel the USA, holding public field hearings and roundtables, culminating in Washington, D.C., in September. The commission will send recommendations to Congress in advance of NCLB's expected renewal in 2007.

■ The percentage of students with disabilities who are achieving proficiency on state accountability tests increased in 42 states between the 2002-03 and 2004-05 school years, concludes a survey of state directors of special education. Released by the Minneapolis-based National Center on Educational Outcomes, the survey also found that most states now have enough data to attribute increased proficiency to specific efforts by schools and districts. Those efforts include better access to standards-based instruction for students with disabilities, better alignment of individualized education programs with standards, and clearly communicated test-participation policies.

■ Hispanics have the highest high school dropout rate of any ethnic or racial group in the United States. A new report from the National Research Council says persuading students of Spanish-speaking immigrants to finish high school and go to college is crucial to the economy as much of the nation's workforce edges toward retirement. By 2030, about 25% of white Americans will be at retirement age or older, compared with 10% of Hispanics. Although a growing number of Hispanics have reached the middle class, the report says they

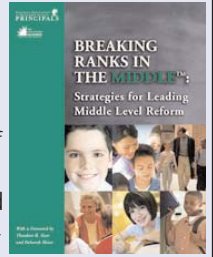
continue to lag economically as a group because of a continued influx of low-skilled immigrants. The report suggests that investing in education for Hispanic students is critical to shaping the nation's future.

■ Only one in four Americans can name more than one of the five freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment (freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly and petition for redress of grievances.) But more than half can name at least two members of "The Simpsons" cartoon family, according to a new survey. The survey found more people could name the three "American Idol" judges than identify three First Amendment rights. It also showed that people misidentified First Amendment rights. About one in five people thought the right to own a pet was protected, and 38 percent said they believed the right against self-incrimination contained in the Fifth Amendment was a First Amendment right, the survey found.

■ A sudden rise in online public school enrollment - and ballooning state aid payments to school districts as a result - has caught educators and lawmakers in Colorado by surprise. The number of students in Colorado taking courses over the Internet jumped from 3,483 last school year to 5,730 this school year. The increase drove a 66 percent increase in state aid for online students - from \$19.6 million to \$32.6 million. One farming community in southeast Colorado enrolls only 100 traditional students in all grades. But around 2,000 students from around the state take courses through the district's online programs - and the number is growing. State aid payments to that district jumped from under \$2.5 million last school year to \$10.9 million this year. Supporters of on-line schooling say that its increased popularity represents healthy competition in meeting the needs of struggling students who were on the way to dropping out. Critics, on the other hand, want the money to be channeled to brick-and-mortar schools. "What really shocked me was that online students could drive costs" instead of saving money, said Rep. Tom Plant, D-Nederland, chairman of the Joint Budget Committee.

■ When it comes to improving academic achievement for early adolescents, a study out of Philadelphia suggests that the strategy of shifting from middle schools to K-8 schools may not do the trick—at least not in and of itself. The report, published last month in the *American Journal of Education*, comes as city school districts including Cincinnati and New York are joining Philadelphia in phasing out middle schools in favor of K-8 grade configurations. Christopher C. Weiss, the lead author of the new study, said it turned up no evidence that K-8 schools alone confer such benefits in Philadelphia. All other things being equal, the study found, 8th graders in that city's K-8

NASSP RELEASES PUBLICATION ON REFORMING MIDDLE SCHOOLS



The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has released *Breaking Ranks in the Middle*, the middle level counterpart to the seminal "Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform." The new report challenges middle level principals to take responsibility for improving the academic outcomes of all of their students and for getting them on track for success in high school and beyond. The report includes 9 strategies and 30 recommendations for reform which are similar to those in *Breaking Ranks II*, but are grounded in the middle school philosophy. A commission of middle level practitioners and experts had an active hand in developing the report which includes a number of full-length profiles and vignettes of schools that put the report's recommendations in action. Every NASSP member and every U.S. middle level principal will receive a free copy in a few weeks. For more information, visit www.principals.org.

schools had no higher grade point averages and no fewer F's or absences than their peers in middle schools. The study did find, however, that 8th graders in K-8 schools felt safer and scored higher on measures of self-esteem than their middle school counterparts.

■ An effort is under way in Ohio to add a course on gun safety and marksmanship to the state's curriculum for high schools, in essence using the schools to familiarize children with firearms. The lesson would be offered as a one-semester elective that could be used to satisfy graduation requirements. The subject is essential for safety and cultural reasons, said State Rep. Ron Hood, who introduced the legislation in December. "It's wise and prudent that we give high school students an opportunity to learn and understand firearms," said Hood, a Republican from Pickaway County. But opponents argue that schools are not the place to be teaching kids about guns. The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence labeled the effort a ploy by the gun lobby to indoctrinate children in its beliefs. The proposed legislation comes amid a push by gun groups to recruit more children into shooting sports. The drive follows two decades of decline in the number of hunting licenses issued nationally. Total hunting licenses in the country dropped by 1.5 million - or 10 percent - between 1983 and 2003. The percentage decrease was even higher in Ohio over that period, as issued licenses dropped 13.4 percent, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

... more national news & notes

■ More than a dozen elementary school students in Fort Lauderdale (FL) refused to sell chocolate bars and potato chips to raise money for trips, saying they had learned in class about the health dangers of such snacks. "If they tell us to don't eat junk food and then after school we sell it, that disobeys what they said," said 10-year-old Daphnie Auguste, a member of the defiant class of 19 gifted fourth- and fifth-graders at North Side Elementary. Their teacher, Monique Manigat, who is also the school's wellness liaison, said the students came up with the boycott themselves but finding an alternative hasn't been easy. Daphnie said she hasn't raised one dollar toward her personal \$455 goal. "I'm happy because people won't get fat. But I'm sad because how are we going to get the money to go on our field trip?"

■ The Charlotte County (FL) school district is taking a lesson from businesses like Nike and Ford and launching an in-house university to reward the most successful teachers with extra cash. Teachers who complete classes at the "Charlotte Academy of Professional Educators" starting this summer will earn up to thousands of dollars in permanent salary increases if they prove during a classroom evaluation that they are using the skills taught. One school board member estimated the bonuses would cost the school district about \$900,000 the first year if most of the nearly 1,200 teachers participate. Organizers hope the program will motivate teachers more than the state's incentive program, which rewards only teachers whose students improve their scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. Teachers have vocally opposed the state's method of linking their bonuses to the FCAT. Those who don't teach FCAT subjects, such as reading, science and math, don't receive bonuses at all.

■ As the nation's schools struggle to hire enough highly qualified people to teach math and science, the Bush administration offers a new strategy: borrow them from industry. If approved by Congress, the Adjunct Teacher Corps would allow scientists and engineers to leave their jobs for high school classrooms — for a few hours a week or during a leave of absence. The goal: 30,000 math and science professionals working as adjuncts by 2015.

■ Principals are good at identifying the most and least effective teachers in their schools, a new study concludes, and should be allowed a bigger say in decisions about teachers' pay and retention. The study is based on data collected from 13 elementary school principals in an unidentified midsize school district. The results are discussed in an article in the Spring 2006 issue of the journal *Education Next*, which is published by the Hoover Institution

at Stanford University. The participating principals evaluated their teachers' overall effectiveness, and also rated them on specific characteristics, such as dedication and work ethic, classroom management, and parents' satisfaction with their work. The researchers then compared the evaluations with the differences in student test scores that could be attributed to specific teachers. Principals consistently identified those teachers with both the largest and smallest gains on their students' tests, the authors found. Those findings suggest, they write in the article, that "merit-pay programs that reward or sanction teachers should be based on evaluations by principals and should be focused on the highest- and lowest-performing teachers." In addition, they write, "our results suggest that student achievement (as measured by standardized-test scores) would probably improve more under a system based on principals' assessments than in a system where compensation is based solely on education and experience."

■ The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) currently boasts 44 middle schools, two high schools, and one prekindergarten from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. The premise of KIPP is simple: Do whatever it takes to learn. Under a contract signed by students, parents, and teachers, students go to school from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every weekday, every other Saturday morning, and for an extra month in the summer—over 60 percent more class time than the average school year. Teachers are on call 24-7 to answer questions about homework (the better they teach, the fewer the calls), and parents are held accountable. A "no excuses" culture of strict discipline prevails. And the results from these schools founded by Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin are raising eyebrows throughout the educational world. KIPP students consistently outperform their counterparts in traditional public schools on standardized tests, and more than 80 percent of KIPP students from the classes of 2004 and 2005 are enrolled in four-year colleges.

■ A recent study in Maryland showed that in schools where older adults were a regular fixture — with volunteers working 15 hours a week — reading scores went up, and kids had fewer behavioral problems than their peers at other schools. The adults, meanwhile, had fewer falls, expanded their social circles and performed better than their peers on a memory test. The number of U.S. residents 65 and older is increasing dramatically — from 35 million in 2000 to a projected 54 million in 2020 — prompting worries about surging Social Security and Medicare costs. But educators should look at these statistics and see a growing number of willing volunteers who have the time, talent and energy to help kids learn.

HOMework STATS

A recent AP-AOL Learning Services poll revealed that only 19% of parents said their kids get too much homework. Parent respondents said their children spend an average of 90 minutes a night on homework. The workload grows as the students do — 78 minutes of homework a night in elementary school, 99 minutes in middle school and 105 in high school. The survey also found:

- Less educated parents spend more time helping kids with take-home assignments.
- The most affluent parents spend the least time helping their kids with homework.
- Women spend an average 46 minutes a day helping with homework; men spend 35.
- Black parents spend more time than Hispanics or whites on homework help.
- Public school students spend less time on homework than kids in other schools.

The AP-AOL poll of 1,085 parents and 810 teachers of children in kindergarten through 12th grade was conducted online in January.

■ According to research presented last month at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science: AP courses — whatever their merits — may be poor substitutes for college courses in the sciences. The study looked at 18,000 students in introductory biology, chemistry and physics courses in college. The students were at 63 randomly selected four-year colleges and universities and their performance in the courses was correlated to various factors. The researchers found that students who had taken AP courses — even those who had done well on the AP exams — did only marginally better than students who had not taken AP courses. Other factors, such as the rigor of mathematics taken in high school, were found to have a strong impact on whether students did well in college-level work in the sciences. "Our survey, the largest ever of its type, suggests that AP courses do not contribute substantially to student success in college," said Philip M. Sadler, director of science education at the Harvard University-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and a senior lecturer in astronomy at Harvard. Sadler stressed in an interview that he did not want his findings to be viewed as "anti-AP." "AP courses are very helpful to students, and they give a lot of students some heavy duty things to do in high school and they learn a lot," Sadler said. For many high schools, he said, AP courses have become a highly effective way of engaging talented students in their senior year — something that has been a struggle for many high schools. But while AP may function well as enriched content, it doesn't equal college-level work, Sadler said, and shouldn't be promoted as such. Sadler conducted the study — which is being disputed by the College Board — with Robert H. Tai, assistant professor of science education at the University of Virginia.

... more national news & notes

■ The war on terror has a new front line -- the school bus line. Financed by the Homeland Security Department, school bus drivers are being trained to watch for potential terrorists, people who may be casing their routes or plotting to blow up their buses. Designers of the School Bus Watch program want to turn 600,000 bus drivers into an army of observers, like a counterterrorism watch on wheels. Already mindful of motorists with road rage and kids with weapons, bus drivers are now being warned of far more grisly scenarios. Like this one: terrorists monitor a punctual driver for weeks, then hijack a bus and load the friendly yellow vehicle with enough explosives to take down a building. An alert school bus driver could foil that plan, security experts say. The more people watching, the safer the community will be.

■ Jasmine Roberts never expected her award-winning middle school science project to get so much attention. But the project produced some disturbing results: 70 percent of the time, ice from fast food restaurants was dirtier than toilet water. The 12-year-old collected ice samples from five restaurants in South Florida -- from both self-serve machines inside the restaurant and from drive-thru windows. She then collected toilet water samples from the same restaurants and tested all of them for bacteria at the University of South Florida. In several cases, the ice tested positive for E. coli bacteria, which comes from human waste and

has been linked to several illness outbreaks across the country. The ice is likely dirtier because machines aren't cleaned and people use unwashed hands to scoop ice. Toilet water is also surprisingly bacteria-free, because it comes from sanitized city water supplies.

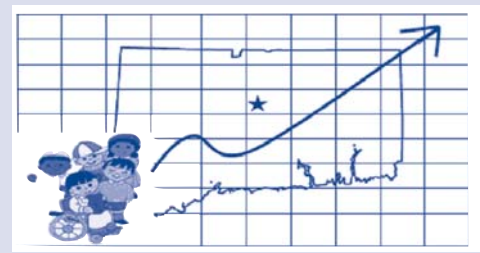
■ More and more schools are grappling with policing students' online journals and finding that drawing a line between free speech and misuse can be tricky. Recent incidents speak not only to the murky territory of free speech in schools but to the challenges of educating in a cyber age -- particularly with the growing presence of Web logs or blogs, those online pages that millions of teens use for journals, photos, dating, or chats. The worries range from the serious -- student safety and cyberbullying -- to the mundane, minimizing gossip and protecting students from embarrassment. A recent article in the Christian Science Monitor reports that some schools are trying to restrict access to the sites, or are holding sessions to educate both parents and students on proper guidelines. Some kids use blogs for class assignments, thoughtful journals, or outlets for creativity. The worries come when teens post too much personal information -- their real names, addresses, e-mail, schools -- not realizing it is also available to stalkers or child predators, or when they use the sites to pick on other kids, reaching more people than old-fashioned bullying ever could.

1st Annual CT Public School Data Showcase Conference

Sponsored jointly by the The Connecticut Association of Schools and The Connecticut State Department of Education

As part of the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative, a Data Showcase Conference will be held **Thursday, April 6**, at the Grand Hotel in Waterbury. Facilitated by Dr. Douglas Reeves, the event will bring together school and district personnel to share data with the professional learning community. Student achievement data will be displayed on science fair boards that will serve as the centerpiece for discussion. Breakout sessions will include several Connecticut success stories. A variety of vendors will also share materials and software used in working with data. Mark your calendars and join other educators as they discuss Connecticut's successes, struggles and strategies for continuous improvement of student achievement.

Registration is available online at www.casciac.org



The Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies presents

The 8th Annual State Conference

for NHS members and advisers

May 22, 2006
Hartford Marriott, Rocky Hill

Featuring:



★ **Ed Gerety** ★
Nationally Acclaimed Leadership Trainer



★ **Dr. Betty Sternberg** ★
Connecticut Commissioner of Education

For further information, contact CANHS Executive Director Don Gates,
860.342.1720 / dgates@portlandct.org

In the hopper . . .

The following education-related bills are currently in the 2006 "legislative hopper." To track these bills, among others, visit <http://www.casciac.org/legalerts.shtml>.

SB00384 AN ACT TESTING START TIMES
To repeal the current statute that requires a later start time for state testing

HB05137 AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.
To increase early childhood education funding to increase the number of quality, licensed care opportunities for infants, toddlers and preschoolers

HB05185 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHERS.
To allow students to submit student yearbook photographs taken by photographers other than those under contract with the school district

HB05026 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EMPLOYEES IN HIGH NEEDS OCCUPATIONS AND MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHERS.

From the principal's desk . . .

DR. JEROME AUCLAIR, PRINCIPAL Darien High School

"Perhaps the most difficult and unpleasant duty of a school administrator involves making decisions in school discipline situations. These include school suspensions, athletic suspensions, and consequences for academic cheating or other violations of school rules. All parents and students recognize the need for rules to ensure that students are safe and that the school fulfills its mission to educate. Nearly all agree that the rules of a particular high school are fair, reasonable and necessary. However, often students and parents disagree in individual instances regarding the administration of school consequences for violations of rules.

"One aspect of school discipline that is often misunderstood by students and parents involves the "student's rights" in a school disciplinary situation. As a lawyer friend of mine likes to say, "People simply watch too much television." Students and parents often think that they have the same due process rights that a person has in a court of law. In 1975, the United States Supreme Court addressed the issue of defining a student's due process rights in a school disciplinary situation in the case *Goss v. Lopez*. Interestingly, the decision was issued on a 5-4 vote, with the dissenting minority of justices feeling that school administrators should be given even greater latitude in dealing with students and that it was unnecessary to define a student's due process rights. Subsequent to *Goss v. Lopez* most states, including Connecticut, passed laws that defined student disciplinary processes consistent with the ideas defined in the ruling of the court.

"In defining a student's due process rights, the court said: "the student (must) be given oral or written notice of the charges against him and, if he denies them, an explanation of the evidence the authorities have and an opportunity to present his side of the story." Essentially, students have the right to speak to an administrator, to have the violation and the circumstances explained to them, and to have an opportunity to tell their version of what occurred. The court further explained limitations to student due process rights: "There need be no delay between the time "notice" is given and the time of the hearing. ... We stop short of construing the Due Process Clause to require, countrywide, that hearings in connection with short suspensions must afford the student the opportunity to secure counsel, to confront and cross-examine witnesses supporting the charge, or to call his own witnesses to verify his version of the incident. ... To impose in each such case even truncated trial-type procedures might well overwhelm administrative facilities in many places and, by diverting resources, cost more than it would save in educational effectiveness." Hence, the student does not have the right to an attorney, cannot cross examine witnesses or even call on other witnesses.

"When a situation arises in which school rules might have been violated, the school administrator has an obligation to first determine what actually occurred. This usually involves questioning



JOHN DODIG, PRINCIPAL Staples High School, Westport

"After reading *The World is Flat* by Thomas L. Friedman, I knew that I would write about it in the next school newsletter. It is the most exciting, provocative, frightening, inspiring, and informative non-fiction book I have read in years. Of course, it also helps that Mr. Friedman puts in writing so eloquently what I have known and believed for years simply by virtue of reading *The New York Times*, going to education conferences on technology, and subscribing to magazines such as *Wired*, and *Popular Science*.



"For those of you who have not yet read it, I'll summarize in two paragraphs what he means by the flattening of our planet. Because of the convergence of an excess of fiber optic cable linking all continents, the power and low cost of present day computers, AND the digitizing of almost all information in all subjects, virtually anyone in the world has access to the same data that was pretty much restricted to the western world in the past. A very bright person in a remote village in India or China or Africa with access to the Internet via satellite can now search for data to support any idea and wind up inventing something that will transform life for all of us. That is the exciting part.

"The frightening and unnerving part of this revolution is that we are now in competition with the rest of the world in areas of the economy that we never had to worry about....services and intellectual property. You and I have both heard over and over again and, probably now accept, that we can't compete with parts of the world in manufacturing common items like televisions, refrigerators, calculators, cell phones and the like. Now, however, new inventions in medicine, software, finance, computer chips, etc. are beginning to come from third world countries. Think of several billion people who have been deprived of even the possibility of competing in these areas with us and, in the future, our children, who are now able to do so. They are hungry for it. They are racing us to the top.

"Here is why I am writing about this topic. The key to our continued success as an important and wealthy nation is to embrace education. Friedman suggests that math and science should be on top of the list, but education as a whole is important. What is even more important for our children is that they learn HOW to learn constantly and continually.

"I am so grateful to have read this book while holding the position of principal at Staples High School. I am working in a brand new state-of-the-art building with new technology in the hands of very bright and well-educated teachers. The need to sustain this level of technology will become more important with every passing year. Our students were born with a mouse in their hands. They gather information electronically. They organize their work and lives electronically. We will have to continue to embed technology in our instruction and assessment practices. It is at once exciting and frightening. It is life as it is, however and we must accept it."

continued on page 7

Hale, continued from page 1

others, no principal can be successful."

WHS is renown for its climate of openness, caring, mutual trust, and respect -- and this hospitable environment is a direct result of Principal Bob Hale's genuine and passionate concern for all who work and learn there. Highly visible and engaged, Bob is a constant presence in the corridors and classrooms. "He reaches out to every student on a personal level, whether it be a friendly greeting in the morning or a conversation in the halls," says WHS senior Abigail Herrick.

Described as "unique and multifaceted," Bob is respected for his ability to juggle a myriad of roles and to manage them all masterfully. The sole administrator in a high school of roughly 300 students, he is called upon to handle all facets of the school operation. While skillfully managing the tasks of student discipline, building maintenance, teacher evaluation, and staff development, Bob still finds time to implement new programs, review and revise existing curricula, advance technology, expand co-curricular activities and strengthen the bond between the school and its community.

Bialicki, who is also president of the Westbrook Education Association, calls Bob an "ideal principal," one who possesses a warm heart, an open mind, and an ever-present concern for the needs of his staff and students. Bialicki praises Bob for his "dedication, fairness, persistence and high energy" and lauds his ability to inspire and energize all those with whom he works. "His style at faculty meetings exemplifies effectiveness, outstanding listening skills and consultative techniques that reach everyone in the meeting."

Bob's proficiency in the area of technology benefits both his school and the entire Westbrook school district. In his role as district technology coordinator, he has engaged in directed and creative efforts to use technology to improve classroom instruction and facilitate building management. Bob is a firm believer in the power of technology to help all students, even the most at-risk ones, achieve at high levels.

According to Herrick, one of Bob's greatest attributes is his passion for celebrating and showcasing the successes of others. Bob maintains the school website and he uses it as a forum to spotlight the accomplishments of his students, teachers and community members. Says, Herrick, "He constantly updates this page and gives recognition to quiet acts which often go unnoticed."

Unselfish and civic-minded, Bob gives generously of his time and considerable talents to numerous educational, professional and community associations. A loyal and longtime member of CAS, he currently serves as chair of the Connecticut Principals' Center Technology Committee, treasurer of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) Board of Control, and chair of the CIAC Field Hockey Committee.

Auclair, continued from page 7

faculty, staff members and students. If the student might be guilty of a violation that will lead to disciplinary consequences, speaking to an administrator can be somewhat intimidating. In my experience, school administrators do not threaten students or brow beat them into confessions. The administrator simply wants to get to the truth of the situation: whether a rule was broken and under what circumstances. School administrators hope that the student demonstrates good character by being honest and forthright. Accepting the consequences for one's mistakes is another indication of strength of character.

"Some parents feel that they have the right to be present when a school administrator questions their child. Although parents have this legal right when the police interview a minor child, there is no such right in school discipline matters. The purpose of the questioning is to determine the truth about what has happened. Having a parent serve as the student's lawyer would likely not shed any light on the truth of the matter and would be a waste of everyone's time. It is also blatantly unfair that student discipline be meted out proportionate to the ability of the parent to plead the student's case. Parents sometimes instruct their children not to speak to the administrator in discipline situations. While this is a choice that the student can make, doing so forfeits the student's fundamental due process right to tell the student's version of the incident. In such an instance the school administrator has no choice but to make the ruling based upon the other available evidence.

Connecticut General Statute 10-233 defines procedures and authority for school discipline, including up to a 10-day suspension from school. Boards of education grant this authority to building-level administrators. Building-level administrators are most familiar with the situation in the school and have the best perspective on the consistency of application of rules and regulations. Appeals of decisions by a building-level administrator to central office personnel are not likely to be overturned on the basis of faulty judgments. The only reasonable basis for an appeal would be a violation of the student's fundamental due process rights. Similarly the courts have repeatedly refused to question the judgment of school administrators. In a recent decision by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York (D.F. v. Board of Education of Syosset Central

School District), the court stated: "This court should not be a haven for complaints of students and their parents against actions taken by school officials in their extremely difficult task of educating and controlling the irresponsible behavior of their students. ... These types of conflicts are better handled within the educational system and not in the federal trial and appellate courts."

School administrators take seriously their obligation to enforce disciplinary consequences for violations of school rules. When these situations occur, they make every effort to determine the facts of the situation and consider the perceptions of all involved before making a decision. The standard for that decision is reasonable certainty, not proof beyond a shadow of a doubt. Consequences should be administered based upon discipline codes and student actions, not on technicalities or minor details. Almost always, the reason why school administrators chose to enter the field of education was to support and educate students. In discipline situations administrators have to balance the individual needs of the student involved with the larger interest of fairness and consistency of application of school rules. These situations are often painful, yet valuable learning experiences for all involved.

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middle school news

"Arts in the Middle" Registrations Coming Soon

By Earle Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

Popular wire sculptress Barbara Scavatto-Early, painters Jake Sadler and Paul Hoffman and illustrator Nina Goodale head a creative and talented group of Connecticut artists who will inspire, teach and coach young artists at the fifth annual "Arts in the Middle" conference on the campus of the University of Hartford on May 23, 2006. The conference is designed to:

- give statewide visibility to the fine arts and promote the arts among middle school students;
- provide opportunities for art students from diverse backgrounds to work together
- offer middle school art students high caliber artistic challenges;
- provide opportunities for art teachers to create their own work

With a mix of new and returning artists, there will be opportunities for all to hone their skills, learn new techniques and to work in a state-of-the-art facility. The conference fee of \$25 for each participant includes all materials and lunch.

In response to feedback from past attendees, the CAS Middle Level Fine Arts Committee has revised its enrollment polices to provide schools more flexibility and give more students an opportunity to participate. It was decided to remove the restriction on the number of teams accepted from each school, and process registrations on a first-come, first-served basis. Furthermore, teams of up to five students and one teacher, an increase of two students per team, will be accepted. It is hoped that this will create openings for more students to attend and to make it more practical to secure transportation due to increased numbers.

"Arts in the Middle" is grateful to the Hartford Art School of the University of Hartford and Assistant Dean Bob Calafiore for hosting this unique event.



Artist Jake Sadler works with a student at last year's Arts in the Middle conference.

Middle School Concepts Thrive in High Performing Schools

By Jody Ian Goeler

I am writing in response to Cheri Pierson Yecke's diatribe ("Mayhem in the Middle") which appeared in the February 1st issue of *Education Week*. As a middle school educator with more than twenty-five years working with this age level, I am perplexed by her definition of "middle school concept" and wonder if she has read anything related to the concept. Whether we cite the National Middle School Association's *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents* or Carnegie's report, *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century*, creating and maintaining "high expectations for every member of the learning community" and an "inviting, supportive, and safe environment" remain the cornerstones of the middle school concept.

Similar to so many high performing middle schools throughout the country, we strive to effectively incorporate the "best practices" identified in these reports, which have become synonymous with the "middle school concept". Consistent with the reports' recommendations, our faculty, organized in interdisciplinary teams, maintains high behavioral and academic expectations and has the expertise and disposition to work successfully with this age group.

Thankfully, the "concept" to which Ms. Yecke refers is foreign to my school community and me. I'd suggest she read the aforementioned texts or refer to the National Middle School Association website if she is looking for the blueprint for creating and maintaining successful middle schools. She may find comfort in realizing her call for "rigorous academic standards, a coherent curriculum, high expectations, effective instruction, strong leadership, results-based accountability, and sound discipline" is compatible with our common understanding of "middle school concept". Ensuring that all students attend schools that fully adhere to both *Turning Points 2000* and *This We Believe* would go a long way in providing young adolescents the education they deserve and our nation needs. That is a topic worthy of our time and consideration.

Mr. Goeler is principal of Avon Middle School and chair of the Connecticut Association of Middle School Principals.

Pierce, *continued from page 1*

be named the CAS Middle School Principal of the Year. However, this award represents the wonderful staff, colleagues and educators I have had the opportunity and good fortune to work with in my career. They too are a part of this recognition, and I thank them for working with me to improve student learning for all kids."

Shellie has been uniquely successful in raising the academic achievement of her students while at the same time enhancing the social and cultural climate of the school. Says Granby Superintendent Dr. Gwen Van Dorp, "Under her leadership, GMMS has regained the important balance between high levels of student achievement and close attention to the affective needs of students."

According to colleagues, Shellie is defined by her sense of purpose, her passion for excellence and her commitment to lifelong learning. Her focus on academic excellence and insistence upon high standards have earned her the respect of staff, students, parents and community members alike. "In my opinion, Shellie is one of the best administrators Granby Public Schools has ever employed," says science teacher Bruce Boehm.

One of Shellie's greatest accomplishments is her success in fostering a school climate where cultural diversity is embraced and celebrated. She has engaged all stakeholders in a united effort to promote acceptance and tolerance at GMMS. "While Shellie has made numerous contributions to the middle school during her tenure, it is her leadership and accomplishments in cultural diversity that set her apart," says Alan Addley, principal of Granby Memorial High School. Shellie has spearheaded a number of successful initiatives -- including a host family mentoring program for students enrolled at GMMS under Project Choice -- which have served to dramatically increase student sensitivity to the needs of one another.

elementary news

Arts Festival, *continued from page 1*



Rosato, principal of Mill Hill School in Southport and a vice president of CAS. In welcoming the honorees, Dr. Rosato reminded them that the evening was for them, "This evening's program is our way of honoring your contribution to the arts in your school, to applaud your achievements and to recognize your wonderful citizenship." He then proceeded to congratulate each and every one of them. He also thanked Liberty Mutual for their generous financial support of the program.

Maureen Berescik, assistant principal of Bethel High School and chair of the Arts Committee, congratulated Liberty Mutual on behalf of CAS for being an active participant in safety programs in our schools. She thanked them for sponsoring dozens of events such as teen driving, child passenger safety, fire safety, child fingerprinting, and bicycle safety.

Dr. George Colemann, associate commissioner for the Connecticut State Department of Education conducted the formal awarding of certificates to this year's honorees. In his remarks he made a point of expressing the departments appreciation to those teachers, principals and superintendents and local board members who are advocates for expanding the arts as part of a well-rounded curriculum in our schools. He went on to state, "The arts are an important part of the development of each student's career. It aides his/her learning in the classroom, engages their imagination in seeking applications for what they have learned and, provides for them life long pleasure and satisfaction. Further, the arts help students to be analytical and critical citizens; tools they will need as they evaluate the various influences that preserve or threaten the democracy in which we live.

Also congratulating the students were representatives of Liberty Mutual. Sarah Vezzani, personal sales manager, and Paul Hackley, account executive, both mentioned the strong relationship between CAS and Liberty Mutual over the years and that their company Liberty Mutual was proud to sponsor this very important program that recognizes and celebrates the arts in Connecticut schools. Hopefully this will become an annual sponsorship of such a worthwhile program that recognizes the Arts in education.

A highlight of the evening was a proclamation from Connecticut's Governor M. Jodi Rell which proclaimed February 6th and 7th, as Elementary School Arts Festival Days in the state of Connecticut. The Proclamation went on to recognize the good work that Liberty Mutual is doing by supporting the arts in Connecticut schools.

Since 1912, Liberty Mutual has operated under a single guiding principle: "to help people live safer, more secure lives."

CAS Spring Conference

"Transferring School Improvement Plans into Accountability Plans"



Featuring Tony Flach of the Center for Performance Assessment

May 1 ■ 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. ■ Rocky Hill Marriott



Tony Flach is a professional development associate with the Center for Performance Assessment. He has also served as senior coordinator for data support in Norfolk (VA) Public Schools. In that capacity he assisted PK-12 teachers and administrators in the use of data to support instruction, the design of rigorous standards-based assessments, and the development of data collection and analysis systems.

Tony focuses intently on helping schools design and implement their school accountability plans, a part of the NPS Comprehensive Accountability System. That accountability system, along with many other innovative practices, has earned Norfolk recognition as one of the best urban school systems in the country. Accolades for Norfolk's work have come from such prestigious organizations as the Broad Foundation, the Council of Great City Schools, and the Stupski Foundation.

Prior to his current placement, Tony served as a Title I Math Specialist. In that position he conducted embedded staff development training in mathematics. In addition, Tony worked with the mathematics department to promote the use of performance assessment as an ongoing component of mathematics instruction at the district level. Tony has also contributed to the distance learning programs at the NASA Langley Research Center.

For more information on Tony Flach, visit http://www.makingstandard-work.com/aboutus/tony_flach.htm

Conference information and registration is available online at:
www.casciac.org

REMINDER!

CAS and **eesmarts** are teaming up to offer free CEU workshops for teachers interested in learning to use the eesmarts curriculum. eesmarts is an exciting educational program which offers grade-specific curricula that teach students important energy concepts, and empower them to use energy wisely in their daily lives. These two-day workshops will be led by Gerry Frumento, professor of science education at Southern Connecticut State University and consultant for the CT Academy of Education in math, science, and technology, as well as representatives of the eesmarts Program. The workshops will include training on Inquiry Based Teaching and Learning during the first session. The second session in each workshop will include a broad overview of the program and hands-on activities from the eesmarts curriculum. The workshops will be offered on April 4th and 11th for teachers of grades kindergarten through grade 5, and on April 6th and 13th for teachers of grades 6 through 8. For more information, visit http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/eesmarts_ceu_bro_2006.pdf.



CIAC Website “tidbit”

When Daniel Hand High School added its April 1st boys' volleyball scrimmage to its schedule on March 6th it marked the 100,000th event entry into the online eligibility center in the 10 months since the new scheduling system was unveiled on May 1 of last year.

■ The Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) is taking steps to keep fan behavior under control. Its board has adopted a list of acceptable and unacceptable spectator behaviors; if a fan engages in unacceptable behavior, a number of penalties can be imposed, from a reprimand to probation to suspension of membership. For example, banners must display positive messages. Students can't use expressions like "warm up the bus" and "air ball," or turn their backs to read the paper as the announcer introduces lineups. "The key to all of this is to begin to retrain our constituents to cheer for their teams, not against the other team," said assistant commissioner Bert Borgmann. "In so many games I'm at now, the student section - and even the adults - is cheering against the other team and not really for the efforts of the kids who are playing for their school."

■ According to the results of a study published in the February issue of *Medicine and Science of Sports Exercise*, carbohydrate plus electrolyte feeding during team sports preserves physical and central nervous system function better than does fluid and electrolytes alone. The study involved 10 active men and 10 active women with experience competing in team sports. After performing three practice sessions, the twenty participants took part in two experimental trials during which they were fed either a 6% carbohydrate solution or a flavored placebo. Compared with the placebo group, the participants who had carbohydrate feedings during exercise had faster 20-m sprint times, higher average jump height, enhanced motor skills, and improved mood late in exercise. According to the authors, "The implications of these results are that carbohydrate feedings during exercise designed to mimic activity that occurs during team sports such as basketball can contribute to an athlete's ability to perform at their highest level both mentally and physically."

NCAA Cracks Down on “Diploma-Mills”

The NCAA is taking a close look at non-traditional secondary schools that fail to meet academic standards and said athletes attending those schools could pay a severe penalty by losing their freshman eligibility. A review panel, appointed in December, made draft recommendations last month. While final recommendations won't be made until June 1, the panel already is leaning toward a plan that includes, among others, the following concepts:

- Identifying prep schools that fall outside of state oversight or jurisdiction related to the quality and monitoring of the curricula, sorting out those schools that are not academically sound and removing them from the list from which courses are accepted for review by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse;
 - Limiting the number of NCAA-required core courses a student can take in his or her senior year of high school and beyond, such as at a prep school;
 - Examining the number of courses a high school student takes concurrently, to ensure they are truly learning the course material.
- The NCAA has already begun to identify suspected "diploma-mills." Three schools, including University High School in Miami, a correspondence school, have been removed from the NCAA's list of acceptable institutions. (Source: *NCAA News*)

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

HB-5786, AN ACT CONCERNING ASSAULT OF A SPORTS OFFICIAL, has been raised in the Judiciary Committee. The purpose of the law is to provide an enhanced penalty for a person who assaults a sports official on account of the performance by such sports official of his or her duties. It is important that interested parties contact their local lawmakers and request their support in furthering this legislation. You can send a message to your senator and representatives simply by visiting www.casciac.org/legalerts.shtml.

COACHES' CORNER

News from the National Federation of High School Associations



- **Boys' Lacrosse Rules Changes:** In the fall of 2005, the National Federation Boys' Lacrosse Rules Committee adopted 12 rules changes. Last month, the NFHS issued a corrections and clarifications document to eliminate any confusion that resulted from the numerous rules changes. Download the document at http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/lacrosse_clarifications_2006.pdf
- **Field Hockey Rules Changes:** The National Federation Field Hockey Rules Committee approved 13 rules changes that will be in effect for the 2006-2007 season. One significant change requires defenders to move back 7 yards during a free hit in order to allow more time to react to the ball. Another risk-minimizing rule permits chest protectors that provide additional coverage of the abdomen, sides or shoulders. For more information on these and other changes, visit www.casciac.org/pdfs/field_hockey_rules_changes.pdf
- **Volleyball Rules Changes:** In anticipation of the official implementation of the libero player in the 2006-07 season, the National Federation Volleyball Rules Committee incorporated all stipulations regarding the libero approved last year into the body of the NFHS Volleyball Rules Book. Other changes not related to the libero player were adopted as well. For more information, visit www.casciac.org/pdfs/volleyball_rules_changes.pdf
- **Soccer Rules Changes:** Among the changes approved by the National Federation Soccer Rules Committee was a new rule which allows protective face masks to be worn by high school soccer players with facial injuries, as long as a medical release has been obtained. For more information on this and other changes, visit www.casciac.org/pdfs/soccer_rules_changes.pdf
- **Spirit Rules Changes:** In response to the increasingly advanced skill level of high school spirit participants, the National Federation Spirit Rules Committee approved several rules changes for the 2006-2007 season. Among them, Rule 2-10-1 was modified to stipulate that the formerly illegal helicopter stunt is now legal, under certain conditions. For more information on this and other changes, visit www.casciac.org/pdfs/spirit_rules_changes.pdf
- **Gymnastics Rules Changes:** The National Federation Gymnastics Rules Committee approved 22 rules changes that are aimed at improving scoring and minimizing risk of injury to participants. One significant change allows gymnasts to perform a round off-entry vault if a coach is present as a spotter and a safety collar is placed around the front end and sides of the board. In order to minimize risk, the round off-entry vault is void if it includes a salto and twist in afterflight. For more information on this and other changes, visit www.casciac.org/pdfs/gymnastics_rules_changes.pdf.
- **Football Rules Changes:** The National Federation Football Rules Committee has adopted 15 rules changes this year. Removal of the word "intentional" from the spearing rule and new requirements for the visiting team's jersey beginning in 2010 were among them. For more information on this and other changes, visit www.casciac.org/pdfs/football_rules_changes.pdf.

BILL BARNEY HONORED FOR WORK IN AREA OF SPORTSMANSHIP



William Barney, principal of the Morgan School in Clinton and chair of the CIAC Board of Control, has been selected by the Institute for International Sport (IIS) as a 2006 Sports Ethics Fellow.

Each year, the IIS selects a diverse group of individuals from various academic and athletic fields to serve as Sports Ethics Fellows for National Sportsmanship Day. All

of this year's Sports Ethics Fellows come from the realm of high school athletics.

Bill was selected for his work in spearheading the CIAC's new Exemplary Interscholastic High School Athletic Program Evaluation Model. This assessment and technical assistance program will enhance the quality of high school athletics through the teaching of character education, sportsmanship, and ethical and socially responsible behaviors.

As a Sports Ethics Fellow, Bill will serve as an ambassador of ethics and sportsmanship and will assist with the expansion and promotion of National Sportsmanship Day.

The 16th annual National Sportsmanship Day was celebrated on March 7, 2006. More than 13,000 schools throughout the United States and around the globe participated in this year's event, which involved active discussions on sportsmanship geared towards students, coaches, administrators, and parents.

Bill has served as the principal of the Morgan School in Clinton, CT for the past sixteen years. Prior to Clinton, he was a house principal, curriculum supervisor, vice principal and social studies teacher in various school districts in Connecticut and New York. His career has spanned over forty years of dedicated service to young adults. Bill received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Connecticut, his Masters of Arts from Fairfield University and he is presently pursuing his Doctorate of Education at the University of Bridgeport.

ACTS OF GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP!

by Ann Malafronte, Director of Unified Sports™

You really don't have to look very far to find acts of good sportsmanship in Connecticut. Unified Sports™ teams in forty-nine high schools and thirty-five middle schools across the state will easily provide you the forum that you are looking for! It is routine for a Unified Sports™ athlete or partner to help a fallen opponent back up to his or her feet or return a dropped ball to the opposite team. It is wonderful to see and should be an inspiration to the newly-established CIAC Sportsmanship Committee as members seek examples of the goodness of sport.

The CIAC Unified Sports™ program, a 14-year partnership between Special Olympics and CAS-CIAC, provides opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to train and compete with their non-disabled peers.

Unified Sports basketball tournament games will be played at regional sites across the state during the month of March. The schedule can be found on the CIAC website. Contact Ann Malafronte at (203)250-1111, ext. 3017 or e-mail at amalafronte@casciac.org for additional information.



GUEST EDITORIAL

Youth Sports: What We Can Learn From Jason

By Richard Collins

By now, most of you have heard about the story of Jason McElwain, the team manager for the Greece Athena boys' basketball team in Rochester, New York. His coach, Jim Johnson, rewarded Jason, who is autistic, at his team's last game by letting him suit up. He made no promises to Jason, but said he would try to get him playing time. With about four minutes to go, and Jason's team up by a comfortable amount, coach Johnson put Jason in the game. Over the last four minutes, Jason poured in twenty points, hitting six three pointers, tying his school record. As each point was scored, his high school friends who had packed the gym that night, broke out in ear-shattering hysteria. Each three pointer brought the crowd to an even higher frenzy, and when the game was over, the students of Greece Athena High School stormed the court and lifted Jason high on their shoulders. They treated Jason like the hero he had become.

This was pure joy in sports. Every thing I believe in as a varsity and youth coach was reaffirmed that night. Here was a kid who was given a chance. The fact that Jason is autistic might make for a good Hollywood movie, and I'm sure I'll watch it, but there is something so much deeper to this story. Let's focus on the reaction of his schoolmates.

Almost all of the kids who carried Jason on their shoulder that night, I believe, felt as much joy in themselves as they felt joy in Jason's accomplishment. To all of these kids, this is what sports are all about. A friend of theirs, not an autistic friend, but just a friend, had been given a shot to succeed. These kids reveled in Jason's night because it struck a nerve with them, deep seeded, sensitive, and alive. Every kid hopes that the coaches and adults in their lives believe in them. These kids, and daresay our entire country, exploded with joy because all of us hope that people who matter to us believe in us.

There will be a time very soon when a coach, high school or youth level, will be confronted with an opportunity to make a difference in the life of a kid. There will be youth board meetings where decisions will be made about how each kid is going to be treated. There will be a time on the sideline or in the stands when things are intense and parents have to decide how they will act. And there will be a time in the very near future when a whole town comes together to meet the social, emotional, and developmental needs of all kids through youth sports.

This is the reality of sports when it comes to how sports impact kids. It is a sobering notion. Every single act, every single decision, every single policy created will impact kids in ways that will change their lives forever. It has to be about every kid, not just the ones who get picked for teams. It is a measure of accountability for all of us. Something deep inside us knows that Jason is on the path to being successful in whatever he chooses to do. Maybe everyone who witnessed Jason's game became inspired to reach for her or his dream. It's time for all of us to become dream weavers for all of the kids who trust us.

Rick Collins is a 4th grade teacher at Latimer Lane Elementary School in Simsbury, CT. He is also the girls' track and field Coach at Simsbury High School, the assistant varsity football coach at Hall High School in West Hartford, CT, and the founder of the Connecticut Youth Sports Initiative.

. . . more ciac news & notes

CIAC 14th Annual Golf Benefit

By J. Robert Ford, Director of Development

The annual CIAC golf benefit will be held on June 19th at the Chippannee Golf Club in Bristol. We are pleased to announce that our honorary co chairs will be David Doebler, president and general manger of NBC 30, our media partner, and Tom Moore, associate head coach of the UConn mens' basketball team.

David Doebler, came to NBC-owned WVIT 30 in March, 2005, from his former position as president and general manager of NBC 13 in Birmingham, Alabama. Doebler, a Philadelphia native, has received several philanthropic awards over the course of his career. More recently, he has been the recipient of the Governor's award for "outstanding community service", the Positive Press Award from the National Association of Mental Illness and the "Outstanding Corporate Citizen Award" from the National Philanthropy Day Foundation. He currently serves as a member of the Hartford Science Center Board of Directors.

Tom Moore is in his 12th season as a member of the UConn basketball staff. He has earned a national reputation as a superb recruiter and evaluator of talent. A Boston University graduate, Tom is looked upon as one of the rising head coaching talents in the USA!

Golfers interested in participating in this year's event should contact Judy Sylvester at the CIAC office.



Did you know. . .

**72% of girls
15 to 17 withdraw from
lifeengaging activities
due to feeling badly
about their looks.***

* "Beyond Stereotypes: Rebuilding the Foundation of Beauty Beliefs," *The 2005 Dove Global Study*

Self-Esteem Workshop

The CIAC in partnership with the Dove Self-Esteem Fund would like to inviteteachers and nurses to attend a FREE workshop about self-esteem issues.

What you can do:

Spend time with Dove and the Campaign for Real Beauty to discover self-esteem issues facing youth today and learn relevant tools for overcoming these issues in your classroom. The presentation, hosted by Rande Bynum, MSW – Co-author of true you! "Sometimes I Feel Ugly and Other Truths About Growing Up" will get you started fostering self-esteem around you.

What you will take away:

- understand the magnitude of the issues
- recognize when there is a problem amongst students
- be provided with tools and techniques that can be incorporated into your lesson plans
- earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

Session details:

When: Wednesday April 26th, 10:00 to 1:00 (lunch included)

Where: CIAC Office, 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, Connecticut

Register today!

RSVP by April 17th to Joyce Smith by phone: 203.250.1111, x 3005; fax: 203.250.1345; or e-mail: jsmith@casciac.org

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