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Connecticut Association of Schools Proclaims October “Month of the Young Adolescent”

In an assembly program / media event attended by middle level educators and media representatives on October 2, 2008 at Canton Middle School, Earle Bidwell, assistant executive director of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), and Norma-Jean Posocco, CAS Honors and Awards Committee chairperson and distinguished teacher from Mansfield Middle School, officially announced that October has been designated as the *Month of the Young Adolescent (MOYA)* in Connecticut. Canton Middle School is the 2008-2009 Connecticut Association of Schools' Middle School of the Year.

Initiated by the National Middle School Association (NMSA) and endorsed by and more than forty national organizations focusing on youth, MOYA is intended to bring attention to the unique needs of young adolescents. In his landmark book, *“Understanding and Appreciating the Wonder Years,”* John H. Lounsbury states, “No other age level is of more importance to the future of individuals, and, literally, to that of society; because these are the years when youngsters crystallize their beliefs about themselves and firm up their self-concepts, their philosophies of life and their values - the things that are the ultimate determinants of their behaviors.” Because young adolescents experience more physical, mental and social emotional growth than at any other time in their lives except infancy, educational curriculum, organization for instruction and school climate all need to be geared to their unique needs.

The literature on middle level schools shows a preponderance of evidence that exemplary schools, those with high achieving, well adjusted, happy students have:

- Standards based curricula that is relevant, challenging, integrative and exploratory
- Delivery of instruction that is varied, challenging and age appropriate, which recognizes that all children can achieve at high levels
- Educators that are specifically trained to recognize and teach the unique characteristics of young adolescents
- Organizational arrangements that allow for flexible scheduling, adult advocates for all students and participatory governance involving administrators, teachers and students
- Safe and healthy school environments
- Parental and community support.

During the *Month of the Young Adolescent*, Connecticut middle level educators will join their colleagues from around the world in providing parents and other adults with information on how they can support the natural maturation process of ten to fifteen year olds, including educational, health and social development.

CAS is proud to join the National Middle School Association in recognizing October as the “Month of the Young Adolescent” in Connecticut.

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