



2023-24 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 2023-24 was to link activities to 21st century leadership skills, diversity awareness, mental health awareness, student voice, and school climate initiatives. The following is a brief summary of the initiatives and events organized under the auspices of the CSAC this year.

State Student Leadership Conferences

•**Elementary Level Leadership Conferences** - The Elementary Student Leadership conferences were held in person at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield, Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, and Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. All conferences were held in January 2024. We had over 600 students, advisors and administrators in attendance. In addition, we had parent breakout sessions with over 80 parents in attendance. There were impressive student and adult professional presenters who received exceptional reviews from attendees. Students had a great time building leadership skills and community service skills and participating in anti-bullying activities to bring back to their schools.

•**Middle Level Leadership Conference**- The middle level leadership conference was held in person at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. Over 300 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 their schools.

•**High School Level Leadership Conference** - Over 400 high school student leaders, along with their advisors, attended the 2023 High School Leadership Conference in December at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. Students statewide were able to participate in intense leadership training and have fun while doing it! Students engaged in presentations geared toward 21st century skill development and learned a variety of ways to improve collaboration, communication, student voice, action planning, positive sportsmanship with our Class Act program, financial literacy and much more.

•**Men of Color in Leadership Conference** - The Men of Color in Leadership Conference took place on October 25, 2023, and featured leaders from different backgrounds including education, entrepreneurship, medicine and sports. Over 300 middle and high school students and advisors attended the event at Berlin High School. According to attendees, it was a morning of inspiration with dynamic leaders on the panel/breakout sessions motivating them to reach their highest potential.

•**Women in Leadership Conference** - The annual Women in Leadership Conference, held on May 23, 2024, at Berlin High School, 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 200 students and advisers attended. This year's conference included one panel of distinguished women leaders in the fields of education, medicine, law, entrepreneurship, media, construction, and athletics. Student-leaders were also represented on the panel. Student participants will also attend a women's empowerment/networking breakout session with professional leaders.

National Student Leadership Conference – The NFHS National Student Leadership Summit will take place in-person this year from July 22-25. We will be bringing student leaders (CANHS, CASC, SSACE, SAAB, SEAB and Unified Sports) to represent Connecticut.

“Arts in the Middle” - The “Arts in the Middle” Conference will return in March 2025.

National Honors Society Statewide Conference (High School/Middle School Level) - The statewide Connecticut Association of National Honors Societies (CANHS) conference took place on April 30, 2024, at Southern Connecticut State University. Student leaders planned a tremendous conference that included dynamic speakers, an SCSU National Honors Society student panel, and student-lead activities. This year's theme was *Taking Strides in Leadership* and featured keynote speaker Kendrick Moore. Students and advisors left the event following a phenomenal leadership experience.

Connecticut Association of Student Councils Leadership Convention - The CT Association of Student Councils (CASC) Convention took place in person at Woodland Regional High School in Beacon Falls, CT. This student-driven, -planned and -led event was a huge success. There were close to 200 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 advisors.

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" took 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.

Student Athletic Advisory Board - CAS-CIAC's Student Athletic Advisory Board (SAAB) had a great 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 five 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. In addition to the meetings, board members had the opportunity to take action and conduct Class Act training for schools and leagues in the state. The last meeting of the school year took place on May 21, 2024. Students presented their recommendations to schools on continuing to promote positive sportsmanship in schools and increasing and encouraging positive behavior in parents at sporting events.

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 six students from each league and those members develop and implement ideas and action plans to bring back to their respective leagues, schools, and communities. The final presentation from SEAB to educators statewide took place on May 29, 2024.

State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) - The 2023-24 State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) consisted of twenty high school students who met monthly from August 2023-June 2024. SSACE's number one project this year was to produce a presentation for the State Board of Education which centered on two topics: Literacy and Dual Enrollment. 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 2024-2025 school year.

Battle of the Fans Competition - Battle of the Fans is a video-based school spirit competition designed to find the CT high school with the very best examples of spirit and sportsmanship. This year's winner was Newtown High School. Newtown was honored at Mohegan Sun during the 2024 basketball state championships.

High School Dance Championships – The dance state championships were held this year on February 24, 2024, at Hamden High School. With over 50 teams competing, the event ran very smoothly. The coaches, dancers, and families were extremely excited to be a part of the event. Visit <https://casci.ac/10559> for more information.

High School Cheerleading Championships – The cheer state championship was held on March 4, 2023, at Floyd Little Athletic Center in New Haven, CT. Over 80 teams competed. Visit <https://casci.ac/10560> for results and related information.

Esports - Esports continues to take off in the state of Connecticut. With over 45 schools in Connecticut participating, 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 3, 2024. Both the fall and spring season championships were held in-person at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT. Click [here](#) for the 2023-24 championship results. Visit <https://www.playvs.com/connecticut> for more information about esports opportunities in Connecticut.

Robotics - CSAC continued its partnership with NE *FIRST*, an organization that sponsors robotics tournaments for elementary, middle and high school teams. NE *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 took place on May 18, 2024, at Glastonbury High School. Visit <https://www.nefirst.org/nedcmp> for results and related information.

Connecticut Debate Activities

- High School Debate** - High School debaters from schools statewide debated on intriguing topics throughout the school year. For schools, debate topics, results and more, <http://ctdebate.org/>.
- Middle School Debate** - Middle schools debated on intriguing topics throughout the school year. For schools, debate topics, results and more, see the link below. <http://ctmsdebate.org/>.

Thomas Flanagan / CAS-CIAC Endowment Grant Awards – Applications for a 2024 Flanagan grant closed in early June and we are excited to provide funding to schools with up and coming leadership programs.

The Arts Committee - Over one hundred and fifty high schools were represented at this year's in-person Arts Banquet. A feature of the event is the presentation of the "Heart of the Arts" award which is given annually to an individual who exemplifies the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of the fine and practical arts. Christine Manalo, special education music teacher at Bunnell High School, was this year's recipient.

The Look for the Good Project - CSAC continued 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 conferences. Parents enjoyed the workshops and we hope to have more in the future. We are hoping to pilot a middle level program in the future.