

ct news & notes

■ Attorney Tom Mooney of Shipman and Goodwin LLP has prepared a summary of education-related laws which were enacted during the 2004 legislative session. Many of the new statutes have implications for administrators and for the day-to-day operation of Connecticut's schools. To download the summary, visit http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/legal_update_2004.pdf.

■ Janet Garagliano, principal of Wamogo Regional High School in Litchfield, has recently been appointed to serve on the National Committee on Student Contests and Activities (NCSCA). The NCSCA annually prepares and publishes the National Advisory List of Contests and Activities to inform and assist principals, teachers, parents, and students in making decisions regarding participation in a wide variety of student program opportunities. The committee reviews all programs based on the following considerations: educational, financial, organizational, promotional, adjudication, and awards. Programs that meet the guidelines are placed on the National Advisory List. Janet currently serves as chair of the CAS Student Activities Board of Control and is the newly appointed treasurer of the CAS Board of Directors.

■ Typically speaking, higher percentages of test takers result in lower scores on standardized tests. But such was not the case with the 2004 CAPT. Despite significant increases in student participation rates this year, Connecticut's 10th graders showed performance gains in all four subject areas. More good news came in the form of significantly increased participation rates for students in two key subgroups: students eligible for free or reduced-price meals by an average of 10.8% and students with special education needs by an average of 15.4%. Student performance in the state's Regional Vocational-Technical Schools (RVTS) increased significantly from 2003 to 2004, with an average of 4.8% more students scoring at or above the goal level in the four subject areas in 2004 than 2003. Participation also increased by an average of 2.1%. For more information visit www.state.ct.us/sde/whatsnew/CAPTRRelease04.pdf.

■ According to a report released last month by the state department of education, more than three-quarters of the state's high schools are meeting the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind law. The state department of education reported that 138 of the state's 180 public high schools, or 77 percent, are making enough progress under the law, which aims to have every student proficient in reading and math. Last year, just 46 percent were in compliance. A majority of the schools not making significant progress this year are in cities or extremely rural districts. Three are identified because of overall academic problems, while others need to increase minority or special education achievement in math or reading. Fifteen schools were cited for having major problems in math. Next year, 72 percent of students will be expected to be proficient in reading, and 69 percent will be expected to be proficient in math, a 10 percent increase over this year.

■ Last month, the state board of education adopted new measures to reshape its statewide technical high school system, revising its mission statement, implementing tighter admission standards and changing its name. A critical stride for the schools, now known as the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS), is a new admissions policy that excludes students who have serious disciplinary problems or low reading and math skills. The CTHSS will focus on such programs as Information Systems Technology, including microprocessing, networking systems, programming and software development, health technology, bioscience environmental technology and other technical fields. The Connecticut Technical High Schools are now beginning their recruitment period for next year. Grade 8 students who are interested in learning more should contact their middle school guidance counselor or visit the Connecticut Technical High School System web site at www.cttech.org.

■ In June, the state department of education adopted a position statement on science education. The statement, which is intended to provide districts with guidance as they address policies, curriculum and programs related to science education, can be viewed at www.state.ct.us/sde/board/statements.htm.

■ Statistics show that more and more of Connecticut's high school graduates are staying close to home. In 2002, the latest year numbers were available, 13,935 high school graduates (56 percent), planned to stay in Connecticut to attend college; in 2000, 52 percent stayed local. UConn was the most popular public institution for Connecticut grads. Among private institutions, Quinnipiac drew the largest number of Connecticut students.

■ According to a recent U.S. Census Bureau report, Connecticut's median household income has declined slightly in the last three years. While Connecticut remains a wealthy state overall with a median household income of \$55,004 (compared to a national median household income of \$43,318), that income dropped about \$236 on average from 2001 to 2003. The decrease came as no surprise to economists, who attribute it to a combination of economic stagnation and state aid cutbacks which have hurt poor families.

CT STUDENTS EXCEL ON SATs

Connecticut's 2004 high school graduates recorded the highest combined average SAT scores in 30 years – even with one of the nation's highest percentages of students taking the exam in anticipation of attending college this fall. This year, 33,221 of Connecticut's 39,191 high school graduates (public and non-public combined) – an estimated 85% -- took the SAT. This compares with a national average of 48% and an average for New England of 82%. Connecticut's combined average score was up four points to 1030 – four points above the national average, which was unchanged from last year. Connecticut's performance represents:

- one of the highest participation rates in the nation -- 85 percent;
- Connecticut's highest combined score since 1974;
- a one-point increase in mathematics, bringing the average to the highest level since the data were first reported by graduating class 32 years ago;
- a three-point increase in the verbal score, bringing it to the highest level in 17 years; and
- the highest scores for black and Hispanic students ever.

For additional information, visit www.state.ct.us/sde/whatsnew/SATFI-