



2022-23 Annual Report
CT STUDENT ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE
Submitted by Cherese Miller-Odukwe
Director of Student Activities

The Connecticut Student Activities Conference (CSAC) saw impressive participation rates this year. The overall objective for CSAC in 2022-23 was to link activities to 21st century leadership skills, diversity awareness, mental health awareness, student voice, 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 in person for the first time since 2020. Both conferences were held in January 2023, one at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield and the other at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. We had over 600 students, advisors and administrators in attendance. In addition, we had a parent breakout session with over 80 parents in attendance. There were impressive student and adult presenters who received exceptional reviews from attendees. Students had a great time building leadership and community service skills and participating in anti-bullying activities to bring back to their schools.

Middle Level Leadership Conference - The middle school student leadership conference was held in person, for the first time since 2020, at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. Over 300 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 their schools.

High School Level Leadership Conference - Over 400 high school student leaders, along with their advisors, attended the 2022 High School Leadership Conference in December at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. Students statewide were able to participate in engaging presentations geared toward 21st century skill development and learn a variety of ways to improve collaboration, communication, student voice, action planning, positive sportsmanship, financial literacy and much more.

"Arts in the Middle" – This event was canceled due to lack of participation and presenters. The conference committee is currently working on finding a more convenient time to host the event. We look forward to getting back together next year.

National/Regional Leadership Conferences – The NFHS National Student Leadership Summit will take place in person this year from July 28-31. We will be bringing student leaders (CANHS, CASC, SSACE, SAAB, SEAB and Unified Sports) to represent Connecticut.

The New England Leadership Conference has been postponed to 2024 due to funding.

CT Association of National Honor Societies (CANHS) Statewide Advisors Conference - In December 2022, NHS/NJHS advisors were able to meet and collaborate on ideas for student leadership. Advisors planned for the year ahead, participated in professional development for Connecticut National Honor Societies and got a chance to network and share ideas with one another.

CANHS Statewide Conference High School/Middle School Level - The statewide CANHS conference took place in person in April 2023 at the Connecticut Association of Schools office building in Cheshire. Student leaders planned a tremendous conference that included dynamic speakers and student-led activities. Students and advisors left the meeting with a phenomenal leadership experience.

Connecticut Association of Student Councils (CASC) Leadership Convention - The CASC Convention took place in person at Woodland Regional High School in Beacon Falls, CT. 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.

CASC/CANHS Adventures in Leadership Conference - CANHS and 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" took place at Winding Trails in Farmington, CT, with a day of team-building activities designed to prepare new councils for the adventures of leadership that lay ahead in the new school year.

Men of Color in Leadership Conference - The Men of Color in Leadership Conference took place on October 27, 2022, and featured ten leaders from different backgrounds including education, industry, medicine and sports. Over 300 middle and high school students and advisors attended the event at Berlin High School. According to attendees, it was a morning of inspiration from the dynamic leaders on the panel who motivated them to reach their highest potential.

Women in Leadership Conference - The Women in Leadership Conference held on May 17, 2023, focused on how dynamic individual leadership builds community and shared purpose and contributes to positive personal growth and change in our schools and communities. Over 250 students and advisors attended. This year's conference included two panels of distinguished women leaders in the fields of education, medicine, law, industry, media, construction, and athletics. The panels also included student leaders.

STUDENT ATHLETIC ADVISORY BOARD (SAAB)

CAS-CIAC's Student Athletic Advisory Board had a great 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. In addition to the meetings, board members had the opportunity to take action and conduct Class Act training for schools and leagues in the state.

STUDENT EQUITY ADVISORY BOARD (SEAB)

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 communities. The final presentation from SEAB to educators statewide took place on June 1, 2023 and can be viewed [here](#).

STATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (SSACE)

The 2022-23 State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) consisted of twenty high school students who met monthly with Cherese 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 Voice to Address School Attendance and Engagement to Encompass Engaging Curriculum. 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 2023-2024 school year.

CONNECTICUT DEBATE ASSOCIATION

High School Debate - High School Debaters from schools statewide, debated on intriguing topics throughout the school year. For schools, debate topics, results and more, visit <http://ctdebate.org/>.

Middle School Debate - Middle schools debated on intriguing topics throughout the school year. For schools, debate topics, results and more, visit <https://ctmsdebate.org/>.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

BOTF Competition - Battle of the Fans is a video-based school spirit competition designed to find the CT high school with the very best examples of spirit and sportsmanship. This year, in order to increase participation, the Student Athletic Advisory Board (SAAB) voted to change the video submission to a 90-second Instagram Reel or Tik Tok video. We received quite a few submissions and the winner was Shelton High School, Shelton, CT.

High School Dance Championships – The dance state championship was held this year on February 25, 2023, at Hamden High School. There were over 50 teams in attendance. Everything went smoothly. The coaches, dancers, and families were extremely excited to be a part of the event. Dance championship can be found at https://www.casciac.org/pdfs/dance_results_2023.pdf.

High School Cheerleading Championships – The cheer state championship was held on March 4, 2023 at Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven, CT. Over 80 teams competed. For results and more information, please visit https://www.casciac.org/pdfs/cheer_results_2023.pdf.

Esports - Esports continues to take off in the state of Connecticut. With over 45 schools in Connecticut participating, all students are able to have fun playing video games while being a part of a team and gaining important life lessons and leadership skills. The spring season wrapped up on Friday, April 28, 2023. Both the fall and spring season championships were held in-person at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT. For the yearly results, visit <https://www.playvs.com/connecticut>.

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 will take place this year on June 24, 2023, at Glastonbury High School.

Thomas Flanagan / CAS-CIAC Endowment Grant Awards – The Flanagan Grants are back this year. Applications close June 16, 2023, and we are excited to provide grants to schools with up and coming leadership programs.

Annual High School Arts Banquet - Over one hundred and fifty high schools were represented at this year's in-person arts banquet. An added announcement was 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. Riley Cook Jiminez, senior at Bunnell High School, was this year's recipient.

The Look for the Good Project - CSAC continued its partnership with Anne Kubitsky, CEO and founder of "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 during our elementary leadership conference. Parents enjoyed the workshops and we hope to have more in the future. We are also hoping to pilot a middle level program in the future.