

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The Fifty-Eighth Annual Meeting

May 13, 2010

2009-2010 ANNUAL REPORT

PRINCIPALS' CENTER BOARD OF CONTROL

Submitted by Benjamin Skaught, Chair

The Connecticut Association of Schools established the Principals' Center to address the professional development and related needs of practicing principals and to support the professional development of aspiring principals. The Connecticut State Department of Education has been an important partner with CAS in promoting the Principals' Center by providing both technical and financial assistance. The SDE was unable to continue this year the ITL grant that had provided funds for the Principals' Center. Dennis Carrithers, associate executive director of CAS, is the director of the Center. The Center is served by an advisory committee of experienced principals, superintendents, representatives of graduate and undergraduate educational leadership and education programs, and educational consultants.

In order to provide professional support for principals and advance the professional development of aspiring principals, the work of the Center has been organized into six strands of action:

- Strand #1 – Developing and Implementing Quality Administrator Aspirant Programs
- Strand #2 – Developing and Implementing Quality Administrator Certification Programs
- Strand #3 – Developing and Implementing Quality Induction/Mentor Programs for Beginning Principals
- Strand #4 – Providing Quality Professional Development for Career Principals
- Strand #5 – Advancing the Understanding of Issues Critical to Principals
- Strand #6 – Promoting the Effective Use of Technology by Principals

Each strand has its own committee of school administrators and consultants who plan and implement activities relevant to its focus. The existing committees have served hundreds of principals and aspiring principals throughout Connecticut this year in the provision of an impressive variety and depth of programs. In the interest of time, I will share with you here the primary activities of each committee.

■ **Administrator Aspirant Committee**

- One consequence of the reduction in state funding was the inability to offer a two-day residential program for aspiring administrators that had been held for eight straight years.
- A fourth “future leaders” program was conducted successfully for the New Haven Public Schools. Teachers who have their 092 certification and who complete the workshop series are granted interviews for administrative positions in the district as vacancies occur. The topics addressed in these workshops included building capacity for leadership, instructional leadership in daily practice, creating and sustaining a positive climate for learning, best practices for supervising and evaluating staff, and creating and sustaining professional learning communities. Michael Buckley has led this program.
- For the past five years, the Principals' Center has opened up several of its workshops to aspiring administrators participating in Southern Connecticut State University's Educational Leadership Program. Over 120 SCSU interns attended at least one Principals' Center workshop this year. Also, University of Connecticut Administrative Preparation Program (UCAPP) students (and their mentors) were again allowed to attend workshops on a no-fee basis.

■ **Administrator Certification Program (UCAPP) – Mike Buckley, Director**

- The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) and the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education (NSOE) have entered into a partnership which aims to address an increasing shortage of qualified administrators to fill positions of leadership within Connecticut's schools. The Principals' Center has specific responsibilities for conducting the clinical component of the University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP), a nationally recognized series of courses and internships

that prepares candidates for the 092 intermediate administrator certification and leadership positions primarily at the school building and central office levels. As an active partner in this program, the Principals' Center brings its resources including aspiring administrator's program, administrator induction program, statewide network of seasoned mentors, and well-established relationships with schools throughout the state. CAS and NSOE, with their combined resources, believe that they have the capacity to address the critical issue of administrator shortages and, in the process, build the premier school leader preparation program in the nation.

- With regard to the fifth year experience with UCAPP, the Center successfully *managed* eight cohorts with a total of 81 students. To *manage* means to link students to experienced mentors, help students develop leadership plans tied to program objectives, meet regularly with students and their mentors, help develop authentic experiences linked to courses, translate these experiences into products and artifacts for inclusion in an electronic portfolio, become familiar with course content, and participate in the department-wide curriculum revision process to accommodate both the CAS conditions for partnership and the demands of NCATE accreditation.

■ **Mentor-Mentee Committee – Dale Bernardoni, Chair**

- Due to loss of funding and attrition in Tier II year, the committee re-organized the Mentor-Mentee program to a one year activity. Five sessions were held on legal issues, transitions to school leadership, school culture, teacher supervision and best practices. Forty-five new administrators and their mentors participated.
- The collaboration among the CAS Principals' Center, Cooperative Educational Services (CES), and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) – again with support from the Wallace Foundation – to develop model statewide induction program components continued. Two induction academies for new administrators were held – *Leading Change . . . And Getting Everyone on Board* and *Classroom Data...Feedback, Follow-Up and Follow-Through*. Both were offered twice during the year. A third academy – *Getting the Climate Right so All Students Can Achieve* – was offered once.
- The key to the success of the Mentor-Mentee Program remains the supportive, non-evaluative relationship established and sustained between the beginning administrator and the veteran mentor.

■ **Career Principals' Committee – Dr. Tim Breslin, Chair**

- Despite loss of substantial state funding for the Principal Center, the popular Summer Institute will again be held. Through a combination of some state funding, partnering with CASCD, and additional principal center sponsorships, the Summer Leadership Institute will be held on June 29th and 30th at the Heritage in Southbury. The theme is “Transforming Schools: Building Capacity.” Phil Schlechty will be keynoter. The New Haven School District will be featured as well for their initiatives on school change. Last years Institute garnered over 100 participants in the reduced two day format and featured Kim Marshall (of *Marshall Memo* fame), and Lol Fearon, CSDE consultant, and Katie Haycock of Education Trust.

■ **Critical Issues Committee – Jeffrey Cryan, Chair**

- The Committee identified the issue of principal performance evaluation as a broad topic in anticipation of the state's Race to the Top application and the possible re-authorization of the ESEA federal law. Both will require principal evaluation based on student growth. In preparation for the work, the committee is working with the State Department of Education on the adoption of Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLCC) Standards for School Leaders, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Committee worked to plan and organize a means to provide input from principals in reacting and revising for Connecticut the Performance Expectations and Indicators for Educational Leaders. This work will continue during the 2010-2011 school year.

■ **The Principal and Technology Committee – Charles Dumais, Chair**

- The Committee reorganized and re-focused efforts to assist principals with implementation of technology by working with Matt Fischer, CAS Director of Technology to expand the CAS website. Initially, the committee has asked school principals to submit school publications and materials that can be available on the CAS website and indexed for ease of access by topic. Previously documents have been available but had to be examined page by page. Using the technology now available, the documents will be easier to search and have relevant sections grouped by school, DRG, or other categories. The initial stage will be piloted and then expanded as needed.

■ Other Activities of Note

- The Center organized the CAS Fall Conference that fulfilled a long-standing commitment to feature the Connecticut Science Center in its opening year. The setting provided the opportunity for school leaders to see the facility, learn about its offerings to schools for professional development, preview the outreach it provides for science instruction, and examine the exhibits. Keynote speaker Dr. Michael Klentschy presented his work on “Closing Achievement Gaps Through Inquiry-Based Science.”
- The Center this year worked with the Commissioner of Education on the state’s Race to the Top application by coordinating work with other state educational groups (referred to be the Commissioner as “external partners) to find common agreements on the evaluation of teachers and principals. CAS facilitated the work over several months to provide perspectives on using student growth as a key element in evaluating the performance of educators and schools. The state was able to include the analysis in the Race to the Top application in Phase I and will be again included in the Phase II application.
- The Principal Center Board conducted surveys of principals to determine the topics most suggested for professional development and for Principal Center planning. The most popular topics were SRBI, legal issues, Leadership, Leading Change, 21st century learning, data teams, and supervision and evaluation. A follow up survey was done to determine the favored formats for offering programs. Workshops and presenters had the most responses
- The Center again sponsored a session of *The Breakthrough Coach* (TBC), demonstrating with thirty five more teams of administrators and secretaries that it is possible to “work less, play more, and still get the job done in a normal work week.” To date the Center has sponsored nine sessions with over 315 teams participating. A tenth session is scheduled for next January 11 and 12, 2011
- The Center again offered its popular five session series on Teacher Evaluation. The program featured Tom Mooney, Superintendent of Schools Diane Ullman from Simsbury, and Kathleen Butler, Interim Dean of the School of Education at St. Joseph’s College. Evaluations were so positive that the Waterbury School District has engaged the Center to offer the same presenters to its school leaders this May and June.
- The Center continued its involvement with the Connecticut - Shandong Province (China) Sister School Project, nominating schools and principals for participation and hosting a number of Chinese delegations. State Department of Education funding was secured to sponsor a sixth Principal and Teacher Shadowing Program in April. Additionally, the Center hosted two delegations of Chinese educators, including helping to provide professional development for the delegation from Hunan Province in September.
- The 5th Annual Connecticut Public School Data Showcase on April 28 and 29 attracted over 300 participants each day. They were inspired by keynoters Doug Reeves and Katie Haycock, selected from a menu of breakout sessions, and viewed an impressive assortment of “data displays.” CAS, CSDE, and EASTCONN again collaborated on this celebration of the state’s school improvement efforts via the effective use of data to inform instruction.

I am proud to share with you the accomplishments of the Center for this year. Particular thanks are in order for all the chairs and members of the committees for their dedication and voluntary efforts. Special thanks go also to the 226 administrators who volunteered as mentors either in the new administrator induction program (mentor-mentee) or the UCAPP program, or in some cases both. They do it because they feel an obligation to support the next generation of school leaders, a professional service initiative that ranks among the top leadership development activities in the state. Special recognition for their contributions is also extended to: CSDE staff members Deborah Richards, Jo Ann Freiberg, Robert Pitocco, Larry Jacobsen, Lol Fearon; Professor Barry Sheckley and Michele Femc-Bagwell, Educational Leadership Department, UCONN’s Neag School of Education; Attorney Thomas Mooney of the Neag School of Education and Shipman and Goodwin; CAS administrative assistants Erin Guarino and Noreen Liberopoulos, and CAS Executive Director Michael Savage, CAS Associate Executive Director Michael Buckley, CAS Assistant Executive Directors Susan Kennedy Director and Principals’ Center Director Dennis Carrithers.