

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The Fifty-Eighth Annual Meeting

May 13, 2010

2009-2010 Annual Report

MIDDLE LEVEL BOARD OF CONTROL

Submitted by Joseph Scheideler, Chair

The Middle Level Board this year had a wide variety of committees very active and productive with a marked increase in membership from across the state on these committees. Issues ranging from athletics to school reform to promoting student leadership dominated the work of the middle level.

Under the direction of Assistant Executive Director Earle Bidwell, the Middle Level Board conducted and reviewed a wide ranging survey of middle school leaders. The goal of the survey was to find out what services provided by CAS to Middle Schools were priorities. The top items that resulted from the survey showed that according to the membership, the top two services provided to middle schools are: advocating for middle level education with the state legislature and with congress; and representing Connecticut middle schools regionally and nationally, through collaboration with The New England League of Middle Schools, National Middle School Association and National Association of Secondary School Principals. The next two priorities are: tracking education legislation and testifying with regards to education related bills in the CT state legislature, and providing legal updates/workshops with Attorney Tom Mooney. Rounding out the top ten are:

- representing middle level education in major planning and policy initiatives with the Connecticut State Department of Education and the commissioner of education;
- professional development on “hot topics”, such as in-school suspension, and anti-bullying workshops;
- positive school climate training;
- teacher evaluation workshops for administrators,
- Exemplary Practice designations for schools;
- professional development for career administrators.

Guidelines for Middle Level Athletics: A major initiative by the Middle Level Board this year has been to work with CAAD to review the outdated Middle Level Athletic recommended guidelines from CAS/CIAC. A special committee has worked with the athletic directors and CIAC to update and re-write the guidelines for middle level athletics. This process is well underway. A Purpose Statement, Belief Statements and Recommendations and Recommended Administrative Practices have all been written and reviewed by the Board. The final sections on Health and Safety, Intramurals, Unified Sports and specific recommendations for interscholastic sports are near completion. The Board expects to review these and ratify the committee’s work before the school year ends.

The Professional Studies Committee organized into six working subcommittees addressing various aspects of secondary school reform. These subcommittees each are working to produce a recommendation for action that schools will be able to implement despite the funding concerns

that we all face. In addition the Professional Studies Committee made site visits to schools for exemplary school climate. Hartford Magnet Middle School, East Hartford Middle School and Tyrell Middle School in Wolcott were awarded this distinction. In addition, Suffield Middle School was cited for Exemplary Teaming practices.

The Honors and Awards Committee selected Winthrop Middle School in Deep River (Regional District 4) as the 2009-2010 Middle School of the Year. Clearly, JWMS is a cutting edge school that is exemplary in every way. Students consistently score at the top of their education reference group. In addition, Principal Russell's leadership was evident yet all constituents feel empowered and part of the process. The show of support by the community and the knowledge of the parents about the programs at the school were also very impressive.

The Committee honored Dr. Gail Thibodeau as the Middle Level Exemplary Educator of the Year. A veteran of twenty-five years, Gail is the language arts consultant at the Albert D. Griswold Middle School in Rocky Hill. Holding a doctorate in educational leadership, she remains in the classroom because every year presents new challenges.

The Middle Level Leadership Committee conducted the annual Middle Level Leadership Conference in January at Quinnipiac University in Hamden. Over 600 students from 59 schools participated in this conference with close to 500 as attendees and another 100 working as co-presenters with teachers, counselors and others from around the state. The post conference survey was overwhelmingly positive. A typical comment: "Each year my students and I have found this conference to be well organized and a most valuable experience." With "4" being the highest, the attendees rated the conference on average at 3.4. In addition to the student workshops, there were two sessions held for advisors.

A Middle Level Board subcommittee was formed to create a Board "Job Description" that would include expectations for Board members. This produced a document including Board members duties. The document was referenced to National Middle School Association and several other state middle level associations.

Work is under way to gather information on past Middle Level Scholar Leader recipients as that dinner and distinction is now completing its 20th anniversary. There are plans being discussed that would involve information from past recipients at the 2011 Scholar Leader Banquet.