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# THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

October 8, 2009

Dear CAS Board Members:

My thirty years of employment with CAS-CIAC have been a time of great professional fulfillment and personal happiness. It is, therefore, with complex and conflicting emotions that I inform you of my intention to retire at the end of the current school year, effective June 30, 2010.

The face of CAS-CIAC has changed dramatically in the past thirty years. We have grown from a modest operation concerned mainly with the governance of interscholastic athletics to a powerful organization that is a recognized and respected force in Connecticut education. We built and relocated to a new headquarters with the facilities needed to expand and improve services to member schools; we extended membership to elementary schools, a move that served to significantly broaden the scope of the association; we created the CIAC Endowment Fund to ensure our future financial security; we introduced the renowned scholar-athlete, scholar leader and fine arts banquet to recognize the academic, athletic and artistic achievement of Connecticut's students; we founded the Center For Early Adolescent Educators to provide professional development programs to middle level educators; we created the CIAC/Special Olympics Unified Sports Program to extend athletic opportunities to students with disabilities; we earned sanction from the CT State Department of Education as an authorized coaching certification agency; we allied with the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors and the Connecticut Association of Interscholastic Officials to bring Connecticut's athletic directors and sports officials under the CAS-CIAC umbrella; we merged with the Elementary and Middle School Principals Association of Connecticut to create a single principals' organization and a united voice for all administrators in Connecticut; we established the Connecticut Principals' Center to focus on the professional development needs of new, aspiring and veteran administrators; we entered into a partnership with the University of Connecticut to conduct the clinical component of UCAPP which has us positioned as a prominent agent in the state's efforts to address one of its most critical challenges: reducing the growing administrative shortage; we developed, through the Exemplary Interscholastic High School Athletic Program Evaluation Model, an educational framework which will promote the value and importance of high school athletic programs; and, more recently, we embarked on a joint initiative with the state department which serves to recruit, train, place, and supervise executive coaches to support leadership teams in low-performing school districts.

All this has not been accomplished by my hands, but by your hands and by the hands of the thousands of volunteers who have collectively contributed countless hours of time and energy to sustain the ongoing improvement of the services we provide to the schools, students and educators of our state. Our advancement is due not to my individual leadership but to the determination of present and past board members who have insisted that our association not just persist, but flourish. While I would like to think that I have contributed, if I have done so, it has been only through my capacity to mobilize the best thinking of all of our members.

I have been planning my departure since January 2008. It is the right time. I am confident that I am leaving the association in a state of great strength and at a time of great promise. Our staff is scrupulously dedicated and resourceful. Our boards are strong and capable, comprised of members with the utmost experience, integrity and humanity. I am fortunate to have been one of the many beneficiaries of their professionalism, competence and goodwill. Now it is time for new leadership to advance the association through the political, legal and educational challenges that lie ahead. The discrepant call for high standards and accountability on the one hand and budget reductions on the other can be an impetus for action rather than an excuse for complacency.

It is with these reflections that I thank you for your selfless leadership and conscientious work. I will cherish the memories of my interactions with you, staff members, and the many wonderful people that I have had the good fortune to know and serve.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Savage