



THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

CAS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RECEPTION | MAY 11, 2023

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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Dr. Glenn Lungarini

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- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Federation of State High School Associations
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- New England League of Middle Schools

30 Realty Drive
Cheshire, CT 06410
Phone: (203)250-1111
FAX: (203)250-1345
www.casciac.org

As we prepare for the last month of school and all the culminating activities, it's a good time to reflect and appreciate all the good work that has been done. For the Connecticut Association of Schools, the list is long and impactful. Today, I would like to take a moment to highlight just some of these accomplishments.

Before I do that, I would like to share a tradition from my home school. At the elementary level, we love books. We especially love picture books and particularly books that teach a lesson or set a theme. Each summer, I look for inspiring children's books to share with staff. Once I've selected a book, I close our opening staff meeting with a read-aloud, connecting it to the year ahead. When teachers return to their rooms there is a copy waiting for them.

So, for today, I wanted to find a book that captured the challenges CAS-CIAC, along with each of us, have had to contend with in recent years. A book that spoke to resilience, problem-solving, and optimism. The book I chose is "What If," by Samantha Berger, and if you would indulge me I would like to share it with you now.

Both in our schools and at CAS we have had to contend with many "What Ifs" in recent years. We have all had to find answers to unprecedented questions and create opportunities out of our greatest challenges. As CAS President and a member of the CAS Executive Board, I feel CAS has done an exemplary job in this regard. To meet these distinct challenges, CAS, guided by Executive Director Glenn Lungarini's, fearless trial-by-fire leadership, and Deputy Executive Director Karen Packtor's endless optimism and organizational knowledge, not only weathered the storm but grew and expanded services.

When reflecting specifically on the past twelve months it didn't take long for the new year to present CAS with a new laundry list of "What Ifs" to contend. Here are just a few highlights:

- This year saw, CAS-CIAC's decision-making process legislatively challenged. In response, CAS-CIAC turned the challenge into an opportunity by gathering leaders from key boards and partner organizations to host a symposium. Speaking in turn, school leaders provided legislators with not only insight into their member-led decision-making practices but also a comprehensive overview of the association's mission, purpose, and operation. The presentation was well received, effectively putting the inquiry to rest while building additional ties and support with state lawmakers.

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- This year saw the dynamic duo of Dr. Alicia Bowman and Tiffany Caouette join the team, leading the professional services division, and helping facilitate the return to fully in-person events for all major banquets and conferences for the first time in three years.
- Likewise, taking full advantage of the opportunity to return to in-person programming, Chereese Miller and Henry Rondon's student boards - the Student Equity Advisory Board, Student Athletic Advisory Board, and the State Student Advisory Council on Education - continued to bring student voice to bear on key issues.
- Additionally, CAS saw the Men of Color in Leadership conferences expand with over 300 young men attending the fall event.
- In response to principals' demand for professional development focused on mental health, CAS brought back its annual administrators' conference after a 4-year hiatus. The retreat drew a sold-out crowd.
- In response to supporting the principal pipeline, CAS grew participation in their leadership academies, engaging participants in leadership projects to apply their learning while also advancing the work of the district.
- CAS worked with an early childhood expert to secure a grant from the LEGO Foundation to promote purposeful play programs across the state.
- The newly expanded Early Childhood Committee collaborated with CEA and other stakeholder groups to push legislation requiring play-based learning during instructional time in pre-K and kindergarten.
- This year Connecticut had its second National Principal of the Year, former CAS president and current principal of Haddam-Killingworth High School, Donna Hayward.
- CAS-CIAC rebuilt its legacy systems and updated its website design.
- An ad hoc committee of middle-level principals, athletic directors, and sports specialists completed a revision of the CIAC Guidelines for Middle School Athletic Programs, which had not been revised in over a decade.
- To meet the challenge of finding affordable and available sites for championship games, CIAC significantly expanded its use of college sites.

True to the message in Samantha Berger's book, "What If," CAS has had to be creative, responsive, and incredibly resilient in recent years. Additionally, like each of you, CAS overcame its many challenges to provide the educational leaders and the students we serve with cutting-edge resources, professional development, advocacy, and opportunity. As a result, 2022-23 has been an outstanding year for CAS and the future is bright. It's been my honor to serve as CAS President for the 2022-23 school year and to have the chance to share with you today.