

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting

May 22, 2009

2008-2009 Annual Report **ELEMENTARY BOARD OF CONTROL**

Submitted by Renata Lantos, Chair

The 2008-2009 school year continued to be a year of expanding programs and services for the elementary schools of Connecticut. A goal and focus has been to continue our collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education. This was accomplished by CAS, EASTCONN, and the CSDE working together in sponsoring several workshops and conferences. In December, in response to recent legislation, sessions were held on the topics of *in-school suspension*, *bullying*, and *secondary school redesign* as well as *21st century skills*. The programs were well attended by teams of principals, teachers, and consultants. In the fall, CAS and CSDE sponsored a conference on secondary reform and its impact at all levels. Exemplars from other schools already implementing changes were presented. In addition, the CAS Legislative Committee, represented by Dennis Carrithers, continued to provide the elementary board with regular updates about current legislation. The committee monitored the resolution to keep ECS funding intact while minimizing the effects of other reductions on items deemed essential to district operations and staffing, particularly in our priority school districts. In addition, the committee monitored secondary school redesign, in-school suspension, and bullying legislation, while providing informational forums for CAS member schools.

CAS, EASTCONN, and CSDE will jointly sponsor the “*Fourth Annual Public School Data Showcase*” at the Holiday Inn in Waterbury on May 13th. This event will include keynote speaker Dr. Nancy Love. Participants will be able to select from 6 sessions during the event. Other goals that have been accomplished and are enumerated in the document that follows include: developing the early childhood committee; improving and expanding our resources on the CAS website; using CSDE representatives as consultants to the elementary board and the professional studies committee when planning staff development opportunities for principals and teachers; and networking with CSDE representatives to serve on SDE committees as appropriate. The elementary division serves close to 700 public and parochial schools throughout the state. This was a year of continued growth in services provided by the various committees under the direction of the elementary board. The board continues to assess the needs of its member schools in the areas of professional development and recognition for schools, principals, teachers, parents and students.

ELEMENTARY BOARD 2008 - 2009

The Elementary Board of Control (Chaired by Renata Lantos, Principal, Bielefield School, Middletown)- The elementary board continued to address the CAS Board of Directors’ goals for 2006-2008 through sub-committees for each goal. A number of board members attended the Northeast Regional Elementary School Principals’ Council held in Portland, Maine in late September. The Northeast Council consists of the following states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Next year Hyannis, Massachusetts will host this annual meeting. A delegation from CAS attended the summer leadership conference in Washington, D.C. The board also coordinated a large CT delegation to the NAESP convention in New Orleans, LA where 18 principals from Connecticut met for a special dinner at Tommy’s Cuisine in New Orleans. This year Connecticut did not have a booth, nor did any New England state. It was felt that between the cost and the time involved in serving at the booth, there was little time for attending important convention sessions. The elementary board, in conjunction with the middle and high school levels, developed a member survey to gather data that will enable the respective divisions to a) advocate for and further the interests of their members; b) encourage and facilitate worthwhile activities for Connecticut youth; and c) recognize excellence among students, teachers, administrators, and schools.

ELEMENTARY COMMITTEES 2008-2009

- **Elementary Level Professional Studies Committee** (Chaired by RoseAnne O’Brien-Vojtek, Principal, Ivy Drive School, Bristol) – workshops were held at CAS on in-school suspension and bullying laws. These workshops were well attended by principals and teachers from across the state. An informational session was held about *Kids Marathon*, a life-changing fitness program for elementary students, using a holistic approach. The program was first piloted in Center School in Litchfield with noteworthy results. Several elementary schools have agreed to pilot the program, which will culminate in June with a run and awards ceremony at Southington High School. The Exemplary School Climate Award has been implemented, with four schools applying and receiving exemplary climate status. Two additional schools currently are being visited to determine qualifications. This year awards were presented to Jonathan Trumbull Primary School in Watertown, Frenchtown School in Trumbull, Elmer Thienes- Mary Hall School in Marlborough, and John Lyman School in Middlefield. RoseAnne O’Brien-Vojtek is to be recognized for her efforts on behalf of the professional studies committee.
- **Elementary Leadership Conference Committee** (Co-chaired by Jean Barbaro, Teacher, Anna Reynolds School, Newington; and Lauren Elias, Principal, Tinker School, Waterbury)- Connecticut students in grades four and five were invited to attend either of two statewide leadership conferences sponsored by CAS. The first was held at Assuntnuck College in Enfield and the second at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. Attendance at both conferences was higher than usual and over 200 parents of student attendees attended a parent workshop on leadership.

- **Environmental Science Conference Committee** (Chaired by Jay Brennan, Principal, Paul Chatfield School, Seymour; and Susan McNamara, Executive Director of the Long Island Sound Foundation). This committee organizes the annual environmental science conference for elementary school students throughout the state. This year's conference was again sponsored by the Long Island Sound Foundation and **ee-smarts**, a division of United Illuminating. It was held at Wesleyan University in March. For the sixth consecutive year, Marine Science Day will be held at the University of Connecticut at Avery Point, Groton. This year the conference has expanded to a second site - the CT River Museum, Essex - so more students can participate in this very worthwhile educational opportunity.
- **CAS Arts Committee** (Co-chaired by Maureen Berescik, Director of Arts, Bethel Public Schools; and Laura Ferrante Fernandes, Assistant Principal, Masuk High School, Monroe) –The task of this committee is to give public recognition to the arts in general and to students and teachers who excel in the visual and performing arts. This was the ninth year that the committee sponsored the elementary arts festival where two elementary students from each school are recognized for excelling in either the visual or the performing arts. This year, for the seventh time, two evenings had to be devoted to the event because of the large number of schools participating. Attendance continued to grow as an increasing number of schools are participating in this celebration..
- **National Distinguished Principal Selection Committee** (Chaired by Andrienne Longobucco, Principal, Litchfield Center School) – A seven-member selection committee was formed to select Connecticut's National Distinguished Principal for 2009. Following the guidelines established by NAESP, the selection committee members reviewed applications and portfolio information and then visited the schools of the three finalists before making their final selection. Dr. Marcia Elliott, principal of West Stafford Elementary School was selected as Connecticut's 2009 NDP.
- **Volunteer/Parent Recognition Awards Committee** – This committee plans the annual Parent Volunteer Recognition Banquet and, this year, collaborated for the first time with the middle level. Each year this awards dinner grows as more and more schools feel a need to recognize volunteers. This year the program continued to be well attended by elementary and middle school educators and volunteers. Gina Vance is to be acknowledged for her outreach to the middle level, which resulted in a successful collaboration on the volunteer recognition banquet.
- **Secretaries Conference-** The Third Annual Secretaries Conference, including K-12 and central office personnel, was held on April 23rd at Water's Edge Resort in Westbrook, where over 160 secretaries were in attendance.

ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES 2008-09

- **The Annual Elementary Program Recognition Banquet** – This event was held in November. CAS recognized exemplary school programs as well as the school of the year and the exemplary educator award winner. This was a positive way for schools to begin the school year.
- **Parent Volunteer Recognition Banquet** - This most successful seventh-year program was co-chaired Gina Vance, Assistant Principal, Gideon Welles School, Glastonbury. The program was for the first time a collaboration between the elementary and middle school levels. The purpose of the program is to reward the efforts of school volunteers across the state. Each honoree received a certificate and a booklet listing all who have been honored. Bearingstar Insurance sponsored this special event, presenting a carnation to each honoree. The program was well attended, with over 500 guests representing over 60 schools present.
- **Annual Recognition Awards**– Awards given by the elementary division annually are: National Distinguished Principal, Educator of the Year, School of the Year, Exemplary Principal Program Award for Special Education, Marjorie Bradley Curriculum Award, William Cieslukowski First Year Principal Award, John Wallace Awards, John C. Mulrain Community Service Award, and Thomas R. Flanagan Student Activity Memorial Grants.
- **Elementary School Blood Drive Program** - The elementary division of CAS and the American Red Cross teamed up for the ninth year to continue this program in our elementary schools. The objective of the program is to provide students an opportunity to make a difference by sponsoring a blood drive at their school or co-sponsoring a blood drive in their community. The goal next year is to have over 150 of our elementary schools holding blood drives. What a great way to teach youngsters about community service and, while doing so, save lives.
- **Getting Retired Principals to Remain Active in CAS** – Many retired principals have become involved in the CAS mentor/mentee program and have been trained as executive coaches.
- **Urban Leaders** — Through our mentor/mentee program and through membership on our committees, we will continue our efforts to involve more urban leaders. The Urban School Committee is in the process of establishing goals for next fall to address their members' specific needs through workshops and networking initiatives.
- **Increasing CAS and NEASP Membership**– Regina Birdsell, Kit Bishop and RoseAnne O'Brien-Vojtek are overseeing this effort and are encouraging our new administrators to become members at the local and national levels. Rosie presented information on membership in CAS and NAESP to the new elementary administrators who were participating in the mentor/mentee program. Most of those administrators were from districts which were already CAS members. Kit and Rosie have led the charge in our increased efforts to encourage more principals to join NAESP and to pay their membership dues through CAS. CAS has taken direct charge of all NAESP renewals and new member applications for Connecticut elementary principals. Through this effort, CAS will receive a small percentage of the dues. Last July at the NAESP state leaders conference, CAS was recognized for the increase in its NAESP membership. RoseAnne O'Brien-Vojtek continues to represent us well as NAESP state representative; and Vicki Reed has represented us with federal relations.
- **Unified Sports® Programs**–The Young Athlete Program, which supports motor skill development at the preschool to grade 1 level, has grown. This program informs parents of the Special Olympics pathway from age 3 to 83 and also provides early childhood educators with sample lesson plans and free classroom supplies. New school districts participating include: Waterbury, East Haddam, Essex, and Hebron. The Elementary Sports Skill Days were held in New Canaan, Colchester, and Glastonbury, with two more scheduled for the remainder of this year in West Hartford and New Haven. Students in grades 3-5 participated in these skill days. In addition to the veteran schools, the following new schools have joined this enriching program: West Hill and Stevens in Rocky Hill; Jack Jackter in Colchester; The Brownstone and Gildersleeve Schools in Portland; and the Orange Avenue School in Guilford. Project Unify is a Special Olympics grant program to assist our staff in attracting new schools to offer a Unified Sports® program for their students. Currently 27 schools are participating in Unified Sports® programs.