

**WILLIAM CIESLUKOWSKI
OUTSTANDING FIRST-YEAR PRINCIPAL AWARD
NOMINATION FORM 2009-2010**

(Deadline for Submission is September 11, 2009)

Name John H. Fidler _____, Principal

School East Hampton Middle School _____

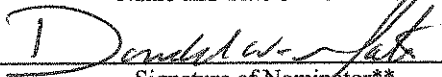
Address 19 Childs Road _____ Town/City East Hampton Zip 06424-1710

Have you confirmed the nominee's school membership in CAS? ☒ Yes ☐ No

1. How has the nominee's instructional leadership, innovative practices, and managerial or organizational skills had a positive impact on the school district this year? (Please attach and limit your answers to a total of six typed pages, double spaced.)
2. Show how the nominee has shown indications of being a risk taker, a visionary, and the ability to overcome adversity. (Please attach)
3. The candidate will submit a resume. (Please attach)
4. Two letters of recommendation. (Please attach)

Donald W. Gates, Interim Assistant Principal

Name and Title of Nominator


Signature of Nominator**

860-365-4060

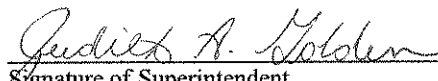
Telephone Number of Nominator

(**If signed by staff members, signature indicates support of the majority of the staff)

ENDORSEMENT BY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Judith A. Golden, Ph.D.

Typed Name of Superintendent


Signature of Superintendent

SEND COMPLETED NOMINATION FORM TO:

*Regina S. Birdsell, Assistant Executive Director
Connecticut Association of Schools
30 Realty Drive
Cheshire, Connecticut 06410*

Outstanding First-Year Principal Award Nomination

Candidate: John Fidler, Principal
East Hampton Middle School
19 Childs Road
East Hampton, CT 06424-1710

#1 How has the nominee's instructional leadership, innovative practices, and managerial or organizational skills had a positive impact on the school district this year?

Prior to being appointed Principal, Mr. John Fidler served the East Hampton School District in the capacity of Middle School Assistant Principal for four years. The Board of Education appointed Mr. Fidler to the Principal's position because of his exemplary performance as a building administrator and the belief that he had the ability to improve instruction at the Middle School resulting in an increase of test scores.

As an interim assistant principal it has been an honor to work with and be associated with John Fidler. When I came on board in September of 2008 it was very clear that the Superintendent of Schools had identified specific focus areas to be addressed during the 2008-09 school year that included faculty and staff evaluation procedures, instructional practices, reading instruction, and school climate.

As Mr. Fidler went about accomplishing these tasks he demonstrated outstanding organizational and leadership skills. He developed appropriate plans to engage faculty and staff in decision making processes that would ensure solid communication and awareness of these focus areas for the school year.

During his first year as Principal, Mr. Fidler has established credibility in the district with his awareness and understanding of community priorities. He has completely changed the school climate of the middle school. East Hampton Middle

School, once negatively perceived, is now regarded as a very positive, engaging school, where a sense of pride exists in the students and families associated with the school. John makes it a point to know each and every student's name. His witty, humorous personality is enjoyed by both, students and staff. He has made East Hampton Middle School a fun place to be.

A formalized teacher evaluation document, which existed but was not adhered to, became the first task at hand. In working with the interim assistant principal, an observation schedule was developed for all non-tenured teachers as well as those tenured teachers "on focus" for the school year. For the first time, instructional objectives were written by all faculty and an evaluation schedule was publicized and adhered to ensuring that every faculty and staff member was in compliance with board policy. Pre and post observation conferences were held and summative evaluation reports were written on every teacher "on focus". Some teachers remarked that it was the first summative evaluation they had received in many years. Teachers not "on focus" submitted written instructional objectives and provided end of year progress reports documenting the degree to which they were successful in fulfilling individual objectives. This whole process set a tone for accountability and, in my opinion, lit a spark under some and brought others together resulting in the majority of the faculty working as a team with leaders to deliver the best instructional program while creating challenging educational opportunities for students.

Instruction for the 2008-09 school year focused on improvement in the areas of language arts and mathematics as well as the use of technology as an instructional tool.

The Middle School Language Arts program was in need of modification. Mr. Fidler recognized the need for change, sought assistance and moved forward with a goal in mind. Common formative assessments were put in place to help drive instruction. Students not meeting goal were monitored closely. Mr. Fidler headed a team which met monthly and collected data used to improve instruction. Recognizing a need for professional development, Mr. Fidler scheduled training sessions and arranged for coverage. Teachers often asked him to come into their classes to view the use of new materials or to celebrate student accomplishments. Mr. Fidler fully appreciated the fact that change is difficult for many and in an effort to have his staff feel comfortable, he offered, on several occasions, to teach classes and to read and evaluate student writing assignments. Change is continuing to occur. Using this year's data, Mr. Fidler has changed the way students will be grouped for instruction next year, providing creative ways to offer more support to the challenged reader.

Mr. Fidler has shown remarkable strength supervising the schools' mathematics program through innovative practices such as daily oral math and common assessments within grade levels. Integration of blue ribbon software (a program that focuses on state math and language arts standards) into the math and language arts programs enhanced student learning. A focus group of special needs students were recipients of an individualized remediation program that resulted in student academic growth. In the area of professional development, Mr. Fidler supports efforts to engage teachers piloting new mathematics programs. To support instruction, Mr. Fidler facilitated the development of a standards based mathematics curriculum.

Creating a positive image of the school in the community and for the students and families receiving services was a major task undertaken by Mr. Fidler. Throughout the year teachers were expected to keep an open line of communication with parents. They were also encouraged to promote some of the creative instructional methods and learning activities that were being employed in the classroom via .press releases, in-house broadcasting, bulletin board displays, engaging parents in learning activities, and displaying photographs of students engaged in learning throughout the school building. Students were recognized for successful academic or athletic accomplishments or for fulfilling personal/professional goals by publicizing their photographs in monthly newsletters sent to parents/townpeople by either the school or the superintendents' office.

Mr. Fidler engaged a faculty committee to work with the interim assistant principal to develop a school mission statement that included academic and community expectations. This was a first for East Hampton Middle School and will be the driving force for all faculty and staff to promote and support a learning environment in which students are challenged to reach their full potential both academically and personally.

During the 2008-09 school year, Mr. Fidler was honored by the Connecticut Music Educator's Association having been named the only principal in Connecticut to be the recipient of the "administrator of the year" award. This honor is bestowed upon an administrator who contributes above and beyond expectations to support music education and co-curricular activities.

#2 Show how the nominee has shown indications of being a risk taker, a visionary, and the ability to overcome adversity.

John Fidler is a cancer survivor! When he began his administrative career as an assistant principal at East Hampton Middle School five years ago, he was diagnosed with cancer. Throughout the course of his treatment his first priority continued to be the students, the school and the community. He reported to work regularly (often with a chemo bag on his hip) demonstrating his commitment and love for the well being of every student enrolled in his school.

As a risk taker and visionary, Mr. Fidler has recognized the need to create academic support opportunities beyond the school day for students experiencing academic difficulties even when funding for education was in crisis. He developed an after-school homework club that included providing bus transportation. Funding for this program covered teacher stipends, student snacks and transportation and was derived from fundraising activities (90%) and registration fees (10%). There was no funding provided by the Board of Education.

He worked with teachers to develop and implement a block schedule that will be piloted during the 2009-10 school year. East Hampton Middle School is one of only a very few middle schools in Connecticut that will employ a block schedule at the middle school level.

Mr. Fidler is a compassionate, creative, instructional leader and risk taker who recognizes the need for change in order to improve instructional delivery and afford teachers the opportunity to incorporate a variety of methodologies that will motivate and challenge students. After only one year and significant work with teachers on the teaching of reading and reading across the curriculum, positive results have already been

noted both in school climate and the newly released CMT scores which show growth in most areas. In eighth grade, there were 13 to 15 percentage point gains in all areas of students who met goal. There is much for this faculty to be proud of under Mr. Fidler's leadership and there is no doubt in anyone's mind that this kind of positive results in student achievement will continue.

John Fidler
4 Brookside Court
East Hampton, Connecticut 06424
Home (860) 267-7301
Cell (860) 707-5041

Objective: To utilize my administrative experience in leading a school system to move forward while continuing to grow personally and professionally.

Education: University of Connecticut

June 2000	Sixth year diploma.	Major: Educational Administration.
Dec. 1986	M.A. degree.	Major: Education.
May 1980	B.S. degree.	Major: Special Education

Experience:

July 2008	<i>Principal at East Hampton Middle School, East Hampton, CT</i>
To	Performed all duties required by the position including hiring faculty and staff, evaluating faculty and staff, developing and leading professional growth activities, developing and implementing school improvement plan, scheduling of staff and students, collaborating on student discipline, overseeing building activities and events, and maintaining ongoing communication with the community and outside agencies.
Present	

July 2004	<i>Assistant Principal at East Hampton Middle School, East Hampton, CT</i>
To	Performed all duties required by the position including scheduling of staff and students, overseeing student discipline, chairing PPT and 504 meetings, hiring faculty and staff, evaluating faculty and staff, developing professional growth activities, overseeing building activities and events, and maintaining ongoing communication with the community and outside agencies.
June 2008	

Sept. 2001	<i>Support Services Team Leader at East Hampton High School, East Hampton, CT.</i>
To	Coordinated student scheduling, teacher responsibilities, and student evaluation within the support services department. Maintained ongoing communication with parents, faculty, administration, outside agencies, and students wherever support services concerns arose. Ensured that timelines and mandates were followed.
June 2004	

Sept. 1999	<i>Athletic Director, East Hampton High School, East Hampton, CT.</i>
To	Supervised and administered the high school interscholastic athletic program. Prepared budgets, ordered equipment, scheduled games, transportation, and officials, participated in the hiring, supervision, and evaluation of coaches, maintained ongoing communication with parents, faculty, administration, athletic directors, coaches and students.
June 2004	

- Sept. 1990
To
June 2004 *Support Services Teacher at East Hampton High School, East Hampton, CT. Taught self-contained and collaborative classes. Administered achievement testing and completed educational evaluations. Chaired planning and placement team meetings. Additional responsibilities included coaching at the middle school and high school junior varsity and varsity levels, fulfilling the role of student council advisor and fulfilling the role of class advisor.*
- Sept. 1989
To
June 1990 *Support Services Teacher at Tolland Middle School, Tolland, CT. Taught students in a resource room setting. Instructed students in academic areas. Implemented behavior management systems. Consulted with regular education teachers on a weekly basis regarding academic support.*
- Dec. 1985
To
July 1989 *Clinical educator at Elmcrest Hospital, Portland, CT. Worked with middle school and high school students in a residential setting. Instructed students in math and science. Implemented behavioral systems. Participated in group meetings dealing with adolescent issues. Additional responsibilities included serving as head teacher overseeing teams of three and four teachers, doing liaison work with sending towns, completing diagnostic testing, and starting up the education program for a new adolescent drug and alcohol treatment center.*
- Sept. 1981
To
June 1985 *Support Services Teacher at EASTCONN Vocational Program, Danielson, CT. Instructed emotionally disturbed and learning disabled students in academic and life skill areas. Implemented behavioral systems. Held head teacher position from fall 1982 to spring 1985.*
- Sept. 1980
To
June 1981 *Support Services Teacher at CREC Alternative Vocational School, East Hartford, CT. Instructed students in academic and life skill areas. Implemented behavioral systems and participated in planning and placement team meetings.*

**EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

94 Main Street
East Hampton, Connecticut 06424-1119
TELEPHONE (860) 365-4000
FAX (860) 365-4004

JUDITH A. GOLDEN, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

BRIAN S. REAS
Director of Support Services

KEVIN M. REICH
Assistant Superintendent

KAREN HITCHCOCK ASETTA
Finance Director

September 1, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of recommendation for Mr. John Fidler to be nominated as First Year Principal of the Year for the 2008-09 school year. Mr. Fidler has just completed his first year after serving for four years as assistant principal of East Hampton Middle School. It is especially noteworthy that I asked the Board to approve the appointment of Mr. Fidler to the position of principal of the school without conducting a search not for the convenience but because I believed that he had the skills and abilities to be an outstanding leader in the school. The Board approved this request with great enthusiasm, an indication of his standing in the school and larger community.

Mr. Fidler is a quiet and reflective professional who contributes thoughtfully to all of the work we are doing together as an administrative team. During my first summer two years ago, we held the first retreat the administrative team had attended. Mr. Fidler worked with another administrator as a team in developing ways to create urgency among staff in our district and the data to support that sense of urgency. He did an excellent job with his partner, combining thoughtful data with humor and engaging his colleagues in the activity. I was and continue to be impressed with his ability to think creatively about a range of problems and to offer solutions to those problems. He is always open to and invites constructive feedback and is reflective of and responsive to any feedback he gets from me or from his other colleagues and staff.

Mr. Fidler is highly engaged in the community and is respected and well-liked by all who know him. He runs sports activities outside of school and knows the community well. This is of great assistance to him as the principal in providing insight into and intervention for students who come through the middle school. He has tremendously positive relationships with students and their parents. One of the charges I gave to Mr. Fidler was to understand and change the perception of the middle school as non-responsive to parents. In one year, I have heard from many parents about the positive change they see in the school and complimenting the Board and me on our choice of principal. He accomplished this by being accessible to parents, calm and responsive when dealing with conflict, and visible in classrooms, around the school, athletic events, and other activities at all times.

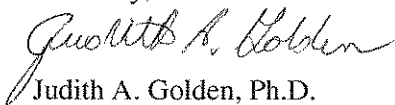
When I met with Mr. Fidler that first summer, he told me that when he had entered the assistant principal position he had a preconceived notion of what that position was like and that his view of the position had been very traditional. However, he quickly came to realize that the instructional

and leadership aspects of being an administrator are of great importance and he had taken advantage of many opportunities to grow in those directions. The reading across the content area initiative is one in which he took leadership as an area of emphasis with teachers. In addition, he has shown great interest in the work we are doing district-wide in developing into a true Professional Learning Community. He has studied the book, *Whatever It Takes* by Rick and Becky Dufour with the administrative team and is working with staff to begin to analyze data and work collaboratively to develop common assessments. His dedication to his own professional growth and development is an example to the staff and to his fellow administrators.

Mr. Fidler and I conducted walk through observations throughout the first year. These gave us a series of snapshots of instruction which allowed him to begin to see the instructional practice in his school and where the areas of strength and weakness were. He asked many questions during our times together. This is one of Mr. Fidler's greatest strengths. His ability to ask questions and his persistence in questioning until he could see the solution serves him well. He faced head on a need to address student achievement in his school particularly for special education students. Mr. Fidler has done an outstanding job of leading the reading initiative which was implemented this past year. The Middle School staff have great respect for him as a person and as a leader and were willing to accept that they needed to make significant instructional changes. Just as he created a sense of urgency by using data for the administrative team, so he did for his staff. The improvement in the CMT scores this year, particularly in grade 8, was an impressive feat for the school. He also realized that because lack of time was the greatest impediment to having his teachers work in teams that the schedule needed to change. This year under his leadership, the middle school will work in a modified block schedule. They are very enthusiastic about this change and about the way in which Mr. Fidler made it happen with them last year so that they can continue their collaborative work as a professional learning community. In East Hampton, the words, professional learning community are not buzz words. Mr. Fidler took the importance of the real work of professional learning communities seriously and has worked diligently to assist his staff in acquiring data, finding time to examine that data, developing common assessments and discussing changes in instruction. For a first year principal to take on and lead successfully such significant changes is indeed noteworthy.

Mr. Fidler is a genuinely kind and compassionate person who I have come to respect, like and admire a great deal in the time we have worked together. As the superintendent I can say with great certainty that we are very fortunate to have him as the principal of our middle school and a member of our administrative team. I highly recommend him to you as the most worthy candidate for First Year Principal of the Year award and hope you will not hesitate to contact me if you should need further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Judith A. Golden".

Judith A. Golden, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

**EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

94 Main Street
East Hampton, Connecticut 06424-1119
TELEPHONE (860) 365-4000
FAX (860) 365-4004

JUDITH A. GOLDEN, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

KEVIN M. REICH
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

BRIAN S. REAS
Director of Support Services

KAREN HITCHCOCK ASETTA
Business Coordinator

August 31, 2009

First Year Principal of the Year - Selection Committee
Connecticut Association of Schools

Committee Members,

It is with a great deal of enthusiasm that I, Michael Vasquenza - Chairman of the East Hampton Board of Education, submit this letter of recommendation for Mr. John Fidler, Principal – East Hampton Middle School, who has been nominated as First Year Principal of the Year for CAS (Connecticut Association of Schools). This recommendation incorporates a wide breadth of my experiences with Mr. Fidler. John and I are the same age, have lived in East Hampton the same number of years (23), we each have 2 boys of about the same ages (with our eldest's now being Freshman at the University of Connecticut), we are active in many aspects of East Hampton community organizations outside of school, are best of friends, and have both gone through recent personal challenges in dealing with Cancer. With that background it is obvious this is not an unbiased recommendation, but one I would argue that provides the kind of real perspective that your committee is more than likely seeking.

In my view a Middle School Principal is among the most difficult positions in a school district. I would submit those difficulties are even more so when you live in that school community. John, from day one, has fostered a leadership style of open communication, fairness and consistency. This has allowed him to be receptive to dialogue and compromise, yet at the same time not compromise his high professional standards and previous decisions.

Over the years John held many positions in the East Hampton school system, and it is not a coincidence that when our Middle School Principal position became available and John expressed his interest, the Board of Education waived the selection process and unanimously appointed John. We as a Board knew what we wanted and knew what we had, not the most common occurrences for Boards of Education. But were we proved out to be right! Under previous leadership the Middle School, rightly or wrongly, was viewed as "not that user friendly". John immediately transformed that image into one where parents of Middle School students (for which I am one) are fully engaged and welcome in

any and all activities, and most importantly made to feel like participants in their child's education.

In summary, I am sure your job is not easy. Clearly there are many educators in Connecticut worthy of this award and your organizations recognition. Yet knowing firsthand the education environment in the East Hampton Middle School, and this person, John Fidler, I can guarantee there are no educators more worthy.

Good Luck with your selection process and thank you in advance for this opportunity to speak to an outstanding educator and a dear friend, Mr. John Fidler.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Vasquenza', written in a cursive style.

Michael Vasquenza – Chairmen,
East Hampton Board of Education