

# THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

## *The Sixtieth Annual Meeting*

*May 10, 2012*

2011-2012 Annual Report

### **ELEMENTARY BOARD OF CONTROL**

*Submitted by Karen Fitzsimmons, Chair*

The 2011-2012 school year continued to be a year with many programs and workshops for elementary schools in Connecticut. The goal and focus have been to work collaboratively with the Connecticut State Department of Education. This was accomplished by CAS, EASTCONN, SERC and the CSDE working together to sponsor workshops, conferences and discussions on teacher/principal evaluations and early childhood education.

CAS, EASTCONN and CSDE are again sponsored the "Seventh Annual Public School Data Showcase" at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Cromwell on April 24 & 25, 2012. With the topic of "High Quality Instruction and Assessment in the Age of Common Core Standards" CAS, CSDE, and EASTCONN again collaborated on this celebration of the state's school improvement efforts via the effective use of data to drive instruction.

#### **ELEMENTARY BOARD 2011-2012**

**The Elementary Board of Control** (chaired by Karen Fitzsimmons, Principal, Memorial Elementary School, East Hampton) A delegation from CAS attended the summer leadership conference in New York. The board also coordinated a CT delegation to the NAESP convention in Seattle Washington. Again this year no New England state had a booth.

#### **ELEMENTARY COMMITTEES 2011-2012**

**Elementary Level Professional Studies Committee** no longer exists as it has been combined with the middle and high school to become one committee.

**Elementary Leadership Conference Committee:** The elementary student leadership conferences were held for the 19th consecutive year, with a fourth venue, Sacred Heart University, being added to the line-up to make this event more accessible to students in the Fairfield County area. In total, the four conferences - the other three being held at Asnuntuck, Three Rivers, and Naugatuck Valley Community Colleges - enrolled more than 850 students, setting a new all-time high. Co-Chairs Karen Brimecombe, Lauren Elias, Kathy Walsh, and Eileen Roxbee coordinated the programs that featured teacher volunteers from across the state providing highly interactive leadership activities for students in grades four through six.

**CAS Arts Committee:** The task of the committee is give public recognition to the arts in general and to students and teachers who excel in the visual and performing arts. This was the thirteenth year that that CAS sponsored the elementary arts festival where two elementary students from each school are recognized for excelling in either the visual or performing arts. Two evenings had to be devoted to the event because of the large number of schools participating.

**National Distinguished Principal Selection Committee:** (chaired by Andrienne Longobucco, Principal, Litchfield Center School) The six member selection committee reviewed applications and portfolios and then visited the schools of three finalists before making their selection. Dr. Miguel Cardona, Principal of Hanover School in Meriden was selected as Connecticut's 2012 NDP.

**Volunteer Recognition Committee:** (Norma-Jean Posocco, retired educator; Rick Watson, Albert D. Griswold Middle School, Rocky Hill) This committee plans the Annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet, and for the second year in a row collaborated with the middle and high school levels. Each year this awards dinner grows as more schools feel a need to recognize volunteers. This year the program continued to be well attended by elementary, middle and high school educators and volunteers.

#### **ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES 2011-2012**

**The Annual Elementary Program Recognition Banquet:** The event was held on November 21, 2011. This is the 18<sup>th</sup> year CAS recognized exemplary school programs as well as the exemplary educator award winner; and this year two schools were recognized as the school of the year. A slide presentation showcased each of the exemplary programs.

**The Annual Celebration of the Arts Banquet:** At the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Elementary Arts Banquet two students from each of the 180 elementary schools in attendance were honored at the Aqua Turf Club this past February. Over 1400 students, teachers, administrators and parents were treated to an interactive night of art activities. Students were recognized and treated to a performing arts presentation. Members of the CAS staff and committee provided congratulatory remarks as well as a member from the state department of education.

**Volunteer/Parent Recognition Banquet:** The program rewards the efforts of school volunteers across the state. Each honoree received a certificate and a booklet listing all the honorees and their accomplishments. Horace Mann Insurance sponsored this special event, presenting a carnation to every honoree. There were 625 in attendance representing elementary, middle and high schools across CT. Distinguished Friends of Education Awards were presented to NEJ, Inc. of Beacon Falls and Mary Barnett from Branford.

**Annual Recognition Awards:** Awards given by the elementary division annually are: National Distinguished Principals, Educator of the Year, School of the Year, William Cieslukowski First Year Principal Award, John Wallace Awards, and Thomas R. Flanagan Student Activity Memorial Grants.

**KiDSMARATHON:** Working with the Rod Dixon Foundation in Los Angeles, CSAC put together our Connecticut version of KiDSMARATHON, an amazing life fitness program for students ages 7-12 that features an 8-10 week program of running with nutritional guidelines. Final celebrations are set later this spring at Cheshire, Fairfield, Litchfield, Danbury and Norwich as over 2,000 runners are set to complete their last mile of a marathon before cheering family and friends. This represents a substantial increase in participants from last year. KiDSMARATHON is very fortunate to have received corporate sponsorship from Anthem and Sodexo Foods. KiDSMARATHON produced a short documentary video that provides prospective schools with an overview of the program. We also applied for a grant from the "Active Schools Program" in early April. The prospects for KiDSMARATHON, aligned with First Lady Michelle O'Bama's "Let's Move Campaign", continue to be a source of pride for the Connecticut Association of Schools.

**Marine Science Day** – The Long Island Sound Foundation in conjunction with CAS will host Marine Science Day for students in grades 5 through 8 on Wednesday, May 16, 2012 in five locations: Avery Point in Groton, Ct River Museum in Essex, Sound School in New Haven, Sound Waters in Stamford, and Schooner Inc. in New Haven. The purpose of this conference is to promote greater awareness of Long Island Sound and marine science.

**Unified Sports Program:** The Unified Sports Programs sponsored by CAS/CIAC is divided into two categories. Students in pre-k through grade two participate in the Young Athlete Program and the students in grades 3-5 take part in the Elementary Sports Skill Developmental Program. Young Athlete students practice gross motor skills in an inclusionary setting and are provided with a free set of instructional supplies and a suggested list of lessons. Our Young Athlete program includes schools from Derby, Canton, Southington, Milford, Middletown, Clinton, Darien, Avon Waterbury, Colchester, Essex, Deep River, New Haven, Wethersfield, Westbrook, Wallingford and Stonington. In most schools, physical education and classroom teachers join forces with physical and occupational therapists to focus on individualized education plans for physical development. At the end of the school year, a representative from the CAS staff will attend the school's field day and present Young Athlete t-shirts and Olympic medals to each participant. Our hope is that these students will continue with an elementary skill development program when they reach 3<sup>rd</sup> grade which is the beginning of the pathway continuing onto the middle and high school levels. At the Elementary Unified Sports level, students with and without intellectual disabilities practice sports skills at their schools with teacher advisors. These practice sessions occur before and after school with the goal of participating in one of the five elementary sports days sponsored by the CAS/CIAC staff, hosted by a CT high school. These events are held in New Canaan, New Haven, West Hartford, Glastonbury and Colchester. Students are assisted by corporate, school and student volunteers as they practice soccer, basketball, volleyball, baseball, track and bowling skills. At the culmination of these sports days, each participant is presented with a gold Olympic medal. In line with our goal of offering activities which promote social inclusion, students and coaches are given a picnic-type lunch to enjoy with each other.

**Early Childhood:** CAS is currently working with the CT State Department of Education and several early childhood associations. They are looking at programs for elementary principals who do not have early childhood background or who want additional information on early childhood. Two symposiums, "Closing The Achievement Gap – Getting PreK – Grade 3 Right", were held in August 2011 in New Britain and January 2012 in Waterbury. Governor Malloy welcomed the participants at the New Britain symposium. They focused on providing knowledge about the importance of instructional leadership at the district and building level and featured national experts in the field of language development and executive function. There was also an "Early Assessment Summit" held in March 2012 in Rocky Hill. The purpose was to provide a national overview of the rapid expansion of kindergarten entry assessments. A Survey was sent to all elementary principals to help ascertain principals' background and need for additional information on early childhood. There are several bills on Early Childhood and CAS with elementary principals has been instrumental in speaking on the bills.

**Legislation:** CAS is also involved with teacher/principal evaluation, working with all levels of principals. Legislation has never been as focused on evaluation as it has been during this legislative session. CAS, along with selected elementary principals, has been involved by testifying to the legislature on bills affecting several areas including entrance age for kindergarten children; schools collaborating with preschool agencies and families; and looking at extending half day kindergarten days to full day kindergarten.