



**2019-20 Annual Report**  
**CT STUDENT ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE**  
*Submitted by Cheresse Miller*  
*Director of Student Activities*

The Connecticut Student Activities Conference (CSAC) saw impressive participation rates, with many of its programs selling out during 2019-20! Unfortunately, due to the horrific COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel some of our major events. The overall objective for CSAC in 2019-20 was to link activities to 21st century leadership skills, diversity awareness, and school climate initiatives. The following is a brief summary of CAS Student Activities.

**Student Leadership Conferences**

**Elementary Level Leadership Conferences** - The Elementary Student Leadership conferences were held at three college sites with the following participation numbers:

- Sacred Heart University- 206
- Naugatuck/Asnuntuck(relocated) Community College- 281
- Three Rivers Community College 143
- Naugatuck Valley Community College 267

Students had a great time building leadership skills, community service skills and participating in anti-bullying activities to bring back to schools.

**Middle Level Leadership Conferences** - The middle school student leadership conference was held at two locations this year - Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT, featuring 220 students; and, Trinity College in Hartford, CT, featuring 375 students and advisors. Students and advisors participated in extensive leadership training, fun anti-bullying activities and ended the day with a presentation on the importance of community service in leadership from Jonathan Winer, Director of Athletics for CREC schools.

**High School Level Leadership Conference** - Over 350 high school student leaders, along with their advisors, attended the High School Leadership Conference on November 22, 2019 at Central Connecticut State University. This was a sold out event! Students, statewide were able to participate in intense leadership training and fun! Students engaged in workshops geared toward 21st century skill development and learned a variety of ways to improve collaboration and communication strategies. In addition, student presenters from Brookfield High School, Kaynor Technical High School, and Woodland Regional High School presented highly engaging workshops that students and advisors enjoyed.

**“Arts in the Middle”** - Cancelled due to COVID-19. Although this event was cancelled, CAS is still accepting Artwork via email from students statewide. We are hoping to continue to celebrate these students and their passion virtually. We look forward to getting back together next year.

**“Generation Leadership”** has been successfully implemented in five high schools – Morgan (Clinton), Kaynor Tech (Waterbury), Windham Tech (Willimantic), Bullard Havens (Bridgeport), and Enfield. Some of the schools involved in Generation Leadership continue to present at our elementary, middle and high

school leadership conferences.

**National/Regional Leadership Conferences** - Both the NFHS Leadership Summit and the New England Leadership conferences have been postponed to summer 2021. The New England Leadership Conference committee is working together with New England state associations to possibly come up with a mini virtual conference for this summer 2020.

**National Honors Society Statewide Advisors Conference** - National Honors Society Advisors were able to meet and collaborate on ideas for student leadership during the High School Leadership Conference in November. Advisors planned for the year ahead and got a chance to network and share ideas with each other.

**National Honors Society Statewide Conference High School/Middle School Level**- The statewide NHS conference has been postponed to November 2020.

**Student Council Adventures in Leadership Conference** - The Student Council statewide conferences have been postponed to 2021. Date TBD.

**Student Athletic Advisory Board** - CAS-CIAC's Student Athletic Advisory Board has had a fantastic second year. An offshoot of the successful "Class Act Schools" initiative, the statewide advisory board empowered students to promote good sportsmanship within their leagues and to address other issues regarding athletics. Students met three times throughout the school year and were able to share their respective experiences and highlights, plan and implement community service actions plans, and come together to have a voice in promoting respect, teamwork, and character in all of our "Class Act" schools and beyond. The last meeting for the school year will take place virtually on June 2, 2020.

**BOTF Competition** - BOTF stands for Battle of the Fans, a video-based school spirit competition designed to find the CT high school with the very best examples of spirit and sportsmanship. Modeled after the Michigan program, the CSAC has sponsored our version of the program for the past six years. This year, Glastonbury High School had a stand-out performance and became the 2020 BOTF winner!

**KIDSMARATHON** - Working with the Rod Dixon Foundation in New Zealand & Los Angeles, CSAC sponsored KIDSMARATHON for the tenth consecutive year. KIDSMARATHON is an amazing life fitness program for students ages 7- 12 that features an 8-10 week program of running with nutritional guidelines. The KIDSMARATHON final mile celebrations have been postponed – new dates TBD.

**High School Dance Championships** - The 14th annual state dance championship was held at Hamden High School on February 29th. A record number of dance team entries – over 51 – competed in the event witnessed by a standing room only crowd. The choreography, costumes, music and synchronization delighted all in attendance at this popular event. Teams were crowned champs in the following categories: Large Hip Hop - Fairfield Warde; Small Hip Hop - Branford High; Kickline- Hamden High; Large Jazz - Newtown High School; Small Jazz - Branford High; Pom - Hamden High. Unfortunately, the New England Dance Championships, scheduled to be at Enfield High School in CT this year was canceled due to COVID-19.

**High School Cheerleading Championships** - More than 100 schools participated in the state competition which drew large, spirited crowds on Saturday, March 7th. The event was successfully held all in one day. Champions were crowned in the following divisions:

- LL - Newtown High School
- L - Daniel Hand High School
- M - Wolcott High School
- S - Holy Cross High School
- Co-ed - Fairfield Ludlowe

Unfortunately, the New England Cheer championship scheduled to be in Massachusetts this year was canceled due to COVID-19.

**Esports** - Esports continues to take off rapidly in the state of Connecticut. In January 2020, Connecticut held the Fall 2019 Esports State Championship at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, CT. Xavier High School and Newtown High School battled it out in Rocket League. After a very competitive match, Xavier High School won the championship title. Manchester High School and Woodstock Academy met again to battle it out in League of Legends. Woodstock Academy took home the championship title for the second year in a row. All teams did a tremendous job and came with the best spirit and sportsmanship.

**Robotics** - CSAC continued its partnership with CT FIRST, an organization that sponsors robotics tournaments for elementary, middle and high school teams. CT FIRST's goal is to inspire in students an appreciation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to show them how an understanding of these fields can enrich their lives. The CT High School Robotics Championship was canceled due to COVID-19.

### **Connecticut Debate Association**

#### **High School Debating -**

March 7 Tournament:

Two-hundred eighty-four debaters from 30 schools competed at tournaments at Darien High School and Greenwich High School. Thanks to coaches Leslie Bradshaw and Aaron Johnson for their hospitality.

The topic was:

Resolved: *The US should adopt a "no first use" policy for nuclear weapons.*

The final round at Darien was won by the Simsbury team of Cole and Picoult on affirmative over the Greenwich team of Croce and Snyder.

The final round at Greenwich was won by the Westhill team of Boccuzzi and Bansal on affirmative over the New Canaan team of Renda and Axon.

During the year, nearly 600 students from 41 schools participated either at the initial Novice Scrimmage or one or more of the regular monthly tournaments. The debate topic changed for each monthly event. Events were held at high schools across the state. The CDA is grateful to Greenwich High School, The Academy of Information Technology and Engineering, Seymour High School, Crosby High School, Westhill High School, Stamford High School, Fairfield Warde High School, Daniel Hand High School, New Canaan High School, Darien High School, Wilton High School and Joel Barlow High School for hosting this past year.

CDA debaters also participate in events sponsored by other institutions. This year many attended high school tournaments sponsored by Yale, Vassar and Columbia. CDA debaters also serve as coaches and mentors for teams in the Connecticut Middle School Debate League, and as judges at the middle school debate tournaments.

**Middle School Debating** - The CTMSDL held four events this year: a scrimmage in October and tournaments in December, January and May (Virtual).

On Saturday, May 9, 2020 the CTMSDL hosted an online Middle School debate tournament. 99 debaters from 11 schools combined into 36 teams to debate the motion: This House believes that it's time to expand nuclear power for civilian use. Twenty-eight wonderful high school debaters and coaches volunteered to judge. Special thanks go to Eliza Posner, Ann Walsh Henderson, and Everett Rutan. While it wasn't the same as an in-

person tournament, participants all enjoyed the opportunity to socialize distantly.

The first place team in the Open Division was Gallant, Ranjan & Berg visiting from the Dalton School in New York. Zach Berg (Dalton School) was the first place Open Division speaker. Deep Bannerjee (Scofield Magnet Middle School), Beashagnya Chalasani (Turn of River Middle School) and Mohammed Zanbrakji (Scofield MMS) from the Middle School Debate Team made up the first place Novice Division team; Muskaan Jakhar (Rippowam Middle School), Shruthi Anandraman (TOR) and Jessica Sharma (Rippowam) from our Middle School Debate Team won 2nd place Novice Team; and Mohammed Zanbrakji (Scofield) was our first place Novice Division speaker. Full results can be found on [Tabroom.com](http://Tabroom.com).

**Thomas Flanagan / CAS-CIAC Endowment Grant Awards** - Due to COVID-19 the Flanagan Grant has been suspended for this year.

**State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE)** - The 2019-20 State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) consisted of twenty-five high school students who met regularly with John Sieller and Cherese Miller, CAS Director of Student Activities. SSACE's number one project this year was to produce a presentation for the State Board of Education which centered on two topics: Student Voice and School Climate. SSACE also selected the recipients of the Governor's Challenge to Educational Citizenship Awards that are an annual recognition of school / community service projects. In addition, SSACE selected possible candidates to serve on the State Board of Education for the 2020-2021 school year.

**The Arts Committee** - Over one hundred and fifty high schools will be represented at this year's virtual arts banquet. An added announcement will be the recipient of the "Heart of the Arts" award given to a student who exemplifies the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of the fine and practical arts. Cristian Mestre, a senior from Central High School in Bridgeport, CT was the 2020 recipient.

**The Look for the Good Project** - CSAC continued its partnership with Anne Kubitsky, CEO and founder of the program "The Look for the Good Project." The "Look for the Good Project" is a research backed program built around the core belief that gratitude changes everything – especially in schools. The feedback that CAS has received from "The Look for the Good Project" has been sensational. This year we were able to offer workshops regionally during our elementary leadership conferences. Workshops were presented by educators who are currently implementing "Look for the Good" into their lessons. Teachers enjoyed the workshops and hope to have more in the future. We are hoping to pilot a middle level program in the future.