



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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NOVEMBER 2004

A NEW WAY TO SAVE MONEY

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Teachers' Insurance Plan believes that educators deserve to pay less for auto insurance. They have a program exclusively for active and retired members of the educational community to provide the most competitive automobile insurance rates and a myriad of other services.

The obvious question that arises is -- Why would a teacher-exclusive plan be able to provide lower auto insurance rates? The answer might surprise even teachers. Educators are more likely to be conscientious when it comes to their safety and the safety of others. In other words, teachers, as a group, are better insurance risks. Lower risks for an insurer, means lower rates for those drivers.

Teachers' was founded in 1992 to serve educators in Long Island, NY and is now in seven states. Following their New York launch, they first expanded into Connecticut, where they now have several exciting programs. Schools or school districts can sign up for a Scholastic Assistance Program to raise money for participating schools. Teachers' will make a cash contribution to your school for every quote requested - with no obligation to purchase.

And, if you're interested in earning money, their Teacher Agent Network is currently accepting applications for Teacher Agents to promote Teachers' Insurance Plan to their colleagues and earn money for every one that signs up.

For more information check out www.teachers.com.

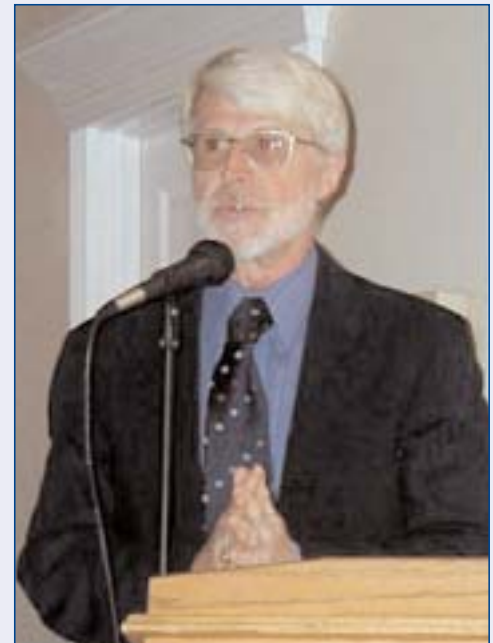


Teachers' Insurance Plan
Special rates for a special class of people

CAS HONORS OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

On Thursday, October 21st, CAS hosted its third annual "celebration" of educational leadership at the Farmington Club in Farmington. The event was conceived three 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.

Called the "2004 Distinguished Administrators," six individuals from the ranks of Connecticut's school administrators were honored at the third-annual recognition dinner.



Master of Ceremonies Scott Gray

CAS 2004 DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATORS

Jerome Auclair, Principal, Darien High School

♦ CAS High School Principal of the Year ♦

Sally Biggs, Assoc. Principal, South Windsor H.S.

♦ CAS High School Asst. Principal of the Year ♦

Brian Czapl, Asst. Principal, Smith M.S.

♦ CAS Middle School Asst. Principal of the Year ♦

Diane DiPietro, Asst. Principal, Highland School

♦ CAS Elementary Asst. Principal of the Year ♦

Michael Galluzzo, Principal, East Farms School

♦ CT's National Distinguished Principal ♦

Carol Janssen, Principal, McGee Middle School

♦ CAS Middle School Principal of the Year ♦

More than one hundred forty educators, friends, and family members traveled to the Farmington Club to join in honoring CAS' 2004 Distinguished Administrators. Janet Garagliano, principal of Wamogo Regional 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, sports commentator for WTIC AM 1080.

Though suffering from sleep-deprivation following his coverage of the marathon ALCS games, Mr. Gray was a witty and

gracious host, sharing personal reflections about the powerful impact that educators have on the lives of those they touch.

Donald Gates, principal of Portland High School and president of CAS, and Frances Rabinowitz, associate commissioner for the Division of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, extended congratulatory remarks to the honorees prior to dinner.

The evening concluded with an awards ceremony during which each of the six distinguished administrators was recognized individually. The honorees were called to the podium one by one to receive an engraved clock and a copy of "Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't?" by Jim Collins. There they were also entertained with a short presentation which included stories of their accomplishments, pictures of them as "administrators in action," and quotes from friends and colleagues.

By all accounts, the third annual "celebration" was a rousing success! Many thanks to the members of the organizing committee, Janet Garagliano, Mike Rafferty, and Ev Lyons.

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: One of my teachers is so low energy that even I nod off during classroom observations. Figuring that he would be better (even if never great) if he would plan more and ramble less in his teaching, I recently told him that I would be reviewing his lesson plans. When I went to collect his lesson plans this week, however, he told me that his dog ate them, insisting that this excuse is so lame that it must be true. I would like to call his bluff, and I have arranged for a lie detector test like on those television shows. Any problem?

-- *Just the Truth Mam*

A. Dear Just: There are only two problems with this novel approach. First, lie detector tests are not scientifically proven as reliable. Second, requiring the teacher to take this test violates the law. Connecticut General Statutes Section 31-51g prohibits any employer from requiring that an employee or prospective employee take a polygraph test. The law defines "polygraph" as "any mechanical or electrical instrument or device of any type used or allegedly used to examine, test or question individuals for the purpose of determining truthfulness." Given this prohibition, you'd better call off the test. After a thorough investigation (including determining breed and why there are no remnants), however, you are free to decide that the excuse is bogus and impose disciplinary action.

Q. Dear Mailbag: As we struggle with student drug use, we regularly appear before the board of education in hearings over the expulsion of students who possess and use drugs in school. Recently, the board of education has gotten creative. The last three times the board has expelled for a lengthy period of time, but then further provided that the student can return early if he or she (1) provides evidence of drug counseling and (2) will provide results of random drug testing, both at parent expense. Since we cannot charge for school, how can they impose these costs on students and their families?

-- *Cost Conscious*

A. Dear Cost: The board has made an offer the families may not want to refuse. The board does not have the right in general to impose costs as a condition for attending school. Here, however, the board has simply exercised its right to expel. The possibility of incurring costs and returning early is presented as an option, not a requirement. The student and his family remain free to forego such counseling and testing and simply exercise their legal right to have the student return when the expulsion period is over. If they choose to accept the board's offer, they do so voluntarily, more or less.

Q. Dear Mailbag: This Halloween one of the teachers at my school read a short story about vampires to her second graders. Unfortunately, her minor in college was drama and she scared these little kids half to death. I am dealing with her, but now I have a bigger problem. One of the parents of a student in that class is demanding that the board of education give her a public hearing over her request that "Scary Stories" be removed from the library. Does my board of education have to give her a hearing?

-- *Scared Myself*

A. Dear Scared: Not unless there is a specific board policy granting that right. Boards of education are required by law to provide hearings only when they receive a petition signed by fifty people or one percent of the district's electors, whichever is greater. That said, if your board of education provides for public comment at its meetings, the parent can still come and make trouble. Caution is advised, however, with regard to removing books from the library. Courts have ruled that such action can raise First Amendment issues. Any such action, therefore, should be based on legitimate educational concerns, not pressure from some hypersensitive parent.

ct news & notes

New wireless network available

CAS is pleased to announce that a new wireless network has been installed in the central office. The network is available to visitors with palm pilots, notebooks or the like.

The next time you are here for a meeting or workshop, feel free to check your e-mail!

■ Connecticut has received grants totaling \$15 million from the federal government in an effort to reduce underage drinking and treat youngsters with substance abuse problems. A \$12 million grant from the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention will pay for a prevention program to be overseen by the CT State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services over five years. The initiative is a cooperative venture involving other state agencies and academic and community partners. A \$1.5 million grant to the CT Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services will help expand the state's capacity to treat youngsters with emerging substance problems and another \$1.5 million will be used to strengthen prevention services for youth using ecstasy and other "club drugs."

■ In 2003, the federal government spent a record-setting \$15.4 billion in Connecticut -- a figure that exceeded the state's own yearly budget. Nearly 90% of that money was spent on defense, health services, transportation, housing and education -- in that order. In the past four years, federal spending on salaries, products and grants in Connecticut has nearly doubled. Connecticut currently receives more federal money per capita than all but eight states. Says Marc Ryan, state budget chief, "The fact that federal spending here has outpaced state spending is an interesting statistic, but one that reflects the rapidly expanding federal budget more than the state's spending habits." Ryan adds, "Federal spending is increasing, but the amount of taxes we're paying has been steadily increasing as well."

national news & notes

■ What makes a school worth going to? What would make students pay more attention to their teachers? You can find out on "The Way We See It," a video created by youth production teams from around the country. The program will air on PBS in January (hosted by John Merrow), but it's available now on DVD for the cost of shipping and handling. To request a copy, visit: www.listenup.org/education/.

■ A consortium of national organizations, under the leadership of the National School Boards Association (NSBA), has issued a resource document to help school leaders address legal issues surrounding students' sexual orientation and gender identity. Aimed at school policy makers and administrators, "Dealing with Legal Matters Surrounding Students' Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" provides practical guidance on schools' legal rights and responsibilities with respect to students, school programs, and curriculum. It is intended to answer questions about students' civil rights which regularly arise in public schools. Using a Q&A format, the publication addresses questions involving student organizations and clubs; dress codes; curriculum and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender students; student involvement in school events; and student harassment. Download a copy of the guide at <http://www.nsba.org/site/docs/34600/34527.pdf>.

■ Loudoun Valley High School in Purcellville, Virginia is requiring students to sign a pledge that they will not engage in sexually suggestive dancing at school dances. In addition to promising not to use drugs or alcohol or engage in "freak dancing," the students pledge to face each other on the dance floor. Principal Gerald Black says the pledge is an attempt to stop popular back-to-front dancing in which a girl gyrates her hips against the pelvis of a guy standing behind her. It was adopted after several parents and students complained at a school board meeting in the spring that school dances had become so explicit that they felt they could no longer attend. However, over three hundred students signed a petition that contends that the pledge violates students' First Amendment right to freedom of expression. "Civil rights are falling by the wayside every second," says parent Laura George, who encouraged her daughter and her classmates to protest. "I've got to take a stand here for my kids. I've got to teach them that you question authority when authority's gone mad."

■ State legislatures are beginning to respond to a growing concern across the nation, especially among school officials, over possession and use of realistic looking imitation guns. Both educators and law enforcement personnel are concerned about the imitation guns, some of which can shoot pellets up to 350 feet per

second and are indistinguishable from real firearms. Some schools treat the toy guns as weapons and expel students who possess them. Other schools look more to the intent of the child; they merely suspend if the imitation gun is found in a locker or backpack, etc., but expel if the student uses the fake gun in a threatening manner. However, police and school districts also are turning to state legislatures for help with the problem. In September, the California state legislature expanded the definition of imitation firearm to include "BB devices" and mandated that imitation guns be clear or painted in a bright color to distinguish them from the real thing.

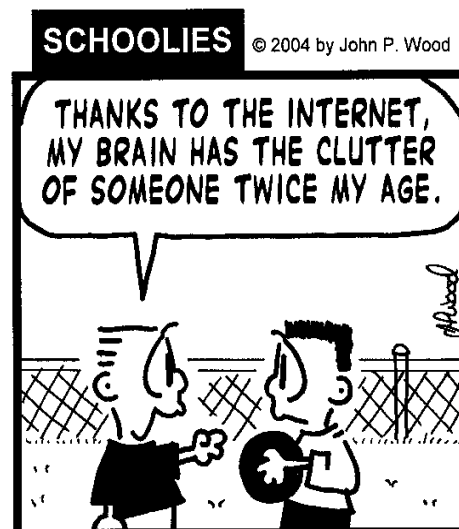
■ Congress has passed a bill which will allocate \$82 million over three years to help states prevent teenage suicide. The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act of 2004, sponsored by U.S. Senator Chris Dodd, was named after U.S. Senator Gordon Smith's son, who committed suicide last year. The funds will be used to provide better mental health screening, assessment, mentoring and counseling to children and youths.

■ Donations to public schools are on the rise. For years, private schools and colleges and universities have raised millions of dollars from alumni for building renovations, teachers, programs and technology. Now public school districts have begun to follow suit. About one of every three or four of the nation's 16,000 school districts has a foundation, most generating \$100,000 to \$500,000 a year, said Pete Karabatsos, a foundation development consultant based in Denver. Karabatsos said he has seen poor and affluent districts becoming entrepreneurial in raising money. Karabatsos said the effort is a relatively new movement in public education. "Foundations are not to replace lost tax dollars," Karabatsos said. "Foundations established to replace tax dollars are not successful. Foundations established to take kids to the next level of excellence are successful."

■ The New York City school system is setting up, for the first time, a centralized office to routinely translate school information into eight different languages. The nation's largest school system is one of several urban districts that have recently upgraded their translation and interpretation services for students' parents who speak little or no English. Factors fueling the attention include a rising number of students with limited English proficiency, increased federal accountability requirements for serving such students, and advocacy on behalf of immigrants.

■ American high school students are no better prepared for college than they were 10 years ago, according to a new study by the American College Testing Program (ACT). The study found that of the 1.2 million students throughout the country who took the ACT this year, only 22% were ready for college-level work in English, math and science. The ACT study found that the proportion of students taking what it deemed a minimum core of college preparatory courses - four years of English and three years each of math, science and social studies - had risen only slightly in 10 years: to 56% in 2004, from 54% in 1994. Another problem, the report said, was that even those who took the full core curriculum were not necessarily prepared for college, since some of their courses were not rigorous enough. Of the students who took no math beyond Algebra I and II and geometry, only 13% were ready to handle college algebra. Of those who added trigonometry, only 37% were prepared. That figure jumped to 74% for those who also took calculus. But only 40% of students took trigonometry or another advanced mathematics course beyond algebra and geometry.

■ Parents of student victims of bullies increasingly are turning to the courts. The number of personal protection orders issued by Michigan courts in cases involving minors increased from 600 in 2002 to approximately 700 in 2003. These concerned incidents ranging from bullying to boyfriend-girlfriend harassment. Protection orders typically prohibit perpetrators from any contact with the victim, under penalty of arrest. While legal experts acknowledge that the courts can be an effective means of eliminating bullying, they urge parents to use the courts only as a last resort. Bonnie Hanes, education director of Oakland Mediation Center in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, argues that school programs designed to curb bullying are more effective than court orders, which do little to change school culture. A 2001 survey of 15,600 American students in grades six to 10 funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development reported that 30% of students nationally say they have been involved in bullying, either as perpetrator, victim, or both.



... more national news & notes

■ Contrary to a popular prejudiced belief, most black students do not carry a cultural bias against high achievement into the classroom. Instead, new research shows that an anti-achievement attitude develops over time and is most likely to occur in schools where blacks are grossly underrepresented in the most challenging courses, said Duke University public policy professor William "Sandy" Darity Jr. "Oppositional attitudes are not 'learned in the black community,' as some have suggested, but are instead constructed in schools under certain conditions," Darity said. The findings counter a commonly held belief, voiced in recent months by such prominent black Americans as politician Barack Obama and entertainer Bill Cosby, that black students are culturally predisposed to limit their scholastic success and worry that excelling will prompt peers to accuse them of "acting white," Darity said. Race-related pressure to avoid or disparage academic challenges did not exist at the elementary grades, the research showed. Rather, researchers found that adolescents in North Carolina harbor a general sentiment against high academic achievement, regardless of race. The research report is under review for publication and can be obtained by e-mailing the author at darity@unc.edu.

■ The use of some antidepressant drugs appears linked to an increase in suicidal behavior in some children and teen-agers, a U.S. advisory panel has concluded. The committee said evidence from two dozen clinical trials of nine of the newest antidepressants showed children treated with the drugs were more likely to report suicidal thoughts or actions. As a result of the trials, during which no suicides occurred, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a public health advisory to warn of the increased risk of suicidality associated with use of antidepressants in children and adolescents. Furthermore, the FDA ordered that a medical guide be dispensed with antidepressants and that a warning for pediatric use be added to their labels. The drugs under review include Paxil, Wellbutrin, Prozac, Serzone, Zoloft, Celexa, Effexor, Luvox and Remeron. Millions of children are treated with various antidepressants, although only Prozac is approved for treating pediatric depression.

■ Across the nation, many PTAs are disbanding and parents are forming independent parent-teacher groups to avoid having to send away dues, which can total as much as \$6.75 per member, to the national and state Parent-Teacher Associations. The result is that the PTA's national membership has declined steadily from a high of 12.1 million in 1963 to 5.9 million last year. PTA officials say if parents focus only on their local schools, there will be no national organization to advocate for public education funding.

■ Most adolescents who will report suicidal behavior on a screening questionnaire are not known by school officials to be at risk, according to investigators from Columbia University whose findings were presented at the 51st annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry last month. According to principal investigator Dr. Michelle Scott, assistant professor of clinical psychiatric social work at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City, "We often hear calls for screening to identify adolescents at risk of suicide. This study shows that screening is useful at identifying at-risk students that are not known by their schools to have problems." The investigators developed and administered the Columbia Suicide Screen to 1,729 high school students. The screen identified 298 students (17.3%) who reported either suicidal ideation or suicidal behavior. Of the 298 teens who reported either suicidal ideation or behavior, 58.3% were not identified by any school staff member as having problems. Of those with a diagnosed mood or substance abuse disorder, one third (33%) were not identified as at risk by school staff. "The findings clearly show the importance of screening for suicide risk," Dr. Scott said. In a follow-up study that underscored the importance of screening, she and her colleagues found that five years after the initial screening, 26% of at-risk students not known to school officials had either made a suicide attempt or been diagnosed with a mood disorder. (Medscape Medical News)

■ Nationwide, schools are turning to incentives in the face of the federal *No Child Left Behind* education law that requires every school to report truancy figures. Since attendance is a factor that helps determine whether schools go on the "needs improvement" list, many schools are coming up with creative ways to reduce truancy. At Trimble Tech High School in Fort Worth, Texas, attendance jumped nearly three percentage points last year to 94.7 percent after officials announced eligible students could win a 2001 Ford Mustang. It's one of several car giveaway programs at Fort Worth high schools. In Kansas City, Mo., officials say incentives roughly doubled enrollment in summer school. Students who didn't miss a day received a prepaid Visa card worth \$125. Alfie Kohn, a Massachusetts-based former teacher and author who lectures nationally on the dangers of rewards, says that when teachers are "dangling goodies" in front of kids, the kids are less inspired. "The intrinsic motivation to learn, read, or even show up tends to decline when kids are bribed to do what the adults want," he said. Rather, Kohn said, children should be provided engaging courses and be given more choice about what they are learning.

IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS OF HIGH SCHOOLS

By Dennis C. Carrithers, Ph.D.
Assistant Executive Director

What can the CT State Department of Education and the Connecticut Association of Schools do to help high schools reform? At the recent High School Summit in October, teacher/administrator teams from Connecticut high schools had the opportunity to offer suggestions. Following stimulating keynote speakers, schools participated in "Talk Back" sessions to identify needed policies, services and support to assist them in their efforts to improve their schools.

Schools asked the following of the SDE:

- fund technology, including upgrades and maintenance;
- provide professional development in the content areas;
- link literacy programs at universities with reading efforts in the schools;
- hold workshops by ERGs;
- initiate a clearinghouse for urban schools;
- enable schools to get testing information on students transferring from other schools;
- schedule time for CAPT;
- make best practices and model programs available to schools;
- retraining teachers through professional development;
- provide technical assistance for school reform;
- coordinate the various initiatives and demands for change;
- target funding for school reform;
- use RESCs as consultants;
- coordinate discussions with the business community, particularly smaller businesses that will hire our graduates;
- include boards of education and parents in the dialogue of reform;
- teach teachers how to teach literacy in the content areas;
- prepare teachers for differentiated teaching;
- improve teacher preparation programs regarding reform.

Schools asked the following of CAS:

- identify programs that are working in CT
- continue offering workshops and continuous support for schools
- offer regional and local networking
- assist schools with re-structuring ideas, particularly interdisciplinary organization; and,
- provide assistance in creating smaller learning communities.

With the High School Summit being a cooperative effort by CAS and the State Department of Education, the joint planning committee intends to use the feedback from the conference to address the above suggestions. The annual high school/middle school conference on January 28, 2005, will feature an additional opportunity for school leaders to focus on improvement practices. The program brochure will be available in December, so save the date.

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMIT A SUCCESS

By Mike Buckley, Ph.D., Connecticut Principals' Center Director

Over 200 administrators and teachers from forty-one Connecticut high schools gathered at the Radisson in Cromwell on October 19th to reflect on the present and future condition of "the high school." Augmented by representatives from the state department of education, state legislature, and Connecticut Business and Industry Association, these school leaders had their thinking expanded by three national reform presenters and participated in facilitated "talk-back" sessions planning next steps within the state. (See related item page 4)

Connecticut's Commissioner of Education, Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, was the driving force behind this event. Having chaired, while associate commissioner, the blue ribbon task group that produced *The Reconceptualized Connecticut High School* report, she is anxious to see its recommendations transformed into positive action for the benefit of students.

Dr. Sternberg opened the conference by highlighting some of the key recommendations the state department of education is advancing for consideration in the next biennial budget. These recommendations include extending pre-school education to all three and four year olds in priority school districts and giving students in

all ninth and tenth grade English and social studies classes access to laptop computers. She also reminded participants that NCLB means more than new test demands and daunting AYP requirements, that its intent is a rigorous and relevant education that will prepare every student to succeed in the world beyond high school.

Dr. Sternberg advanced eight principles to guide reform at the secondary level:

1. View education as a privilege, not a right.
2. Notice, value, admire, and never deride hard work and exceptional effort.
3. Accept that significant time and effort must be invested outside of the classroom to master material.
4. Establish connections between and among content disciplines.
5. Encourage participation in a variety of activities to stimulate intellectual, physical, social, and emotional abilities.
6. Connect each student to an adult advocate within the school community.
7. Vest students with responsibility for their own conduct and that of their peers.
8. Surround students with adults with sound values who are enthusiastic about being involved with kids beyond the classroom.

Willard Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education, gave an inspirational charge to participants to make the necessary changes to meet the needs of all students in the 21st century. Acknowledging that our present high schools were built and organized for a time in the past that no longer exists, Dr. Daggett pointed out that our goal was not to prepare students to do well in school - something that Connecticut does better than most states - but to prepare students to do well in life. His rationale for reform was the current context of biological, informational, and nanotechnological changes and their implications for what students will need to know and be able to do to succeed in their futures. He concluded by sharing the characteristics that the thirty highest performing high schools in the country share: leaders with the vision and passion to make the necessary changes; sub-divisions into smaller learning communities; ninth and twelfth grades programs with significantly different looks; rigor and relevance in the curriculum; use of data to influence decisions; strong teacher-student relationships; and professional development that is voluntary and focused.

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PRINCIPALS' CENTER TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE TRAINS ADMINISTRATORS IN EXCEL

By Robert Hale, Chair, Technology Committee

Over thirty administrators participated in training on Microsoft Excel sponsored and presented by the CAS Principals' Center Technology Committee. This three-day intensive workshop covered aspects of the program from beginner level through advanced techniques including filtering, graphing, and sorting. The third day provided participants with an opportunity to work on their own individualized projects with coaching from the course instructors.

Held at Seymour Middle School on July 7, 8 and 9, the course was facilitated by principals. This principal-as-instructor model was advantageous because examples relevant to the school environment were embedded into the training.

Lead instructor Alan Capasso, headmaster at Greenwich High School, structured the hands-on training to assist participants with management, supervision and data analysis tasks. Assisting with the course facilitation and providing coaching were Harry Gagliardi, principal at Lopresti School in Seymour; Bob Hale, principal at Westbrook High School; and Leo Lavalley, assistant principal at Edison Magnet School in Meriden. All of the presenters are members of the CAS Principals' Center Technology Committee.

The 3-day program, which was free of charge, was made possible with funding from the Gates Technology Grant.



Alan Capasso, headmaster at Greenwich High School and member of the Principals' Center Technology Committee, assists Sue Homrock, assistant principal of Wamogo High School in Region 6, as she works on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to analyze CAPT results.

"The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get into the office."

- Robert Frost (1874 - 1963)

REMINDER

To Member School Principals

All member schools were required to update their school information in the online CAS membership database by **October 15th**. It is vital that we keep our membership data as current as possible. This allows member schools to take full advantage of the benefits of CAS membership and ensures that our online membership directory information is up-to-date.

All member school principals should have received an e-mail containing their school number and login ID for accessing the online membership database. If you did not receive a message or if you have any questions, please contact Karen Packtor at 203-250-1111, ext. 3010 or kpactor@casciac.org.

NASC, NHS/NJHS MEMBER ALERT!

In late spring of 2004, NASSP was notified that the Student Leadership Network (SLN) was being investigated for their business practices. Regardless, schools continue to report receiving invoices from the SLN and the United States Student Government Association (USSGA), which, according to a letter sent to the North Carolina Attorney General's office, is managed by SLN.

Student Leadership Network solicitations received by schools over the summer months asked for \$628 and listed the payments for *Honor Society* and *Student Council* charter memberships. The words "National Student Council" also appeared on the solicitation as the name to which checks were to be made payable. A \$45 UPS handling fee was indicated on the form, but no merchandise or supplies were listed. The address of the Student Leadership Network has changed from State Street in Chicago to 8 Michigan Ave., Chicago.

Since early October, schools have been receiving a new solicitation from SLN that requests an \$85 payment. SLN mailings have further confused school personnel by using envelopes that display both the Student Leadership Network logo and the name "National Association of Student Councils" directly under it.

The latest solicitations from the USSGA are almost exact copies of the official National Association of Student Council invoice found on www.nasc.us. The USSGA invoice uses the same font, layout, and color combinations as the NASC form.

There is considerable concern for schools that have paid or are considering membership with USSGA since this is the organization that used school checking account numbers to clone checks and draft unauthorized funds from those schools between December 2003 and early 2004.

NASC, NHS and NJHS urge principals, advisers, educational office personnel, and school business officers to please be careful and not mistake the Student Leadership Network promotion for the school's official NASC, NHS or NJHS Membership Invoices. To help avoid any confusion that may be caused by Student Leadership Network mailings, remember that NASC, NHS and NJHS dues are always sent to our Reston, Virginia address: NASC, PO Box 3250, Reston, VA and that in addition to the logos, the statement "Proudly sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals" always appears on membership forms and renewal notices.



Connecticut Educators Say "No Child Left Behind" Law In Need of Improvement

The state and federal government must significantly improve the *No Child Left Behind Act* for the initiative to have a positive effect on Connecticut's schools, according to a new report released by the Legislative Advocacy Clinic at Yale Law School and Connecticut Voices for Children.

"*No Child Left Behind* has the potential to improve education for Connecticut's students, but to do so the law must be adapted to account for the needs and realities of the educators on the ground," said Eliza Leighton, a member of the Legislative Advocacy Clinic, which wrote the report.

The report combined the first-ever statewide survey of superintendents and principals on this issue with site visits and in-depth interviews with school staff in four representative school districts across the state (New Haven, West Hartford, Meriden and New Milford).

Among the highlights of its findings:

- The act's measures of "Adequate Yearly Progress" in educational performance are fundamentally flawed because they fail to track students over time, they set unrealistic requirements, and they do not fairly assess the performance

of special education or English Language Learning students.

- The act's requirements for teacher and paraprofessional qualifications are inflexible, relying too heavily on formal certification and degrees rather than actual classroom performance.

- The sanctions schools face under the act—in particular the sanctions related to not meeting Annual Yearly Progress goals and the labeling of schools as "in need of improvement" and staff as "not highly qualified"—are more likely to hurt rather than help improve student achievement.

- The federal government has not adequately funded many provisions of the act, and its full implementation will prove quite costly at the school district level.

The report calls for some specific changes to state and federal laws and regulations to remove these obstacles and transform *No Child Left Behind* from a tool of punishment to one of progress.

The report, *Early Changes, Enduring Challenges: Connecticut Educators Speak Out About the Impact of the No Child Left Behind Act*, is available at www.ctkidslink.org/publications/educ04nclb10.pdf.

State Department of Education Reports "Adequate Yearly Progress" under NCLB

More than 80 percent of Connecticut's elementary and middle schools analyzed for adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the federal *No Child Left Behind* law achieved this standard, based on results of the 2003 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). Of 806 such schools, 661 or 82 percent met the following standards:

- 65% of students must be proficient in mathematics on the CMT;
- 57% must be proficient in reading;
- 70% must be above the basic performance level in writing; and
- 95% must participate in the CMT testing.

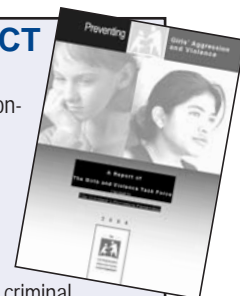
These standards must be met by the whole school and by each subgroup of students (white, black, Hispanic, students with disabilities, English language learners and economically disadvantaged students) with at least 40 students in the subgroup.

The 145 elementary and middle schools that did not make AYP represent a slight decrease from the 149 schools so identified last year. (Also, 49 of last year's identified schools did make AYP this year.) Of the 145, 97 have been identified as "in need of improvement," which means that these schools have not made AYP for at least two consecutive years in the same content area. Of the 97 schools, 8 are now in their fourth year of identification as "in need of improvement." As a result, during this school year they must plan for restructuring for the 2005-06 school year if they do not make adequate yearly progress in the next testing cycle (the 2004 CMT, administered during late September and early October of this year).

continued on page 8

New report on girls' violence in CT

Last month, The Governor's Prevention Partnership released a comprehensive report on girls' violence in Connecticut. The report highlights the work of the Girls and Violence Task Force, a group of prevention and juvenile justice practitioners, educators, researchers, and other experts, who spent several years researching the issue of girls and violence. The study reveals that there has been an increase in girls' involvement in delinquent and criminal activities, as well as physical fighting in schools. Females are now more likely than in past years to be arrested for assault, drug trafficking, and gang activity—juvenile crimes historically considered to be the exclusive domain of young males. This involvement starts earlier for girls than for boys. In Connecticut from 1999 to 2003, the number of girls referred to juvenile court increased from 3530 to 5258, representing an increase of 49%, and one in five girls in secure confinement is now 14 or younger. The report provides a thorough review of the issues underlying girls' involvement in violence and promotes a comprehensive approach to preventing the perpetration of violence by girls. It can serve as a critical resource for policy makers, teachers, parents and others for effectively creating, utilizing and promoting prevention practices which can successfully facilitate the healthy development of all girls. The full report can be downloaded at www.preventionworksct.org/pdf/G&Vfinalreport.pdf.



middle school news

Call for Papers

The editorial staff and the CAS Middle Level Professional Studies Committee are soliciting original manuscripts for the upcoming issue of "IMPACT," Connecticut's Journal for Middle Level Educators. Articles should be directed to the focus topic, "School Climate" or a topic of general interest to middle level educators in Connecticut.

Position statements, curriculum ideas and descriptions of successful classroom activities are most welcome.

Articles and manuscripts should be between one and five pages in length (10 point font) singled-spaced and may include pictures, charts or graphs. Submissions should be emailed or mailed on disc in a Microsoft Word compatible format.

Deadline for the next issue in May 1, 2005

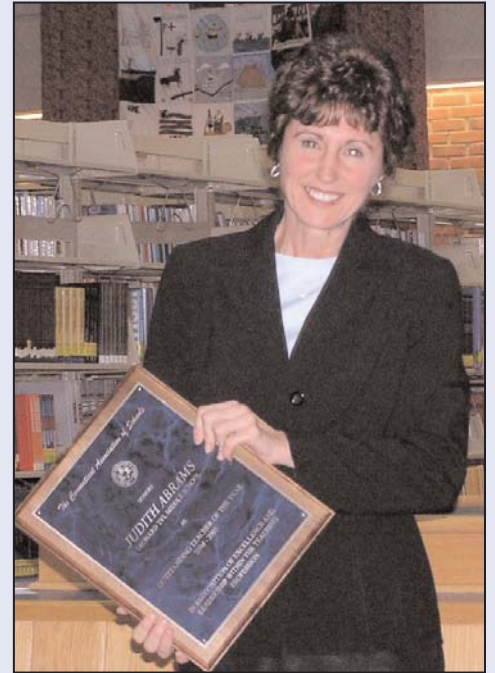
Send manuscripts or inquires to:
Earle B. Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director
The Connecticut Association of Schools
30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT 06410
or ebidwell@casciac.org



Abrams Selected as CAS Middle Level Teacher of the Year

By Earle Bidwell, Assistant Executive Director

"Let me be the music" are the words Judy Abrams chose to begin the reflective writing piece that she submitted as a finalist for the *CAS Teacher of the Year Award*. These words are so appropriate for one whose "music" touches the lives of so many people. Transforming a general music course that was basically an alternative for students who didn't play an instrument and couldn't sing into "Adventures in Music," has brought excitement, vitality and creativity to hundreds of students at Leonard Tyl Middle School in Montville, Connecticut. Students of CAS's 2004-2005 Middle School Teacher of the Year experience a breadth of music experiences ranging from learning to play a keyboard instrument, to conducting music ensembles, developing listening skills and composing their own music.



"This We Believe: Successful

Schools for Young Adolescents" states that "successful schools ... provide curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative and exploratory." Judy Abrams had taken this imperative to heart and created a signature unit that brings new meaning to integration and exploration. Based on a national celebration of freedom in the Bahamas, her unit, "Junkanoo," involves students in a plethora of activities from writing songs to making instruments, creating authentic costumes, studying the history of the country and exploration of the sea life of the islands, to name but a few. The unit is truly integrative as various portions are taught by Ms. Abrams eight grade teacher colleagues. One has only to experience a "Junkanoo Rush," similar to a Mardi gras parade to know the effect this learning has on the entire Tyl community. High school students return to participate, and younger students are already practicing for their turn in the parade. So thorough is her understanding of the tradition of Junkanoo that the Ministry of Education in the Bahamas has adopted her work as part of the national curriculum.

A graduate of Wheaton College Conservatory of Music, Ms. Abrams received a Masters in Music Education from Central Connecticut State University. Additionally, she was one of four nationally to be awarded a six week fellowship at Northwestern University in Chicago and is currently working with Dr. Rosita Sands, Director of the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in writing a textbook about integrated learning at the middle level. Judy has recently shared her knowledge and expertise as the keynote speaker at two prestigious events, the CAS Middle Level Student Leadership Conference and the New England League of Middle Schools' Unified Arts Conference.

If students learn from the implicit lessons modeled by teachers, as well as from formal instruction, it follows that a music teacher should also be a practicing musician outside the classroom. Judy Abrams continues to pursue her own musical journey by singing five part harmony with two sisters, her daughter and her mother, and is the director of music at Evangelical Free Church in North Stonington.

Judy Abrams has certainly been "the music" for countless young people at Leonard Tyl Middle School and has touched the lives of all those with whom she has come in contact. She is among those rare individuals who come along only once in a while. The middle level division of CAS is proud to name her *CAS Teacher of the Year* for 2004-2005.

MIDDLE LEVEL ISSUES

Vol. 4 #6, October 2004

Literacy Across the Curriculum in Middle Level Schools

by Teresa Poulin Kane and Robert C. Spear Ed. D.

"To be literate in content classrooms, students must learn how to use language processes to explore and construct meaning with texts. When students put language to work for them in content classrooms, it helps them to discover, organize, retrieve, and elaborate on what they are learning."

-- Richard T. Vacca,
"Taking the Mystery Out of Content-Area Literacy"

All teachers need to be prepared to teach students how to understand what they are reading. Strategies for comprehending nonfiction as well as literature need to be taught by everyone. Too often other content area teachers leave the writing and reading skills to be taught by the Language Arts teachers. Language Arts teachers often concentrate on teaching students to read and understand literature and fiction; however, the most widely read genre is nonfiction. Students must utilize different literacy strategies in all content areas so that they can better comprehend informational text used in those classes.

Many students do not read textbooks well. If you ask students why, they will often tell you it is

continued on page 8

... more middle school news

Literacy, continued from page 7

because the material is boring or too difficult. Because of this and the age group:

- All classrooms need to be equipped with a variety of interesting nonfiction books;
- Students need to become engaged with the text and involved in their learning;
- Teachers need to model questioning techniques for students to use to help them recall information, to summarize the text and to apply and evaluate what they have read.

Content area teachers need to be prepared to help their students by teaching different strategies for reading nonfiction and a variety of note-taking strategies, so students can choose the one that fits their learning style. One could ask these questions to assess how educators are doing:

- Are content area teachers helping students with note-taking skills and prewriting activities?
- Are we allowing our students time to read, write, reflect, assess, and rewrite?
- Are we providing good nonfiction material that is age appropriate and on different reading levels?
- What are we doing to ensure that strategies for reading fiction and nonfiction are being taught?

All teachers should be utilizing strategies that will ensure the success of each and every student. Schools need to remember that the most important goal should be to give every student the tools needed to be literate in order to be successful in life. All students need to be able to communicate their thoughts and ideas through their writing and speaking, and they must be proficient at listening and reading for the purposes of learning.

With that in mind, schools must provide all teachers with the knowledge and the strategies that they need to enable them to instruct their students. Supportive supervision and walk throughs can help gauge levels of implementation and attainment. When growth is needed, it can be done through conferences, workshops, school based professional activities, reciprocal teaching, team teaching and access to materials such as Janet Allen's *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*; Stephanie Harvey's *Nonfiction Matters*; Laura Robb's *Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science and Math*. Book study groups with year-long professional conversations can also be helpful.

Teresa Poulin Kane is a teacher at the Warsaw Middle School in Pittsfield, ME.; Robert C. Spear Ed.D. is the Executive Director of the New England League of Middle Schools.

Resources:

Allen, Janet. 2004. *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Harvey, Stephanie. 1998. *Nonfiction Matters*. York, ME: Stenhouse.

Robb, Laura. 2003. *Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science, and Math*. Jefferson City, MO: Scholastic Professional Books.

Vacca, R.T. 2000. "Taking the Mystery Out of Content-Area Literacy." In M. McLaughlin and M. Vogt, eds., *Creativity and Innovation in Content-Area Teaching*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.

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

AYP, continued from page 6

In addition, 122 of the 145 schools identified as not making AYP and 81 of the 97 schools identified as in need of improvement are schools receiving federal Title I funds.

Seven schools have made "safe harbor." This means that while they did not reach the proficiency targets in reading and mathematics, they did reach the "safe harbor" targets of 70 percent of students scoring above basic in writing and a 10 percent decrease in the number of students scoring below basic in reading and mathematics. Thus, they were not identified as failing to make AYP.

No schools were identified as failing to make adequate yearly progress for not reaching 95 percent participation, either by the whole school or by any subgroup. Last year, eight schools were identified for not reaching the participation standard. For a list of schools not making AYP for 2002-2003, visit www.casciac.org/pdfs/AYPList.pdf.

Schools did not make AYP for the following reasons:

Whole school math & reading academic achievement	38
Whole school math academic achievement	14
Whole school reading academic achievement	36
Subgroup math & reading academic achievement	27
Subgroup math academic achievement	13
Subgroup reading academic achievement	17

(Source: State Department of Education)

Summit, continued from page 5

Pam Fisher, Director of the Great Maine Schools Project at the Mitchell Scholarship Research Institute, focused on *Breaking Ranks II*, NASSP's recently released template for principals and school leadership teams to systemically improve high schools. Ms. Fisher was formerly principal of Noble High School, during its change from a traditional comprehensive learning institution to small learning communities aligned with the Coalition of Essential Schools. The school has been recognized for its successful work focusing on structures and practices which aim to guarantee equity, rigor, and personalization for each student. The story of Noble's journey is documented in *Breaking Ranks II*, highlighting strategies in the key areas of (1) collaborative leadership, professional learning communities, and the strategic use of data; (2) personalizing the school environment; and (3) creating rigorous student-centered curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She noted the alignment with both the characteristics of high performing high schools cited by Daggett and the NEASC's standards for accreditation.

Following lunch, Betty Despenza-Green, former director of the National High School Initiative of the Small Schools Workshop, shared her success in helping transform the Chicago Vocational Career Academy into a nationally recognized model for small school restructuring. Her approach was simple - put data into the hands of all stakeholders and let them forge a mission that drives change. In this case, the mission for all students became: enter college without remediation; meet or exceed state goal standards in reading, writing, and mathematics; take and pass at least one AP course (or take a college course during junior or senior year); and graduate with at least one industry certification. It took a decade of "keeping an eye on the prize," retraining the entire educational staff, and the courage to take on an institutional culture and history, but the results were dramatic. Teachers who once locked their doors, covered their windows, lectured for fifty minutes and then gave a paper and pencil test on Friday began changing their pedagogy and engaging their students in cooperative learning activities, project-based learning, and authentic performances. These same teachers began to meet before and after school, scripting lessons, talking over their work and that of their students. Eventually, everything became subject to review. Why have an honors program for a select few? Why not make every class "honors" quality and give students the option of taking it "regular" or "honors"? Again, the links to the high performing high schools referenced by Daggett and featured in *Breaking Ranks II* were obvious.

elementary school news

Do you know an outstanding elementary school principal?

The Connecticut Association of Schools is actively soliciting nominations for *Connecticut's National Distinguished Principal Award* for 2005. The program is designed to recognize outstanding principals who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership, a passion for educational excellence, a commitment to their students and staff, and service to their communities.

If you feel that an elementary principal that you know may be eligible for and worthy of this honor, please complete a nomination form, or have it completed by someone in his/her district, by **December 10, 2004**. Two one-page letters of recommendation and a copy of the nominee's resume must be submitted with the nomination form. Specific award criteria, program guidelines, and procedures for submitting a nomination can be found at www.casciac.org/pdfs/ndp_app.pdf

NOTE: All nominees must be members of CAS and have at least five years of experience as a school principal.

Please contact Karen Packtor (203-250-1111, x. 3010 or kpactor@casciac.org) if you have any questions.

EPI Report Shows Early Childhood Education Pay-off

Investment in early childhood development pays off -- literally. A new Economic Policy Institute report shows how education programs for 3 and 4 year old children ultimately provide many financial benefits to local governments and taxpayers, including higher earnings and reduced crime and poverty. In "Exceptional Returns: Economic, Fiscal, and Social Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Development," author and EPI research associate Robert Lynch finds high-quality early childhood development (ECD) programs contribute directly to higher employment and earnings, better health, less crime and poverty, solvency of Social Security, greater government revenues, and higher levels of verbal, math and intellectual achievement for participating students. The report calculates future savings and finds, for example, good early childhood education programs produce at least \$3 in benefits for every dollar of investment.

CONGRATULATIONS . . . to CT's 2004 Blue Ribbon Schools!

- ◆ Edith E. Mackrille Magnet School,
West Haven / Principal: Catherine Biagetti
- ◆ Old Greenwich School, Old Greenwich
Principal: Marjorie Sherman
- ◆ Thomas G. Alcorn School, Enfield
Principal: Marguerite Myers-Killeen

Education World® editor Linda Starr offers 20 of her favorite phrases from the *Dictionary of Education Euphemisms* . . .

- ☞ Molly demonstrates problems with spatial relationships.
(*It's November and she still hasn't found her cubby.*)
- ☞ Sarah exhibits exceptional verbal skills and an obvious propensity for social interaction. (*She never stops talking.*)
- ☞ Paul's leadership qualities need to be more democratically directed.
(*He's a bully.*)
- ☞ Jonathan accomplishes tasks when his interest is frequently stimulated.
(*He has the attention span of a gnat.*)
- ☞ Donald is making progress in learning to express himself respectfully.
(*He no longer uses vulgarities when talking back to me.*)
- ☞ Alfred demonstrates some difficulty meeting the challenges of information retention.
(*He'd forget his name if it wasn't taped to his desk.*)
- ☞ Bunny needs encouragement in learning to form lasting friendships.
(*Nobody likes her.*)
- ☞ Kenny is working toward grade level.
(*He may even reach it -- next year.*)
- ☞ Joel appears to be aware of all classroom activities.
(*He just can't focus on the one we're involved in.*)
- ☞ Sandy seems to have difficulty distinguishing between fact and fantasy.
(*He lies like a rug.*)
- ☞ Allie enjoys dramatization. She may be headed for a career in show business.
(*Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus comes to mind.*)
- ☞ Takira's creative writing skills are reminiscent of Socrates.
(*It's all Greek to me.*)
- ☞ Elinor is a creative problem solver.
(*She hasn't gotten an answer right yet.*)
- ☞ Jack demonstrates an avid interest in recreational reading.
(*He "recreates" while other students read.*)
- ☞ Mayrita appears to be showing an increased desire to consider demonstrating acceptable classroom behavior. (*She now appears to know the classroom rules. Some day she may even obey one.*)
- ☞ Pablo participates enthusiastically in all art activities.
(*He's especially adept at throwing pottery and paint and.*)
- ☞ Jeremy is stimulated by participation in sequential activities.
(*He consistently insists on fighting his way to the front of the recess line.*)
- ☞ Juanita needs more home study time.
(*Could you please keep her home more often?*)
- ☞ Michael demonstrates a need for guidance in the appropriate use of time.
(*Three hours a day is entirely too much time to spend picking his nose.*)
- ☞ David frequently appears bored and restless. You might want to consider placing him in a more challenging environment.
(*Prison, perhaps?*)

Excerpted from an article by Linda Starr, 9/27/2004, http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues225.shtml

ciac news briefs

ONLINE ELIGIBILITY CENTER UPDATE

■ Member schools are reminded that they should be using the "Support Ticket" option to request changes to forms which are not "editable" (such as tournament rosters). To submit a support ticket, scroll down to the "Administrative Actions" section on your eligibility center main page. Locate the "Support Ticket" bullet (second from top) and simply click on the red "Open New" link. Type in your request, making sure to include all relevant information (player name, shirt number, etc). Once a request has been received and processed, a confirmation e-mail will be sent from this office. This new procedure will help member schools, as they will now have an official record of all such requests and of the central office reply to their request. "Support tickets" can also be used to request general help with the eligibility center.

■ Winter sports tournament packets for 2004-05 (.pdf format) are available for immediate download. The packets contain divisional breakdowns, tournament rules and information, key dates and deadlines, and a set of worksheets to be used for collecting the information which needs to be submitted by schools via the password-protected online eligibility center (which is ready now to accept forms for winter sports).

■ We've added another new report to the Online Eligibility Center. The report, which allows you to view the number of athletes on each of your eligibility lists by team dating back to the 2001-02 school year, can be accessed via the "View Team-By-Team Eligibility List Counts" link which can be found near the top of the main eligibility center page. (NOTE: These numbers are drawn from a database built from each of the eligibility lists. The database is updated daily at 3 a.m., so changes made to a list on a given day will not be reflected in the counts until the following day.)

■ In response to the request of our member schools, we've added a new option to the eligibility center which allows you to view one report with the won-lost records for all of your sports for the 2003-04 school year. Hopefully this will assist schools in gathering the information needed to fill out the Michael's Cup form. The link to this report can be found near the top of the eligibility center main page. When viewing the information keep in mind that (1) some sports are missing because we do not collect results for them, and (2) that the records only include games for which scores were submitted last year (after each record there is a number indicating the number of missing games for that team).

■ Exercise Sharpens Children's Minds,

Study Finds: Forget stereotypes of the smart weakling kid and the dumb athlete. Physical and mental fitness tend to go together in youngsters, according to a team of researchers from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. They tested around 500 kids between 7 and 11 both for fitness and mental capacity, on the Illinois Standard Achievement Test. "We found a general relationship between physical fitness and improvement on this test," said study author Dr. Charles Hillman. He added that the findings are one more reason why kids should get plenty of exercise. Though it is unclear why fitness improves kids' minds, Dr. Hillman noted that it also helps keep aging adults sharp. He suggested that physical activity may increase the number of molecules that protect the brain and prevent the loss of cerebral matter. "I personally don't think there's one answer," he said. [Reuters Health, 10/25]

■ Obesity a Problem at All Levels:

Americans are getting taller on average but they are much heavier too, according to government figures released last month. The findings hold for women, men and children, the National Center for Health Statistics reports. The government's latest report on height and weight shows that between 1960 and 2002, the average height of men 20 to 74 years old went from just over 5 ft. 8 in. to 5 ft. 9 in. while the average weight went from 166.3 to 191 pounds. The average height of women went from 5 ft 3 in. to 5 ft. 4 in. while the average weight went from 140.2 pounds to 164.3 pounds. The average 10-year-old boy in 1963 weighed 74.2 pounds and was 55.2 inches tall. By 2002 the average weight was nearly 85 pounds and height 55.7 inches. For 10-year-old girls, the average weight in 1963 was 77.4 pounds and height 55.5 inches. Girls were an average of an inch taller by 2002 at 56.4 inches, but gained an average of 11 pounds to 88 pounds. "This is

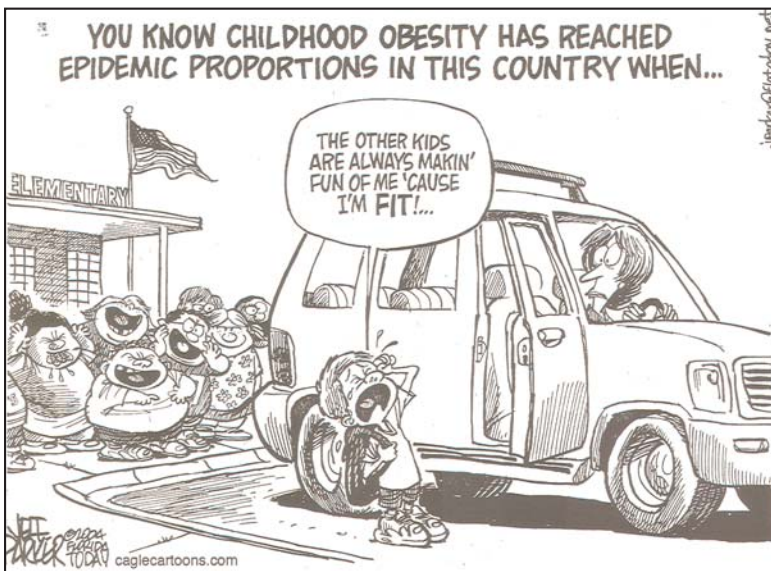
exactly what we have been concerned about," said Dr. Julie Gerberding, head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "It tells me that we are facing an ominous trend in the degree of obesity and lack of physical fitness in our country. It is going to have profound health impacts on our children, on our adults and on our seniors."

■ Bill to Limit Steroid Precursors

Passes: Legislation to curtail sales of steroid precursors and seek increased penalties for offenses involving anabolic steroids was approved by the House earlier this month and sent to the president for his signature. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Delaware, would add 18 substances to the list of banned anabolic steroids, including androstenedione and tetrahydrogestrinone. "A lot of kids don't know how harmful this stuff really is," Biden said when the legislation passed the Senate. "By passing this legislation, we're sending a message about andro and other steroid precursors. We are calling them what they really are: drugs." He also said the bill would provide \$15 million to teach kids about the dangers of steroids. It directs the U.S. Sentencing Commission to review the federal sentencing guidelines and consider amending those guidelines to provide for increased penalties. The House bill was approved by voice vote. Congress has taken an increased interest in the issue this year after reports of steroid use among athletes, particularly professional baseball players. A federal grand jury in San Francisco has indicated four men on charges of illegally distributing steroids, including the personal trainer of Giants slugger Barry Bonds.

■ Principal Drops Truants from Football

Team: When three varsity football players at Mira Costa High in Manhattan Beach, California, ditched school on September 24 and two got caught in a fight, new principal Scott Wilbur released them from the team. As a result, players struggled to learn new positions in mid-season. But Dr. Wilbur had declared his commitment to ethics before he was hired for the job; and he was simply following through on his pledge.



MORE SCRUTINY OF HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS NEEDED

"We have a moral obligation to prevent the exploitation of high school students..."

"When the game ends and the glory fades, educated students will be the ultimate winners."

Alexandria, VA --- The growing professionalization of high school sports, concerns about steroid use and other questionable practices that have put athletic concerns above the core educational mission of schools demand greater state monitoring of inter-scholastic athletics and a wholesale review of the role of athletic programs in public education, concludes a blue-ribbon commission of national, state, and local education policymakers. The panel, convened by the National Association of State Boards of Education, calls for more oversight over school athletic activities to ensure they do not undermine the high academic standards and rigorous accountability measures established by states over the past decade.

"Many of the problems that have plagued college athletics---shoe agents, mercenary coaches, dubious recruiting, and extravagant gifts---are now encroaching upon the high school level. It sends a disturbing message to students and the public about the priorities of our schools," said Brenda Welburn, NASBE Executive Director.

Despite the pervasiveness of high school athletics, there is remarkably little research on the interplay of sports and academic achievement, nor has there been much scrutiny of athletic activities by state education officials who have traditionally deferred to the supervision of private state athletic federations and local educators.

While affirming that athletics are part of the high school experience, it was the commission's fundamental position that academic achievement takes precedence over extracurricular activities, and that such activities are a privilege that must be earned, not a right that is conferred. The commission was most emphatic in calling for a more robust state role in promoting equity and equitable participation so that all students who earn the privilege to participate are able to do so, including charter and home-schooled students.

The commission confronted the sometimes conflicting, and often controversial, sets of academic eligibility rules that critics have deemed too low, too varied, and too inconsistently applied. It also addressed state policy recommendations on hot button topics such as full and equitable student participation, the relationship of high school athletics to private sports leagues, school-supervised testing for steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs, the professional qualifications of coaches, and equitable financing of programs across districts.

The commission's report, *Athletics and Achievement: The Report of the NASBE Commission on High School Athletics in an Era of Reform*, can be purchased at www.nasbe.org.

COACHES' CORNER

News from the National Federation of High School Associations

■ **Periodization:** The Summer 2004 issue of USOC Olympic Coach E-Magazine features a series of articles on Periodization, including one by Tudor Bompa, one of the most respected and recognized voices in this field. The articles are directed specifically at coaches and can be read at <http://coaching.usolympicteam.com/coaching/kpub.nsf/v/0504b>.

■ **Clarification on Football Helmet**

Standards: Over the last several months statements have been made that imply NOCSAE has established new standards for football helmets. The reported "new standards" would make the current inventory obsolete and non-compliant. Although NOCSAE is in the process of considering possible changes to the standards, there are no new football helmet standards at this time. If a new performance standard for football helmets is eventually adopted, that approval and publication cannot occur until at least two years after it is first proposed. Visit http://www.nocsae.org/nocsae/NOCSAE_RESPONSE.htm for more information.

■ **Track Rules Changes:** The NF Track and Field Rules Committee has clarified the difference between the number of entries and the number of competitions allowed for high school track and field participants. The clarification will provide track and field coaches greater or lesser latitude for coaching strategies, depending on existing practices within their respective states. The committee reaffirmed a position that permits high school athletes to participate in a maximum of four events per track meet. Rule 4-2-1 allows a competitor to be entered into four individual (running and field) events, along with being listed as an alternate on relays. Participation on a relay team counts as one of the four events for the meet.

The committee also modified rules pertaining to track and field uniforms. Participants are now permitted to wear bodysuits (unitards) in competition. Previously, shorts were required at meets. The bodysuits must still meet other NFHS uniform restrictions, including logo and color restrictions. They can be either 1- or 2-piece suits.

A new penalty was also established by the committee. A warning, disqualification from the event and then disqualification from the meet can now be enforced if a coach or event official is not present when athletes are warming up for throwing or jumping events.

For additional track and field rule changes, visit www.nfhs.org and click on the "Sport & Rules Information" link.

■ **Boys' Lacrosse Rules Changes:** The NF Boys Lacrosse Rules Committee has approved a coaches/officials time-out rule. Rule 7-13 allows a boys lacrosse coach to request an officials' time-out to discuss the possible misapplication of a rule. The questioning coach must make the request before the next live ball, and discussion will take place in the table area with both teams'

coaches present. In the event that a rule has been misapplied, the decision will be explained to both coaches and proper corrections will be made in the game. No time-out will be charged to the team. However, if the officials' original call stands, the requesting coach's team will be charged with a time-out. The review may only be used in the case of a possible misapplication of a rule and does not apply to judgment calls.

For additional lacrosse rules changes, visit www.nfhs.org and click on the "Sport & Rules Information" link.

■ **Baseball Rules Changes:** The NF Baseball Rules Committee defined what is a balk and what is not for a high school baseball pitcher. Rule 6-1-1 was revised to specify when a baseball pitcher can turn his shoulders toward base runners while on the mound. It is now legal for a pitcher to turn his shoulders to check a runner if he is in the set position and in contact with the pitcher's plate. However, if the pitcher turns his shoulders in the windup position to check a runner, it is a balk. Turning the shoulders after bringing the hands together during or after the stretch is also a balk.

In other changes, Rule 1-4-6 states that players now have the option of wearing batting helmets equipped with attached facemasks or guards. Regardless of whether the mask is produced with the helmet or attached after the helmet is manufactured, all attached facemasks or guards must meet NOCSAE standards at the time of the mask's attachment.

For additional baseball rules changes, visit www.nfhs.org and click on the "Sport & Rules Information" link.

■ **Softball Rules Changes:** The NF Softball Rules Committee has approved a facemask/guard standard. Rule 1-6-6 will require all high school fast pitch softball players to wear batting helmets equipped with NOCSAE-approved facemasks/guards. The new standard will take effect on January 1, 2006, providing all state association-member schools with adequate time to budget and purchase new helmets that include guards, or to obtain facemasks to attach to current helmets. All masks must have the phrase "Meets NOCSAE standards" printed directly on them. Many manufacturers are already producing these facemasks. In other action, the committee modified Rule 2-36, which pertains to the definition of obstruction. The rule previously stated that a defensive team member could impede the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases if the defender was about to receive a thrown ball. The rule has now been relieved of that wording, and will only allow a defensive team member to impede a runner if she has the ball in her possession.

For additional softball rules changes, visit www.nfhs.org and click on the "Sport & Rules Information" link.

INVESTORS IN CT YOUTH



- ★ Baden Sports ★
- ★ Big Y Supermarkets ★
- ★ Coca Cola ★
- ★ CT Lighting Centers ★
- ★ CT Sun ★
- ★ Horace Mann ★
- ★ IGA Supermarkets ★
- ★ Konica ★
- ★ Kukulski Bros ★
- ★ Liberty Mutual ★
- ★ Martin Screen Printing ★
- ★ McDonald's ★
- ★ NBC-30 ★
- ★ Rawlings ★
- ★ Spalding ★
- ★ Sports Image ★
- ★ Subway ★
- ★ Teachers' Insurance Plan ★
- ★ US Marines ★
- ★ Westfield Corporation ★

THE BULLETIN

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT NCAA ELIGIBILITY

The NCAA Division I initial-eligibility rules are changing! Please be aware that your freshman (9th grade class) this academic year, 2004-05, must present 16 core courses to the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse upon graduation in order to qualify for aid, practice, and competition in their first year of collegiate enrollment (2008-09).

The new rule **INCREASES** the number of core courses from 14 to 16. The additional core courses must come from the following areas: English, mathematics, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, nondoctrinal religion/philosophy, or computer science. The breakdown of core course requirements is listed below. The new rule and present rule are outlined below.

After graduation from high school in the spring of 2008, the final certification report, which is based on the academic record from grades nine through 12, will be evaluated under the new rule. It is not possible to mix and match rules.

PRESENT RULE

- 14 Core Courses**
- 4 years of English
 - 2 years of mathematics (*Algebra I or higher*)
 - 2 years of natural/physical science (*1 year of lab if offered by high school*)
 - 1 year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
 - 2 years of social science
 - 3 years of additional courses (*from any area above or foreign language, nondoctrinal religion/philosophy, computer science**)

NEW RULE

- 16 Core Courses**
- 4 years of English
 - 3 years of mathematics (*Algebra I or higher*)
 - 2 years of natural/physical science (*1 year of lab if offered by high school*)
 - 1 year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
 - 2 years of social science
 - 4 years of additional courses (*from any area above or foreign language, nondoctrinal religion/philosophy, computer science**)

* PLEASE NOTE: Computer science is being eliminated as an acceptable core-course area for students first entering any college or university on or after August 1, 2005. Students entering college on or after August 1, 2005, may not use any computer science courses in meeting the core-course requirements.

“PJ SETTLEMENT” OPPORTUNITIES

By Ann Malafronte, Director of Unified Sports™

Now that the CT State Department of Education has a goal, "To increase the percentage of students with mental retardation or intellectual disabilities who participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities with nondisabled students", CAS would like to, once again, offer you information on starting a Unified Sports program at your school!

This is one way to help you meet your goal of inclusionary opportunities in your district. Over eighty schools have found it to be a wonderful way to enhance their extracurricular offerings!

Contact Ann Malafronte at (203)250-1111, ext. 3017, or amalafronte@casciac.org.

We will assist with this every step of the way!



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Visit our web site at: www.casciac.org/ciacunifiedsports.shtml