



2021-22 Annual Report
CT STUDENT ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE
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The Connecticut Student Activities Conference (CSAC) saw impressive participation rates this year. The overall objective for CSAC in 2021-22 was to link activities to 21st century leadership skills, diversity awareness, mental health awareness and school climate initiatives. The following is a brief summary of CAS Student Activities.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Elementary Level Leadership Conference - The Elementary Student Leadership conference was held virtually in January this year. We had over 700 students, advisors and administrators in attendance. In addition, we had a parent breakout session with over 60 parents in attendance. There were 5 impressive presenters that gave students a wonderful half day of leadership. Students had a great time building leadership skills, community service skills and participating in anti-bullying activities to bring back to schools.

Middle Level Leadership Conference - The middle school student leadership conference was held virtually in January this year. Over 400 students, advisors and administrators were in attendance and gave very positive reviews at the end. Students and advisors participated in extensive leadership training, fun anti-bullying activities, diversity awareness, and community service initiatives to bring back to schools.

High School Level Leadership Conference - Over 500 high school student leaders, along with their advisors, attended the Virtual High School Leadership Conference in January. Students statewide were able to participate in intense leadership training and fun! Students engaged in presentations geared toward 21st century skill development and learned a variety of ways to improve collaboration and communication strategies.

“Arts in the Middle” - Cancelled due to scheduling and bus issues with schools. We look forward to getting back together next year.

National/Regional Leadership Conferences – The NFHS National Student Leadership Summit will take place in-person this year from July 18-20. We will be bringing five student leaders (SSACE, SAAB, SEAB and Unified Sports) to represent Connecticut. The New England Student Leadership Conference has been postponed to 2023 due to the pandemic and funding.

National Honor Society Statewide Advisors Conference - National Honor Society advisors were able to meet and collaborate on ideas for student leadership in December 2021. Advisors planned for the year ahead, participated in professional development for Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies and got a chance to network and share ideas with each other.

National Honor Society Statewide Conference High School/Middle School Level - The statewide Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies conference took place virtually in April 2022. The conference included dynamic speakers and student-lead activities; students and advisors left the meeting with a phenomenal leadership experience.

Connecticut Association of Student Councils Leadership Convention - This student driven, planned and led event was a huge success. There were over 100 participants in attendance. High school student leaders joined peers from across the state for a morning of inspiration and empowerment. The program also included a breakout session geared specifically toward advisers.

Student Council Adventures in Leadership Conference - CASC's "Adventures in Leadership" is all about building the base of a successful team outside of our normal comfort zone. This year, "Adventures in Leadership" will take place at Winding Trails in Farmington, CT; with a day of team building activities designed to prepare new Councils for the adventures of leadership that lay ahead in the new school year.

Men of Color in Leadership Conference - The first annual Men of Color in Leadership Conference took place on October 27, 2022, and featured eight leaders from different backgrounds including education and sports. Over 200 middle and high school students and advisers tuned in virtually for a morning of inspiration from the dynamic leaders on the panel.

Women in Leadership Conference - The Women in Leadership Conference focused on how dynamic individual leadership builds community and shared purpose and contributes to positive personal growth and change in our schools and communities. Over 300 Students and advisers tuned in and were inspired and motivated to further develop their own leadership skills and talents by the end of the conference. This year's conference included two panels of distinguished women leaders in the fields of education, law enforcement, Esports, entrepreneurship, media, students and athletics.

Student Athletic Advisory Board - CAS-CIAC's Student Athletic Advisory Board had a good year. An offshoot of the successful "Class Act Schools" initiative, the statewide advisory board empowered students to promote good sportsmanship within their leagues and to address other issues regarding athletics. Students met three times throughout the school year and were able to share their respective experiences and highlights, plan and implement community service actions plans, and come together to have a voice in promoting respect, teamwork, and character in all of our "Class Act" schools and beyond.

Student Equity Advisory Board - In 2020, CAS-CIAC created a Student Equity Advisory Board (SEAB) to bring awareness to inequity in Connecticut and collaborate on ways to enhance inclusion in schools for all students. The SEAB consists of up to four students from each league and those members develop and implement ideas and action plans to bring back to their respective leagues, schools, and the communities. The final presentation from SEAB to educators statewide took place virtually on May 23, 2022.

BOTF Competition - BOTF stands for Battle of the Fans, a video-based school spirit competition designed to find the CT high school with the very best examples of spirit and sportsmanship. Last year, due to the pandemic and schools having limits on spectators, the Student Athletic Advisory Board came up with a plan that would keep sportsmanship alive, unveiling a new program title: Battle of the Teams! Unfortunately, we did not receive the response that we were hoping for, so we did not name a winner for this year. We plan to go back to our original "Battle of the Fans" next year!

KIDSMARATHON - Working with the Rod Dixon Foundation in New Zealand & Los Angeles, CSAC sponsored KIDSMARATHON for the tenth consecutive year. KIDSMARATHON is an amazing life fitness program for students ages 7- 12 that features an 8-10 week program of running with nutritional guidelines. The KIDSMARATHON final mile celebrations are mostly done within the individual school districts now. However, our annual Cheshire High School final mile has been postponed to next year.

High School Dance Championships – The dance state championships returned this year on February 26, 2022, at Hamden High School. There were over 50 teams in attendance. Everything went smoothly. The coaches, dancers, and families were extremely excited to be back in-person. Dance championship results can be found at the link below.

http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/dance_results_2022.pdf

High School Cheerleading Championships – The cheer state championships returned this year on March 5, 2022. Over 85 teams competed and were thrilled to be back in-person. For results and more information, please see the link below.

http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/cheer_results_2022.pdf

Esports - Esports continues to take off in the state of Connecticut. With over 35 participating schools in Connecticut, all students are able to have fun playing video games while being a part of a team and gaining important life lessons and leadership skills. The spring season wrapped up on Friday, May 6, 2022, with a virtual state championship. In the future, we are hoping for the possibility of being back in-person. For the yearly results, please see the link below.

<https://www.playvs.com/connecticut>

Robotics - CSAC continued its partnership with *CT FIRST*, an organization that sponsors robotics tournaments for elementary, middle and high school teams. CT FIRST's goal is to inspire in students an appreciation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to show them how an understanding of these fields can enrich their lives. The CT High School Robotics Championship was canceled due a change in leadership at *CT First*. We are currently working with new leadership on plans for next year.

CONNECTICUT DEBATE ASSOCIATION

High School Debate - Due to the pandemic, CDA held its 2021-22 tournaments online as "virtual" or "eTournaments." We had 158 debaters from 25 schools compete in State Finals in March. For participating schools, debate topics, results and more, see the link below.

<http://ctdebate.org/>

Middle School Debate - Over 300 debaters and 25 middle schools debated virtually on intriguing topics virtual throughout the school year. For participating schools, debate topics, results and more, see the link below.

<http://ctmsdebate.org/>

Thomas Flanagan / CAS-CIAC Endowment Grant Awards – The Flanagan Grants are back this year. We are excited to provide grants to schools with up-and-coming leadership programs.

State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) - The 2021-22 State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) is comprised of twenty high school students who met monthly with Cherese Miller-Odukwe, CAS Director of Student Activities. SSACE's number one project this year was to produce a presentation for the State Board of Education which centered on four topics: Mental Health, Improving Student and Staff Interaction in Schools, Incorporating the Roles of Families and Communities, and Improving Technology in Schools. SSACE also selected the recipients of the Governor's Challenge to Educational Citizenship Awards that are an annual recognition of school/community service projects. In addition, SSACE selected possible candidates to serve on the State Board of Education for the 2022-2023 school year.

The Arts Committee - Over one hundred and fifty high schools were represented at this year's in-person high school arts banquet. An added announcement was the recipient of the "Heart of the Arts" award given to a student who exemplifies the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of the fine and practical arts. Luke Schwartz, Wilton High School senior, was this year's recipient.

The Look for the Good Project - CSAC continued with its partnership with Anne Kubitsky, CEO and founder of the program "The Look for the Good Project." The "Look for the Good Project" is a research-backed program built around the core belief that gratitude changes everything – especially in schools. The feedback that CAS has received from "The Look for the Good Project" has been sensational. This year we were able to offer a workshop during our January Elementary Leadership Conference. Parents enjoyed the workshops and we hope to have more in the future. We are also hoping to pilot a middle level program in the future.