



2020-21 Annual Report
CT STUDENT ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE
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The Connecticut Student Activities Conference (CSAC) saw impressive participation rates this year even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall objective for CSAC in 2020-21 was to link activities to 21st century leadership skills, diversity awareness, and school climate initiatives. The following is a brief summary of CSAC programs and activities during the 2020-21 school year.

Student Leadership Conferences -

Elementary Level Leadership Conference - The Elementary Student Leadership conference was held virtually in February this year. We had over 900 students, advisors and administrators in attendance. In addition, we had a parent breakout session with over 60 parents in attendance. There were 5 impressive presenters that gave students a wonderful half day of leadership. 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 Conference - The middle school student leadership conference was held virtually in February this year. Over 600 students, advisors and administrators were in attendance and gave very positive reviews at the end. Students and advisors participated in extensive leadership training, fun anti-bullying activities, diversity awareness, and community service initiatives to bring back to schools.

High School Level Leadership Conference - Over 1,000 high school student leaders, along with their advisors, attended the Virtual High School Leadership Conference on December 4, 2020. Students statewide were able to participate in intense leadership training and have fun! Students engaged in presentations geared toward 21st century skill development and learned a variety of ways to improve collaboration and communication strategies.

“Arts in the Middle” Conference - Cancelled due to COVID-19 and facility usage. We look forward to getting back together next year.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conference “Unity Starts with U” - The new Student Equity Advisory Board (SEAB) and Unified Sports® student-athletes came together to plan a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conference. Students took the time for several weeks to plan this exciting and engaging conference that featured a presentation from both Unified Sports and the SEAB, a panel discussion and a phenomenal keynote from A’ric Jackson. A recording of the conference can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/HWdHALXf4RE>.

“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. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, many students were unable to have the full Generation Leadership experience this year.

National/Regional Leadership Conferences – The NFHS National Student Leadership Summit will take place virtually for the second time this year from August 8-10. The New England Leadership Conference has been postponed to 2022 due to the pandemic.

National Honor Society Statewide Advisors Conference - National Honor Society advisors were able to meet and collaborate on ideas for student leadership in December 2020. Advisors planned for the year ahead and got a chance to network and share ideas with each other.

National Honor Society Statewide Conference High School/Middle School Level - The statewide Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies conference took place virtually in April 2021. With over 100 participants and dynamic speakers, students and advisors left the meeting with a phenomenal leadership experience.

Connecticut Association of Student Councils (CASC) Leadership Convention - This student-driven, -planned and -led event was a huge success. There were over 100 participants in attendance. High school student leaders joined peers from across the state for a morning of inspiration and empowerment. The program also included a breakout session geared specifically toward advisors. Student Council Adventures in Leadership Conference- CASC’s “Adventures in Leadership” is all about building the base of a successful team outside of our normal comfort zone. This year, “Adventures in Leadership” is going virtual for a day of team building activities designed to prepare new councils for the adventures of leadership that lay ahead in the new school year.

Student Athletic Advisory Board - CAS-CIAC’s Student Athletic Advisory Board has had a fantastic 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 four 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.

Student Equity Advisory Board - In 2020, CAS-CIAC created a Student Equity Advisory Board (SEAB) to bring awareness to inequity in Connecticut and collaborate on ways to enhance inclusion in schools for all students. The SEAB consists of up to four students from each league and those members develop and implement ideas and action plans to bring back to their respective leagues, schools, and the communities. Eleven of those students shared their experiences as part of the SEAB Video Project (which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/aC5X9w3OrVU>). This diverse group of students from across the state spoke openly about prejudice and discrimination they have faced as well as actionable steps they recommend for increasing equity in schools. The final presentation from SEAB to educators statewide took place virtually on June 8, 2021.

BOTF Competition - BOTF stands for Battle of the Fans, a video-based school spirit competition designed to find the CT high schools that are models of spirit and sportsmanship. This year, due to the pandemic and schools not being allowed to have spectators, the Student Athletic Advisory Board came up with a plan that would keep sportsmanship alive! This year’s new title was Battle of the Teams! Teams recorded videos of their acts of positive sportsmanship and submitted them to our review committee.

The winner of this year's Battle of the Teams is Cheshire High School. Its impressive video submission can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/F_walkS0FF8.

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 KIDSMARTHON final mile celebrations have been postponed until further notice.

High School Dance and Cheerleading Championships – The dance and cheerleading state championships were canceled this year due to the pandemic. We are very excited and optimistic for their return next year.

Esports - Esports continues to take off rapidly in the state of Connecticut. For the fall 2020 season, AITE from Stamford, CT, was the winner for Rocket League and Lyman Hall was the proud winner of the League of Legends. The dates for the spring state championship were:
Rocket League-5/11/21: Round 1 @ 4 PM EDT, 5/12/21: Semi-finals @ 4 PM EDT, 5/13/21: Finals @ 4 PM EDT and League of Legends: 5/12/21: Semi-finals @ 4 PM EDT, 5/14/21: Finals @ 4 PM EDT.

Robotics - CSAC continued its partnership with NE FIRST®, an organization that sponsors robotics tournaments for elementary, middle and high school teams. NE 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.

High School Debate - Due to the pandemic, CDA held its 2020-21 tournaments online as "virtual" or "eTournaments." We had 182 debaters from 27 schools compete in State Finals. The Varsity final round was won by the E.O. Smith team of Chaubey and Huey on Negative over the AITE team of Sivasubramanian and Fleischer. Congratulations to E.O. Smith, our state champions for 2021! The Glastonbury team of Sharma and Mittal topped the Novice division.

Middle School Debating - On April 24, 2021, the CT Middle School Debate League (CTMSDL) hosted a successful spring tournament with two hundred sixty-three (263) debaters from 23 middle schools participating. Ninety-four teams debated the motion: This House, as the US federal and state governments, would not require standardized testing for the 2020-21 school year. Proposition prevailed in 56% of the day's debates.

The Dalton School's team of Feder, Massiah & Kotahwala won the Final Round on Opposition over the team of Gusfa, Gusfa, and Minkov, representing The Hive. Francesca Gusfa from The Hive was the first place Open Level speaker.

Winning all three of their Open Level debates were students from Seymour, Middlebrook, The Dalton School, The Hive, and Westfield Academy. Three Novice Level teams from Bethel, Timothy Edwards, and Seymour won all three of their debates.

We had 66 people, including many high school debaters, judge and train to judge. Many thanks go to our coaches, judges, and league sponsor, The English Speaking Union, Greenwich Branch. In particular, the efforts of Jennifer Hunt, Bruce Johnson, Ryan Lafferty, Eliza Posner, Everett Rutan, and Evan Streams made the tournament possible.

On Saturday, May 22, the CTMSDL hosted its first championship tournament - results can be found [here](#).

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

State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) - The 2020-21 State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) consisted of twenty-five high school students who met regularly with Chereese Miller-Odukwe, 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 Engagement during a Pandemic and Best Practices around Remote Learning. 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 candidates to serve on the State Board of Education for the 2021-2022 school year.

The Arts Committee - The 2021 CAS High School Arts Awards broadcast aired on Sunday, June 13, on FOX 61. Over one hundred and fifty high schools were represented. This year's production included a compelling vignette on Claire Hurley, a senior at Daniel Hand High School who was the recipient of the 2021 "Heart of the Arts" Award. This award is given annually to a student who demonstrates exemplary 'heart' – i.e., integrity, citizenship, good character.

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 a workshop during our February Elementary Leadership Conference which was well-received by parents. We are hoping to pilot a middle level program in the future.