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



In This Issue:

CAS Assumes Role with Teacher Evaluation Council - pg 4

CAS Hosts NAESP Regional Conference - page 6

CAS Names Outstanding 1st Year Principals - pg 9

A Principal's Message:

A time to be sentimental

By John Dodig, Staples High School

Editor's Note: As horrific as the recent Rutgers tragedy was, there has to be a way that good can come from it. It is with this hope that we are sharing John's beautiful and important message with our membership. Letters like this can be written and conversations can take place between parents and their kids that might otherwise not. Maybe as a result of those letters and conversations future tragedies will be prevented.

I try to keep under control the many times during every day when I become sentimental or emotional about something a teacher, parent, or student says to me. I can tell you honestly that it happens quite often. Not long ago, a young boy who had a problem on a bus months ago stopped me in the hall to apologize to me because he thought he may have sounded rude when he and I spoke about the incident. I assured him that he had not been rude and that I had completely forgotten about the verbal exchange. I thanked him for seeking me out to be sure that I did not think ill of him. When he left, I became emotional because this seemed like such an unlikely thing for a teenage boy to do. I can assure you that it made my day.

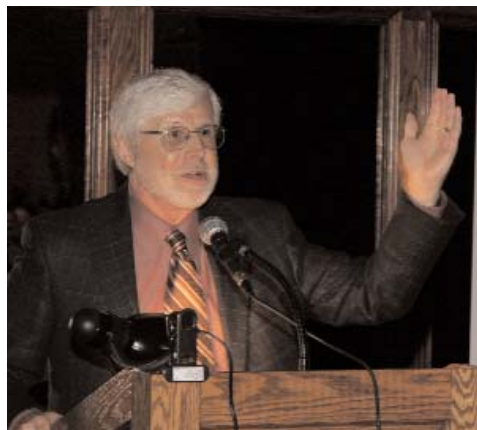
Someone sent me a letter posted on a personal blog that I thought was worth sharing. The author was prompted to write the letter to her daughter because of the tragedy at Rutgers University, but it really could be written to anyone's teenage son or daughter at any time just because it needs to be said. I hope you enjoy reading it and will share it at dinner with your children. *continued on page 4*

CAS CELEBRATES SCHOOL LEADERS AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROFESSION

On Thursday, October 28th, CAS hosted its ninth annual celebration of educational leadership at Saint Clements Castle in Portland. The event was conceived ten 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.

Six individuals from the ranks of Connecticut's school administrators were honored at this year's event:

- ❖ **Ellen Stokoe**, Edward W. Morley School, West Hartford
CT's 2010 National Distinguished Principal
 - ❖ **Tim Sullivan, Jr.**, Classical Magnet School, Hartford
2010 High School Principal of the Year
 - ❖ **Michelle Zeuschner**, Andover E.S.
2010 Elementary School Assistant Principal of the Year
- More than two hundred educators, friends, and family members packed the Waterford Ballroom at Saint Clements to join in honoring CAS' 2010 Distinguished Administrators. Guests were greeted at the door by the mellifluous tones of the Glastonbury High School Resident String Quartet featuring Victoria Hervieux, Jena Mitchell, Bailey Poesnecker, and Nola Campbell.
- continued on page 6*
- ❖ **Jackie Gilmore**, North End M.S., Waterbury
2010 Middle School Asst. Principal of the Year
 - ❖ **Stacey Gross**, Western M.S., Greenwich
2010 Middle School Principal of the Year
 - ❖ **Jeff Provost**, East Lyme High School
2010 High School Asst. Principal of the Year



Master of Ceremonies Scott Gray



Commissioner of Education Dr. Mark McQuillan



Members of the Glastonbury High School Resident String Quartet



CAS President Kit Bishop (left) and Assistant Executive Director Karen Packtor

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: After a student got into a fight, I questioned him. He admitted that he started it, and I imposed consequences accordingly. Now his mother has insisted that I cannot talk to him unless she or her lawyer is present. I don't see how I can run my school unless I can talk to all students. Does she have the right to impose this requirement?

- *Captain of this Ship*

A. DEAR CAPTAIN: She does not. When students come into your school, they are subject to your supervision and control, and such authority includes the right to talk to students and, yes, even ask questions. The important thing here is that you should not simply put the letter in the trash, as tempting as that may be. Rather, you should write back to the mother and inform her that you will not be granting her request for the reasons stated above. You can be nice about it, and you can even tell her that you will be sensitive to her preference that you not talk with her child. However, you have the right and responsibility to reserve your authority to talk to any student in your school as you see fit.

Q. DEAR MAILBAG: Before we get too far along this school year, I want to understand who is tenured and who is not. One of my teachers worked for us for three years under a DSAP, and he got his certificate over the summer. I heard that they changed the law so that DSAP holders are now "teachers." When this teacher completes forty months at the end of this year, will he achieve tenure?

- *Crunching the Numbers*

A. DEAR CRUNCHING: You are to be commended for thinking ahead. Happily, this time you are about three years ahead of yourself. The certification regulations state that a DSAP (durational shortage area permit) is issued "in lieu of a certificate." However, the Tenure Act defines "teacher" as a "certified professional employee below the rank of superintendent." Since an employee with a DSAP is not "certified," he/she is not a "teacher" under the Tenure Act, and he/she does not accrue time

for tenure while so employed. What you are remembering is that the definition of the teachers' bargaining unit was expanded in 2003 to include DSAP holders. Accordingly, DSAP holders are entitled to all of the benefits under the teachers' contract, but they do not earn time for tenure. Your teacher, therefore, just started accruing time for tenure this year.

Q. DEAR MAILBAG: I am under a lot of pressure from my superintendent to improve student performance. Some of my teachers are with the program, but others are not. Last week, I notified staff members by memorandum that I will include on their evaluations my assessment of their individual contributions to the school's progress. I explained that they will be given credit for their contributions on committees and the like. Now the teachers' union representative is all over me. He is claiming that I must rescind the memorandum because teachers cannot suffer consequences if they choose not to volunteer their time. Do I really have to ignore the contributions made by the dedicated teachers?

- *Color Me Incredible*

A. DEAR INCREDULOUS: Stay the course. You have every right to take special contributions of teachers into account in evaluating their performance. Moreover, evaluation is a management prerogative. That said, there are two things to keep in mind. First, you must be careful to follow the procedural provisions of the evaluation plan. In 2004, the General Assembly gave teachers the right to file a grievance if the established procedures of the teacher evaluation plan are violated. Second, anytime you make announcements, you should think about what you are doing. If you announce a "new" expectation, you may be inviting a union claim that you have changed working conditions without negotiations. However, if you are simply clarifying your current practices and/or expectations, such communications should not cause any problems.

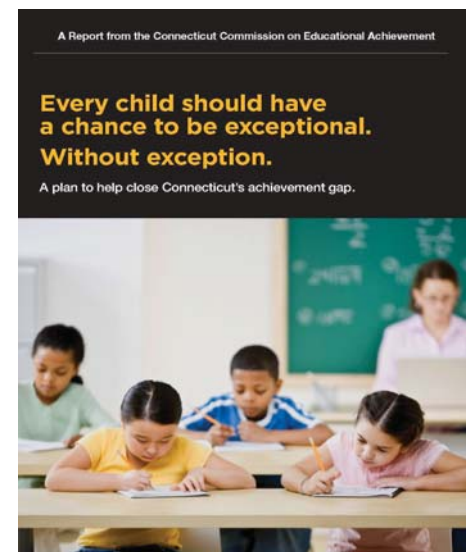
ct news & notes

■ The Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement, established earlier this year by Governor M. Jodi Rell, has issued a 32-page report proposing dozens of reforms designed to close the state's academic achievement gap. Among them are:

- providing quality preschool education for all low-income students
- requiring high school students pass the 10th-grade Connecticut Academic Performance Test to graduate.
- expanding alternative routes to certification programs for teachers and school administrators and holding teacher preparation programs accountable for producing effective teachers.
- linking student performance to teacher and principal evaluations and giving weight to teacher performance over seniority when layoff decisions are made.
- establishing a School Turnaround Office with authority to aggressively intervene in the lowest achieving schools, granting it significant latitude to form innovative schools and extend the learning day or year.
- developing, over a five-year period, a new state funding system to allow money to follow students to the public school of their parents' choice.

To view the full report, *Every child should have a chance to be exceptional. Without exception*, visit: http://www.ctachieve.org/pdf/commission_report.pdf

(Source: *New Haven Register*, *Connecticut Eighth Healthiest State for Kids*, July 27, 2010)



national news & notes

■ A new study from the Century Foundation finds that low-income students in Montgomery County, Md. performed better academically when they attended affluent elementary schools, suggesting that economic integration is a powerful but neglected school-reform tool. Instead of the current focus on improving individual schools through better teaching and expanded accountability, the study addresses the impact of policies that mix income levels across several schools or an entire district, indicating that such policies could be more effective than directing extra resources at higher-poverty schools. The implications lend fresh support to the premise of 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling: Segregated schools of any kind are rarely good at educating low-income students. "Today, 95 percent of education reform is about trying to make high-poverty schools work," said Richard Kahlenberg of the Century Foundation. "This research suggests there is a much more effective way to help close the achievement gap. And that is to give low-income students a chance to attend middle-class schools." The study tracked 858 elementary students in public housing across Montgomery County from 2001 to 2007. After seven years, children in lower-poverty schools performed eight percentage points higher on standardized math tests than their peers at higher-poverty schools, even though the county had targeted these other students with extra resources. The report can be accessed at <http://tcf.org/publications/2010/10/housing-policy-is-school-policy>.

Do you know an outstanding elementary school principal?

CAS, in partnership with NAESP, has opened nominations for the **2011 National Distinguished Principal Award**. The program is designed to recognize outstanding elementary school 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 know an elementary principal who may be eligible for and worthy of this honor, please submit a nomination form by **December 17, 2010**. Two one-page letters of recommendation and a copy of the nominee's resume must accompany the nomination form. Specific award criteria, program guidelines, and procedures for submitting a nomination can be found at: www.casciac.org/pdfs/ndp_11.pdf.

NOTE: All nominees must be members of CAS and NAESP; have at least five years of experience as a school principal; and be in active service in a position of school leadership during the 2011-2012 school year.

Please contact Karen Packtor (203-250-1111, x. 3910 or kpacktor@casciac.org) if you have any questions.

■ Absenteeism at the elementary level is a concern that is receiving increased attention given recent reports detailing the long-term implications of chronic truancy in the early grades. While many think of recurrent absenteeism as a secondary school problem, research is beginning to suggest that the start of elementary school is the critical time to prevent truancy—particularly as those programs become more academic. Statistics show that rates of absenteeism in kindergarten and 1st grade can rival those in high school. An average of one in 10 students younger than grade 3 nationwide is considered chronically absent, defined as missing 10 percent or more of school. That's about 18 days in a normal 180-day year. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the problem is particularly acute among students from low-income families. The foundation reports that, in 2009, more than one in five poor kindergartners was chronically absent, compared to only 8 percent of young students living above the poverty line. The National Center for Children in Poverty found in 2008 that, on average, students who missed 10% or more of school in kindergarten scored significantly lower in reading, math and general knowledge tests at the end of 1st grade than did students who missed 3 percent or fewer days. Moreover, the researchers found chronic absenteeism in kindergarten predicted continuing absences in later grades. A Baltimore Education Research Consortium study released this year showed that high school dropouts show steadily increasing chronic absenteeism for years before they actually leave school. "Early attendance is essential. This is where you really want to work on them," said Kim Nauer, the education project director at the Center for New York City Affairs, which studies attendance issues. "By the time you get to 5th or 6th grade, you can really get a cascade effect that you can't recover from. How much money do we spend in a school system on all of this recuperative stuff in high school—getting the kid back and reengaged—as opposed to making sure the kids don't slip off in elementary school?" (Source: *Education Week*, October 14, 2010)

■ Delaying high school openings by 30 minutes each day may pay dividends for students and teachers. A report in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine found that waiting an extra half hour before starting school is physically and emotionally beneficial to students. After one semester of the study of a Rhode Island high school, students were sleeping longer by 45 minutes and more than 54 percent of students reported getting at least eight hours of sleep per night, an increase from 16 percent before the study. This coincided with less daytime sleepiness and fatigue during the day. Students also reported to be less depressed and had improved motivation at school with improved class attendance. After the study was over, all faculty, students and staff voted to keep the delayed start time. (Source: *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine*, July 2010)

■ A new study indicates participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) may lead to better education attainment and opportunity. The study, published in the Summer 2010 issue of the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, is the first in the NSLP's 64-year history to examine the long-term health and educational impacts of the program. While the study found positive educational benefits based on a correlation between free food and increased attendance as determined by U.S. Census education statistics, it did not show significant long-term health impacts on students into adulthood. (Source: *Science Daily*, 6/29/10)

■ Two independent studies at the University of Illinois have found that aerobic exercise improves cognitive function in pre-adolescent children. Researchers recruited separate groups of 9- and 10-year-olds to run on a treadmill to assess their fitness levels and sort them into highest- or lowest-fit categories. Afterward, the children were given a series of cognitive tasks followed by an MRI scan of the brain. The areas of the brain that help students pay attention and retain information were larger in the highest-fit group. Previous studies found that aerobic activity increases blood flow to the brain and new brain cells are accompanied by the formation of blood vessels. Since the researchers controlled for socioeconomic background, body mass index, and other variables that might influence cognitive ability, they were able to conclude that the increase in brain size was a direct result of physical fitness. (Source: *New York Times*, 9/15/2010)

Principal's Message, *continued from page 1*

LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER (in the wake of senseless tragedy) <<http://vicky-bell.blogspot.com/2010/10/letter-to-my-daughter-in-wake-of.html>>

*Hello my girl,
I wanted to say hi and tell you how much I miss you and that I hope your classes are going well and that you are having fun too. But I also have to have a mommy moment- bear with me here. I won't take long, and I won't be saying anything I haven't already said in one form or another, but it is important.*

You may or may not have heard about the NJ college student who killed himself last week because his room-mate had posted videotape of him having sex with another guy. A terrible, senseless tragedy.

*My mommy job requires that I remind you of two essential things:
One: Nothing ruins your life forever. NOTHING
Two: Nothing ruins your life forever. NOTHING.*

If that young man had only waited a couple of weeks nobody would have cared- he'd have gotten past it. People have short memories - life would have gotten better, much better. His parents and friends? They loved him prior to the tape- they would have loved him afterward too. A few awkward moments and then life goes on.

But when you are young you don't know that even the awkward moments are fleeting. On this, you just have to trust the old people. Remember when you were really small and cried and cried over something? Well, it didn't last. That's kind of what it's like- awful things happen, you feel like there's a rock in the pit of your stomach, somehow time goes by and it gets better. I promise you, it ALWAYS gets better.

The students, a girl and boy, who were involved in the taping and posting-- they are being charged with bias crime, invasion of privacy and possibly other things. Their college life is over. They will have to live with this death the rest of their lives-- and their families are devastated. What they did was so wrong- but also so kid-stupid. Not to mention mean. And so their lives will be different forever- but even so- their families will love them and they will have time enough to hopefully live in such a way as to make meaning from their mistake.

So, my beautiful girl, never, ever think something is unfixable. NOTHING you do will ever keep us from loving you. NOTHING you do could be so awful you can't get past it.

And if someone is mean to you, and it isn't something you can ignore-- seek out people to talk to about it. Surround yourself with people who are supportive. If you ever need help and don't know how to ask- try writing a letter instead. And right now- before you might need such help- think about who you would talk to if needed. In the midst of turmoil sometimes we don't always think as clearly- having a plan makes it easier to find help in crisis. And remember there are always alternatives. Always.

Finally, don't be mean. Don't let other people be mean. Stand up for the under- dog, protect those who aren't as smart or confident or easygoing as yourself. Treat people's feelings like fragile little puppies. If you play with them, be gentle.

*I love you so much and I know you really don't need me to tell you this stuff.... but it's my job.
Love and hugs,
Mommy*

CAS TO FACILITATE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON TEACHER EVALUATION

by Dennis C. Carrithers, Director, CAS Principals' Center

In May of this year, the Connecticut legislature enacted PA 10-111, *An Act Concerning Education Reform in Connecticut*, which includes components such as secondary school reform, charter schools, and school governance councils. It requires the formation of a Performance Evaluation Advisory Council which is charged with providing to the state board of education recommended guidelines for a teacher evaluation program. Such guidelines, which must be submitted to the state board by July 1, 2013, shall include models that involve the use of multiple indicators of student academic growth in teacher evaluations.

Connecticut Commissioner of Education, Dr. Mark McQuillan, has designated CAS as the administrative support center for the council and he has asked the group to assume the additional task of developing a model for principal evaluation as well.

The statute specifically stipulates that the membership of the council shall include the Commissioners of Education and Higher Education, or their designees; representatives from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, the Connecticut Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut; and persons selected by the Commissioner of Education who shall include, but not be limited to, teachers, persons with expertise in performance evaluation processes and systems, and any other person the commissioner deems appropriate.

Other appointments to the council include representatives from the CAS staff, the Regional Educational Service Centers, and the State Department of Education.

The statute gives the charge of the council:
"The council shall be responsible for (1) assisting the State Board of Education in the development and implementation of the teacher evaluation guidelines, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-151b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and

(2) the data collection and evaluation support system, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-10a of the general statutes, as amended by this act. The council shall meet at least quarterly."

The statute further stipulates that the guidelines shall include, but not be limited to:
"(1) Methods for assessing student academic growth; (2) a consideration of control factors tracked by the state-wide public school information system, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-10a, as amended by this act, that may influence teacher performance ratings, including, but not limited to, student characteristics, student attendance and student mobility; and (3) minimum requirements for teacher evaluation instruments and procedures."

CAS and CT Principals' Center committees are currently engaged in providing input to the work of the council. The Critical Issues Committee has been working with state department of education personnel to consider the adoption of the Interstate School Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. Connecticut has had its own leadership standards and will be deciding whether to adopt the national standards as the guiding set. In addition, the CAS Professional Studies Committees are investigating models of principal evaluation from other states and from current research.

Defining "student growth" is a critical factor in developing evaluation models and the focus of considerable attention at the state and national levels. The national media and political agendas are replete with discussion and debate about how student growth should be assessed and utilized. The input from CAS committee members and other school leaders will be important in developing growth models here in Connecticut and in guiding the work of the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council.

This work is timely and essential to teaching and learning and is of considerable interest to CAS member schools, as well as to all interested stakeholders and the public at large. Please be alert to this effort and to subsequent communications about progress toward the models.

SMITH MIDDLE SCHOOL RECEIVES ARTHUR DIRECTOR STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

By Stephanie Ford, Director of Marketing

At an assembly at Smith Middle School in Glastonbury on October 13th, a student leadership team was presented with the 2010 Arthur Director Student Leadership Award. This award is presented annually to a school that exemplifies outstanding application of the themes of the CAS Middle Level Student Leadership Conference. David Director created the award to honor his father, Arthur, founder of the Connecticut Lighting Centers. Longtime corporate partners with CAS, the Connecticut Lighting Centers sponsor the annual student leadership conference and, due to its generosity, students from middle schools throughout the state, regardless of their circumstances, can attend this wonderful annual event.

The theme of this year's conference was "Making Acceptance Acceptable" and the program focused on creating climates of acceptance and inclusion for all students. Smith clearly models these ideals in numerous ways.

"I believe that our school is a successful representation of the qualities that this award celebrates," commented Robby Kasper, 8th grader and student council president at Smith.

"Conduct based on the small, simple acts of student leaders and the community as a whole help build a better learning atmosphere for students," Kasper stated. "It promotes a better place for everyone. The goal of making Smith a better place for everyone is what attracted me into my leadership position."

Smith was chosen as the recipient of this year's award for numerous reasons. To start, acceptance, community and diversity are important at Smith. Evidence of this is in its "Americans Who Tell the Truth" program. "Americans Who Tell the Truth" is a traveling exhibit of portraits of past and current Americans, from a variety of backgrounds, who made a difference by simply living a life of truth and having the courage to

stand up for their values. The intent of the program is to remind people of the dignity, courage and importance of the American truth tellers and to create a dialogue to encourage students and members of the community to pursue the truth and make a difference in the world around them. As a result this brought truth into all academic and elective areas of study at Smith, as well as discussion and learning.

Community involvement is ever present at Smith. Students, teachers, administrators and parents together take part in numerous community service projects throughout the year. They organize Toys for Tots, raise money for cancer research, collect donations for the Community Food Bank, and participate in Hoops for the Heart - a basketball game that raises money and awareness for heart disease. There is also a vibrant PTSO (note the S for students), as well as the Special Education Parents Association (SEPTA), which is dedicated to raising awareness about the challenges of special needs students and the programs available to them.

Smith School is diverse. Not only do they have a curricular focus on the many cultures represented in Connecticut, but they are also a CHOICE school. As a choice school, Smith participates with neighboring students from Hartford, Bloomfield and Derby. Smith has also gone global and regularly hosts students from countries such as Spain, Venezuela and Russia.

During the recent award celebration at Smith, it was with great pride that Arthur Director presented the 2010 Student Leadership Award in his name to the students. Not only were the students and faculty of Smith present for the celebration, but the entire Director family was in attendance as well. CAS is both grateful and proud of its association with the Director family, and it is most fitting that the award is named for a man who symbolizes civic responsibility and philanthropic endeavors.



Front row: Smith Middle School student leaders;
Back row (l to r): CAS Assistant Executive Director Earle Bidwell, CT Lighting Centers President David Director, CT Lighting Centers Founder Arthur Director

NAESP LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE HELD IN D.C.

By Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

A delegation from Connecticut attended the 2010 NAESP National Leaders Conference in Washington D.C. from July 14 to July 16, 2010. The delegation included CAS President, Kit Bishop, principal of Daisy Ingraham School, Westbrook; Rosie Vojtek, principal of Ivy Drive School, Bristol; Karissa Niehoff, deputy executive director and Regina Birdsell, assistant executive director.

The group spent the day on Capitol Hill visiting legislators and encouraging an increase in federal funding for education. To ensure that legislators understand the full implications of federal policies on principals' abilities to

increase student achievement, delegates encouraged them to oppose the automatic replacement of principals as a means of school turnaround efforts without first evaluating the principals' and schools' circumstances. Delegates also lobbied legislators to preserve formula funding and to provide high-quality professional development, especially for principals who are engaged in pre-K through grade 3 learning.

The Connecticut delegation met with Joseph Courtney, Rosa DeLauro, Melinda Leidy of Senator Chris Dodd's Office, John Larson, Christopher Murphy, and Jim Hines.



The Connecticut delegation met with Congressman Jim Hines during the National Leadership Conference to discuss principals' priorities in federal education funding. From left: Karissa Niehoff, Congressman Jim Hines, Regina Birdsell, Kit Bishop, Rosie Vojtek, and Bob Vojtek.

CAS HOSTS NAESP NORTHEAST REGIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' CONFERENCE

By Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Northeast Regional Conference was held at the Hilton Mystic September 23-25, 2010. This year's conference was hosted by the Connecticut Association of Schools. Principals and executive directors attended from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. Also in attendance were NAESP President Barbara Chester, NAESP Zone 1 Director David Cobb, NAESP Zone 2 Director Fidela Sturdivant and NAESP Membership Coordinator Deborah Bongiorno.

The conference commenced with a welcome reception in the Hilton's Mooring Restaurant sponsored by Horace Mann. Following the reception and dinner, guests were entertained with "The Magic of Education," a magic act presented by Connecticut's Bob Hale, Jr., principal of Westbrook High School. Everyone left asking, "How'd he do that?"

Friday morning's session, "Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation," was directed by Kim Marshall (The Marshall Memo). The afternoon session, in keeping with the morning's theme, was presented by a distinguished panel from the states of MA, RI, NY, CT and ME. Each state executive director shared the status of his/her state plans for developing the new teacher and administrator evaluations, and disclosed information on the *Race to the Top* funding. Following a busy and productive day, the group boarded a DATTCO Bus at the hotel and was whisked away to the Mohegan Sun Casino for a delightful dinner at Todd English's Tuscan Restaurant and a little time playing and shopping.

On Saturday, NAESP President Barbara Chester gave an update on the activities of the national association. The NAESP Board of Directors had a meeting with Education Secretary Arne Duncan. "Even though we had to agree to disagree on some issues, it was an important step for the state department to ask our opinion," said Barbara. "We were pleased that Secretary Duncan called and invited our NAESP executive director to a follow up meeting." Barbara responded to a question regarding the national convention and the possibility of changing to regional meetings. She shared that the NAESP board is having ongoing conversations about making changes that will meet the needs of principals with the changing demands they are facing as administrators and members of the association. Additional options, such as hosting a joint convention with NASSP and holding the convention during the summer, are also being weighed.

Jill Flanders from Massachusetts reported on the NAESP Resolutions Committee's work which resulted in narrowing the scope of the national platform. The committee was now looking at



State executive directors from New England discuss teacher and administrator evaluation reforms.



NAESP President Barbara Chester reports on recent activities at the national association level.

assessment, standards-based education, and national assessment programs. Concerns were raised about the impact of some national regulations on small districts as well as about removing principals from under-performing schools without a full understanding of the factors leading to under-performance and how having a new principal might change the situation. Questions as to where does NAPE testing fit in pay for performance, teachers leading schools, and union contracts being the single biggest roadblock to change were raised. Barbara commended the Resolutions Committee for the powerful work they did last year.

Dave Cobb, Zone 1 Director, reported that challenging opportunities were coming up for the association. "There is a need to determine what the 21st century learner looks like and how we can prepare to meet the challenge of leading 21st century learning communities," said Dave.

Next year the Northeast Conference will be held September 22-24, 2011 in New York State.

Celebration, continued from page 1

Janet Garagliano, principal of Jonathan Law High School in Milford and chair of the "Celebration Committee" which organized the event, warmly welcomed guests and introduced the evening's master of ceremonies, Mr. Scott Gray, 39-year veteran sports commentator for WTIC AM 1080.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Gray stated, "I know that your job is a roller coaster ride. My wife is an educator. Some days she comes home dancing through the door; other days she drags herself into the house as if she were carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders. Some days, I see elation; other days I see defeat. And it has never been more difficult to be an educator than it is today. I congratulate tonight's honorees for their fortitude at a time of great challenge and adversity. They continue to inspire, motivate and keep up morale in the face of an uncertain future."

Connecticut Commissioner of Education, Dr. Mark McQuillan, and CAS President, Kit Bishop, extended congratulatory remarks to the honorees prior to the presentation of awards. During the awards introductions, each of the six distinguished administrators was entertained with a short slide-show containing pictures and quotes from friends and colleagues. All honorees received a plaque, an engraved desk clock, a copy of *Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan* by Greg Mortenson, and a proclamation from Governor M. Jodi Rell lauding their dedication and tireless efforts in raising the standards of excellence in the state of Connecticut. Thanks to the generosity of Jostens, one of CAS' newest corporate partners, all honorees also received a custom-designed ring to commemorate their achievement.

Each of the award recipients was given an opportunity to make some brief remarks. Below are some excerpts from the very insightful and stirring thoughts they shared.

Jackie Gilmore:

"It is a privilege to touch a child's life. I go home every evening and ask myself the same question, 'Did I make a difference for a child today?' If the answer is yes, I am satisfied. If the answer is no, I have not done my job."

Stacey Gross:

"To quote the legendary B.B. King, 'The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.' Embracing a love of learning and instilling that love in

our students is critical to our success as educators ...We face many challenges today. But as I look around this room, I feel great optimism as it is clear that we are all deeply committed to meeting those challenges."

Jeff Provost:

"A school's success is built on relationships, especially those between students and staff. We need to make sure that there are no unknown students in our schools, that every student feels a sense of belonging and connection to the school."

Ellen Stokoe:

"I am here today because I had an exceptional role model. My father was an administrator in Hartford and the example that he set for me is what put me on the path to success. He showed me that being a good principal means treating people fairly, bringing them together, honoring their ideas, offering opportunities for leadership, and always doing what is best for children."

Tim Sullivan, Jr.:

"We are in the age of accountability. As an urban educator, I am disappointed in the national dialogue which is currently demonizing teachers' unions and, by extension, teachers. We need to ALL come together under a unified tent if we are going to do right by our children."

Michelle Zeuschner:

"With all of the new initiatives and acronyms that we are confronted with every day, it is essential that all constituents work together as a team to make a unified investment in our children. It takes trust and collaboration if we are to succeed in preparing our students for the world that lies ahead of them."

Mr. Gray concluded the evening by praising all the educators in the room. "What you do lives for generations," he said. "You leave your footprints on this earth. No one has a greater impact on mankind than those who teach future generations."

Many thanks to the members of the CAS Celebration Committee - Janet Garagliano, Bob Hale, Jr., and Mike Rafferty - and to our official photographers, Grynn & Barrett.

For more pictures from the Celebration of Distinguished Administrators, visit: www.casciac.org/celebration10



Michelle Zeuschner receives the *Elementary School Assistant Principal of the Year Award* from Janet Garagliano.



Ellen Stokoe receives the *National Distinguished Principal Award* from Celebration Committee Chair Janet Garagliano.



Jackie Gilmore receives the *Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year Award* from Celebration Committee Member Mike Rafferty.



Stacey Gross receives the *Middle School Principal of the Year Award* from Mike Rafferty.



Jeff Provost receives the *High School Assistant Principal of the Year Award* from Celebration Committee Member Bob Hale, Jr.



Tim Sullivan, Jr. receives the *High School Principal of the Year Award* from Bob Hale, Jr.

GENO'S READING TEAM SET TO TIP-OFF

The Connecticut Association of Schools Elementary Division is pleased to report that registration is open for your school to partner with UCONN Coach Geno Auriemma and the UCONN Huskies and join Geno's Reading Team, an incentive reading program designed to improve your students' reading skills. The expectation is that your students will read at least 20 minutes a day for enjoyment. The CAS Elementary Board has prepared everything that you need to enroll your students - including a suggested list of books, journal/summary log, information page for parents and much more - all linked to the themes that have made the UCONN Women Basketball Players world class student-athletes!

Periodically, once your school registers for the program, your students will be able to log in and watch video lessons made by the UCONN players as they describe and read their all time favorite books. The schedule, set to begin November 1 and end on February 28, is:

Book Title	Player	Release Date
"The Rainbow Fish"	Kelly Faris	Nov. 1-9
"One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish"	Lorin Dixon	Nov. 10-19
"The Little Engine That Could"	Caroline Doty	Nov. 20-28
"The Bike Lesson"	Maya Moore	Nov. 29-Dec 9
"Love You Forever"	Stefanie Dolson	Dec. 10-18
"Clifford And The Big Red Dog"	Lauren Engeln	Dec. 19-Jan. 2
"Duck On A Bike"	Heather Buck	Jan. 3-14
"More Parts"	Bria Hartley	Jan. 15 -28
"Down By The Cool Of The Pool"	Samarie Walker	Jan. 29-Feb.8
"The Cat In The Hat"	Michala Johnson	Feb. 9-17
"Brenda & Belinda & The Slam Dunk"	Tiffany Hayes	Feb. 18-28

Students, classes, grades and entire schools will also be able to tally the minutes read and/or percentage of students involved in Geno's Reading Team. At the end of the program your students will be invited to a practice/pep rally at Gampel Pavilion to promote reading in Connecticut's Elementary Schools - Date/Time T.B.A. Direct inquiries/questions to Regina Birdsell or Dave Maloney at CAS - 203-250-1111.

KIDSMARATHON

What is KIDSMARATHON? KIDSMARATHON is an 8 - 10 week training program that enables kids to complete a full marathon by running incremental distances each week leading up to the finish in front of hundreds of fans! During the project, elementary students, ages 7-12, develop life-long fitness skills, positive nutritional habits, social-emotional learning, a feeling of accomplishment, and self-confidence for themselves. The mantra of the program is "finishing is winning and winning is finishing."

Who participates in KIDSMARATHON? Each CAS Member Elementary School can administer the program for any number of students in any shape they choose. From PE / Health classes to recess to parent supervised running activities, kids are welcome to participate and benefit from this amazing fitness program. Because the goal of the program is to "FINISH", kids of all shapes, sizes, and ability levels can participate and be successful.

Will I Receive Training Materials? Included in the program is a wonderful training guide containing all the information to start: warm-up exercises, nutritional guidelines, drills, games, cool-down activities, and much more! The information is delivered in a way that kids can understand and enjoy. Students record their distances on a personalized guide sheet and are offered other learning activities in the training guide that accompanies the program. There is NO COST for the training manual to CAS member schools!

When Can We Begin? The ideal start date for KIDSMARATHON is anytime during the new year but not later than the end of the first week of April 2011. KIDSMARATHON Celebrations will be held at Fairfield Ludlowe High School on May 14th, Cheshire High School on May 21st, Norwich Free Academy on June 4th, and Litchfield on June 11th in connection with the Litchfield Hills Road Race. On line registration will be available at www.casciac.org/register in early December.

How Much Does It Cost? The cost for each participant is \$5. Each student will be awarded a certificate, and receive a T-shirt and medal for participating in KIDSMARATHON!

The CT KIDSMARATHON program is supported by Rod Dixon's KIDSMARATHON Foundation (<http://www.kidsmarathonfoundation.org>) and is viewed by Rod's organization as the public-schools model for other states to follow.

Questions? Contact Dave Maloney at dmaloney@casciac.org or 203-250-1111, ext.3936.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Middle Level Student Leadership Training Conference

"Making Acceptance Acceptable"

January 11, 2011 ★ Wesleyan University

Student-leaders in grades 6, 7, and 8 will:

- ★ participate in team-building activities with students from other schools;
- ★ respond to role-playing situations;
- ★ talk with student leaders from Connecticut high schools and universities;
- ★ share leadership experiences and ideas with peers;
- ★ go back to school and share new knowledge, ideas, and initiatives with decision-makers.

Same Great Conference in a New Location!

For more information, contact Earle Bidwell at ebidwell@casciac.org.

Student Advisory Workshop

Are you planning or have you implemented a student advisory program?

CAS is pleased to offer a workshop for member schools contemplating personalizing the school community through a student advisory program. The workshop will explore the ways in which an advisory program can be the centerpiece in promoting community, personalizing the school experience, and improving the school climate. Advisory programs hold great potential for supporting the school mission, Connecticut Secondary School Reform, student success plans, community service, capstone projects and portfolios. Participants will use the nine components of the "Advisory Puzzle Planning Process" to customize a program for their school.

Date:	December 13, 2010
Time:	8:30 - 3:00 Coffee & Lunch
Participants:	Teams of 3-4 from each school
Location:	CT Association of Schools 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire
Fee:	\$250. for the school team
Registration:	On line at www.casciac.org/register
Presenters:	Dave Maloney, CAS and Scott Brown, LEARN

CAS NAMES OUTSTANDING 1ST YEAR PRINCIPALS

By Regina Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director

The Connecticut Association of Schools is pleased to announce that Desi Nesmith, principal of America's Choice at SAND Elementary School in Hartford; Nathan Quesnel, principal of East Hartford Middle School; and, Paul Brenton, principal of Putnam High School, have been selected as the recipients of the William Cieslukowski Outstanding First-Year Principal Awards. These awards recognize first-year school principals from the high school, middle school and elementary school levels who have had a positive impact on their school and/or district and have demonstrated exemplary instructional and organizational leadership, a willingness to take risks, and the ability to overcome adversity.



Left to right: CAS Deputy Executive Director Karissa Niehoff, Principal Desi Nesmith, Principal Nathan Quesnel, Principal Paul Brenton, and CAS President Kit Bishop

Desi Nesmith

Desi was nominated for the First Year Principal Award by Leon McKinley, Director of Elementary Education in Hartford. In his nomination, Leon wrote that, in his first year, "Mr. Nesmith effectively hired and built a team of highly capable faculty who under his leadership produced the highest gains on the 2010 CMT of any school in the district. He used his knowledge and skills in data driven decision making, effective teaching strategies, priority standards, common formative assessments and holistic accountability planning

to provide instructional leadership on a daily basis."

Desi went door-to-door in his school neighborhood and spoke face-to-face with existing parents and parents new to the school and shared with them the change of the new school model, articulating his vision of success and providing them the opportunity to share their questions, concerns and suggestions. Parents quickly understood that the school building was the center of learning and students had to come to school prepared in their school uniform and with books and materials in hand. Desi is an effective passionate leader who knows how to deliver because student achievement is non-negotiable when he walks into his building every day.

Desi has made a conscious decision to refer to his staff as the "A Team." Elka Spencer, a teacher at the school, summarized his leadership this way: "It appears that he may be on to something. In recognizing and appreciating the vast talent of his staff, rapidly bonding with staff and community via a shared vision and steadfastly implementing major academic changes, he has started a recipe of success at America's Choice."

Nathan Quesnel

"The role of principal in today's dynamic and challenging society demands an individual of great energy, vision, wisdom and integrity. In the short period of time that Mr. Quesnel has assumed the role of educational leader in our school, he has exceeded the limits of ordinary performance and has proven to his staff, students and parents that he is extraordinary on all accounts." These remarks by East Hartford Middle School Assistant Principal Dr. Edward Orszulak sum up the personal attributes and accomplishments of CAS Middle Level First Year Principal of the Year, Nathan Quesnel. In his brief tenure, Nathan has instilled a sense of pride and tradition among all constituents emerging from a feeling of belonging to the "Falcon Family." He has energized the

faculty to a point where every staff member is involved in membership on building-wide committees established to promote positive action within the academic, organizational and social domains at the school. One result of his efforts was the school receiving an Exemplary School Climate Award from CAS.

CAS Middle Level Exemplary Educator Jill Wnuk, a social studies teacher at E.H.M.S., marvels at what Nathan has accomplished since assuming the principalship just one year ago. "Under his leadership, our school has once again become a shining example of what a good school is, a place where teachers want to teach and students want to learn," wrote Jill. "Nate Quesnel is a principal you want to follow," she added. "He works hard every day and expects the same from teachers and students. With him as our building leader, I see nothing but success in our future."

Paul Brenton

Putnam Superintendent of Schools William Hull, in his nomination, summarized Paul's first year this way: "What was once a culture of failure has now been transformed into a culture of success, where the sole focal point is on student learning. Parents, staff, and students are happy. Staff and students are challenged and supported. All this has been facilitated by a beginning principal who has a vision and the skills needed to make a difference in young adults' lives."

When he started as principal, Paul quickly improved school climate by setting clear expectations for student behavior and providing consistent and fair enforcement of school policies. He established a parent advisory council to involve more parents in school governance and improved communications with parents by initiating a parent newsletter. He provided instructional leadership by regularly getting into classrooms to provide constructive feedback to teachers, and offering professional development programs that focused on instruction. Further, he led much needed curriculum revisions.

Paul established himself as a good listener who is available to all constituencies of the school community. He is highly visible at school and community events. He attends meetings of community service organizations and has appeared on local radio. He initiated student community service projects. He brought needed improvements to what was an already successful Freshman Academy. One indicator of the school's improvement is a reduction in the number of eighth grade students who choose other high schools. As a result of his leadership in just one year, his nominators stated that a tradition of "Putnam Pride" has returned to the school and district.

CAS OFFICERS: 2010-2011

<i>President:</i>	Kit Bishop, Daisy Ingraham Sch, Westbrook
<i>President-Elect:</i>	Janet Garagliano, Law High School
<i>Vice-President(H):</i>	Francis Kennedy, Stafford High School
<i>Vice-President(M):</i>	Dave Russell, John Winthrop Middle School
<i>Vice-President(E):</i>	RoseAnne O'Voitek, Ivy Drive School
<i>Secretary-Treasurer:</i>	Donald Macrino, Waterford High School

CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF

Michael Savage.....	Executive Director
Karissa Niehoff.....	Deputy Executive Director
Earle Bidwell.....	Asst. Executive Director
Regina Birdsell.....	Asst. Executive Director
Ken Bragg.....	Asst. Director of Unified Sports®
Michael Buckley.....	Director, Principals' Center
Dennis Carrithers.....	Asst. Executive Director
Matt Fischer.....	Director of Information Services
Stephanie Ford.....	Director of Marketing
Paul Hoey.....	Assoc. Executive Director
Susan Kennedy.....	Asst. Executive Director
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Beth Rasmussen.....	Young Athlete Program Coordinator
George Synnott.....	Asst. Director of Unified Sports®
Joseph Tonelli.....	Director of Officials

THE BULLETIN

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ciac news

■ The implementation date for NFHS Soccer Rule 4-1-1b has been delayed until fall 2013. The current uniform rule, which was originally adopted in January 2010, is written in the current rules book to reflect a start date of fall 2012. This rule will now read:

"The home team shall wear white or light jerseys and socks, and the visiting team shall wear dark jerseys and socks. Beginning with the 2013 fall season, the home team shall wear solid white jerseys and solid white socks, and the visiting team shall wear dark jerseys and socks. Prior to and during the game, jerseys shall be tucked into the shorts, unless manufactured to be worn outside."

The reasoning behind this change is to allow an additional year for member schools to be in compliance. This change will be reflected in the 2011-12 NFHS Soccer Rules Book.

■ A new report from the University of Louisiana shows students who get more exercise during the school day do better on standardized tests. A comparison of Fitnessgram and standardized test scores of 25,000 Louisiana students from the 2009-10 school year by The Cecil J. Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning at the University of Louisiana found physically fit students scored better than their less-fit peers on the state tests. The Fitnessgram assessment checks students' body mass index, body strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. "We can say with confidence that in Louisiana, our students' physical fitness is impacting their academic performance," a Picard Center spokesperson said. "In short, the healthier and more physically fit a student is, the more likely he or she is to perform better on academic tests. The study also found that 53 percent of Louisiana students had an unhealthy body-mass index and 31 percent were obese. Only 39 percent met minimum aerobic fitness levels. Source: *Shreveport Times* (9/2/2010)

■ The number of children ages 8 to 19 who suffered sports-related concussions has more than doubled in the last decade. Researchers at the Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence, RI analyzed emergency room records from ERs across the country from 1997 through 2007 and found there were 502,000 concussion-related visits. About half of these were sports-related. Although high school athletes suffer the most concussions, children from 8-13 years were involved in 40 percent of reported cases. Approximately 95,000 of all sports-related concussions were from football, basketball, soccer, and ice hockey. Source: *Pediatrics* (8/30/10)

ERRATA:

On pages 10 and 13 of the October 2010 issue of the BULLETIN, Northwest Catholic High School was incorrectly referred to as being in Manchester, CT. Northwest Catholic is located in West Hartford. Our apologies to the school and its principal, Margaret Williamson.

Court Finds Drug Testing Program that Applies to Athletes Is Enough

A California state appeals court has affirmed a lower court's granting of a preliminary injunction in a case where a group of students and their parents successfully challenged a school district's expansion of a random drug testing policy beyond just the district's student athletes. The Shasta Union High School District expanded its random drug testing policy from covering only student athletes to covering all students who participated in competitive representational activities, such as band, choir, future farmers of America (FFA), and science bowl. Three students and their parents successfully challenged the policy, obtaining a preliminary injunction against implementation of the program, which tests for methamphetamine, chlorochromate, amphetamine, phencyclidine, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, opiates, oxycodone, nicotine, and alcohol. The school district, the superintendent, and members of the district's board of trustees appealed the trial court's ruling, arguing that the random drug testing program does not violate the right to privacy, the prohibition against unreasonable search and seizures, or equal protection under the California Constitution.

Upon review, the appeals court noted that "unlike the federal Constitution, California's Constitution grants an express right to privacy. Thus, we focus on California case law on the right to privacy rather than federal law on the Fourth Amendment. The plaintiffs put forth a showing sufficient to establish the threshold elements of a claim for invasion of the constitutional right to privacy. In balancing that invasion against the district's justification for the expanded drug testing, the trial court could reasonably find that the plaintiffs were likely to prevail due to the district's vague and shifting justifications for expanding drug testing to these participants in competitive representational activities and the lack of any showing that selecting only these students for testing was reasonable to further the district's goal of deterring drug and alcohol use. We affirm the preliminary injunction and let the matter proceed to trial on the merits." (Source: *Legal Issues in High School Athletics*, July-August 2010)

ELIGIBILITY CENTER UPDATES

■ Tournament packets for all winter sports are now available on the Online Eligibility Center's "Downloads" tab. They are also available in the publicly-accessible portion of the site on the mainpage for each sport.

■ Non-CIAC sports are now available as options to the general public when signing up for e-mail notifications on changes. These mean schools that enter schedules for crew, girls ice hockey, bowling, etc. can direct their parents to sign up for change notifications.

■ A new "QuickEditor" feature has been added for entering uniform numbers, heights, weights, etc. to eligibility lists for display on rosters. You can access it under the options for each sport.

■ Regular season roster downloads of all schools' rosters in all sports will be made available via both the Eligibility Center and CIACSports.com. Ever since schedules were made available via the site, rosters have been the next most requested feature from schools, the media and the general public. A few additional notes regarding roster downloads:

If a school has designated roster levels for athletes on a team then only those athletes marked as "Varsity" will be shown on the public roster. If no levels have been designated then all athletes will be shown.

Rosters will include uniform numbers, positions, heights and weights if they have been entered by the school. Entry of that additional information is optional, however it is recommended. If people can retrieve the information directly from the site they will not need to contact you to request it. Also the info will be automatically carried over when you are entering tournament rosters, so entering it up front will save you time at that point.

We highly suggest that you look at the new QuickEditor option - it makes entering of the info much faster. We have also made a version of the QuickEditor available for use by coaches using a coaches access code. That tool can be found on the "Rosters" tab at CIACSports.com.

Downloaded rosters will include the logo we have on file for the school. You can see the logo we have on file for you under the "Edit General School Information" option near the top of the Eligibility Center. If you wish to have a different logo appear on your rosters, send it to us and we will replace it.

... more ciac news

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS PARTICIPATION INCREASES FOR 20TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

INDIANAPOLIS, IN - Despite cutbacks in funding in many high schools across the country, participation in high school sports has never been higher - increasing for the 21st consecutive year and establishing records for both girls and boys participants. According to the 2009-10 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS, participation for the 2009-10 school year reached an all-time high of 7,628,377. The survey also showed that 55.1 percent of students enrolled in high schools participate in athletics - a negligible decrease from 55.2 percent last year.

Outdoor track and field gained the most combined participants in 2009-10, with an increase of 25,561 participants, followed by soccer with 19,597 combined participants and cross country (11,925). In girls sports, soccer gained the most participants (11,582), followed by outdoor track and field (11,445) and fast-pitch softball (9,290). Outdoor track and field led the way in boys sports with 14,116 additional participants, followed by cross country (8,156) and soccer (8,015).

Texas remained the state with the most participants with a combined total of 780,721. California was second with 771,465 participants, followed by New York (379,677), Illinois (344,257), Ohio (334,797), Pennsylvania (317,426), Michigan (313,818), New Jersey (253,097), Florida (247,428) and Minnesota (230,043).

Connecticut saw an overall increase in sports participation with 114,414 participants in 2009-2010 compared to 112,883 in 2008-2009. However, a few of Connecticut's most popular sports experienced marginal decreases in participation. Boys' baseball dropped from 6,176 participants in 2008-2009 to 6,124 in 2009-2010. Girls' soccer and girls' softball also saw dips in participation levels. In 2008-2009, girls' soccer drew 5,821 participants versus 5,813 in 2009-2010. Softball attracted 4,610 girls in 2008-2009 in comparison with 4,456 in 2009-2010.

5 MOST POPULAR BOYS' SPORTS: 2009-2010

Nationwide		Connecticut	
Sport	# of Participants	Sport	# of Participants
1. Football (11-player)	1,109,278	1. Football	10,789
2. Outdoor Track	572,123	2. Outdoor Track	7,431
3. Basketball	540,207	3. Soccer	7,118
4. Baseball	472,644	4. Baseball	6,124
5. Soccer	391,839	5. Indoor Track	5,245

(Source: National Federation)

5 MOST POPULAR GIRLS' SPORTS: 2009-2010

Nationwide		Connecticut	
Sport	# of Participants	Sport	# of Participants
1. Outdoor Track	469,177	1. Outdoor Track	6,690
2. Basketball	439,550	2. Soccer	5,813
3. Volleyball	403,985	3. Indoor Track	4,785
4. Softball (fast-pitch)	378,211	4. Volleyball	4,457
5. Soccer	356,116	5. Softball	4,456

(Source: National Federation)

LOOK OUT NEBRASKA, HERE WE COME!

By Karol Brzozowski, Administrative Assistant
CIAC Unified Sports® Program



Left to right: Lizzie Wienick, April Perez, Special Olympics CEO Tim Shriver, and Gabby Brzozowski

Nerves and excitement were abounding for three Connecticut students from three different high schools who were given the chance of a lifetime - travel across the country to Nebraska to attend the Youth Activation Summit hosted by Special Olympics and Project Unify. At the same time this conference was taking place, the Special Olympics National Games were also underway in Lincoln, Nebraska. These students arrived in Omaha just in time to join the huge welcome celebration at the university there and view the opening ceremonies on a jumbo screen.

The Connecticut representatives, of which I was one, learned much about social justice and attended several youth-directed workshops. Ideas were shared; group sessions held; and a terrific role playing segment was performed by the youth leaders on how to reach out to administrators and adults. We traveled to Gallup International to discover our own strength traits, which enlightened many students and adults. This enabled us to view our strengths and learn how to apply them in everyday situations. By knowing our strength traits, we will be able to overcome obstacles which could stand in our way of making things happen.

As part of the Youth Activation Summit, we also attended the first commissioned play by Special Olympics Incorporated called "It's Our School Too," put on by local students. We then were lucky enough to see SOCT teams play basketball and to attend a

continued on page 12

... more ciac news

YAS, continued from page 11

track & field event. One of the girls even found her friend who was competing in track. We helped roll out the new flag football program with athletes - as well as a few celebrities - from many states. (In Nebraska, football players ARE celebrities).

The ideas and possibilities that were taught enabled our students to bring back new and exciting concepts to their schools. To date, two students have approached their principals, athletic directors, school clubs and organizations in their schools to start an "R" word campaign. They have made some suggestions to change a few things in their own schools' Unified Sports programs. Another student has initiated discussion with her athletic director and the coaches

from her middle school to start a team at her new high school.

The three Connecticut student-representatives will be presenting at the Youth Activation Leadership Summit that will be held at Wesleyan in January. The opportunities that were given to the students through this conference will give them the chance to promote social justice and community awareness in each of their home towns. They hope to spread the work of this conference by rolling out the YAC (Youth Activation Committee) in Connecticut which will be holding its first meeting in November.

Pictured below are, left to right: April Perez, Vincent Egan, Lizzie Wienick, and Gabby Brzozowski





INVESTORS IN CT YOUTH



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- ★ Baden Sports ★
- ★ Bearingstar™ Insurance ★
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- ★ CT Lighting Centers ★
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