



Student ACTIVITIES 2025-2026



CAS Student Activities is pleased to present our line-up of programs for the 2025-2026 school year.

Our activity series is grounded in the research from 21st century skills that participation in co-curricular activities increases academic achievement, improves communication skills, and helps students make better life decisions.

Please review these offerings and select some quality activities to link your work with ours!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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CAS-CIAC STUDENT ACTIVITIES PARTNERS



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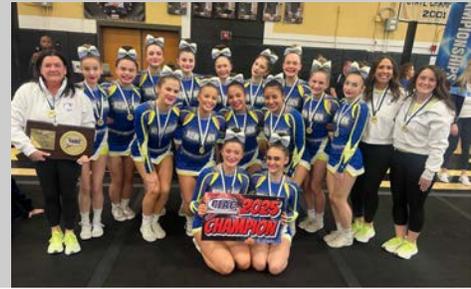


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TBA - CHEER JUDGES SCORESHEET AND INFORMATIONAL SESSION

Cheer judges are encouraged to attend the judges' scoresheet informational session. (CAS Office - 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT). Judges will become familiar with the score sheet, and will review NFHS Spirit Rules, CT Cheer Competitions, CT Championship Guidelines, as well as judging and scoring procedures.

Inquires to Sherrie Zembrzusi at missz14@sbcglobal.net.



CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONS TBA

SEPT-JUNE: STATE STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (SSACE)

In 1998, the CT State Legislature created the State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) to give Connecticut students a voice in education planning and enable the state board of education, the commissioner of education, state department of education personnel, the governor, and state legislators to become familiar with high school students' perspectives on key issues. SSACE meets regularly with CAS director of student activities, the education commissioner, and on occasion with the Governor, to reflect student opinion on matters of concern to the state's high schools. The Council meets ten times per year. Members write position papers on important topics in education; conduct the statewide Challenge to Educational Citizenship Awards Program; and, through their discussions and activities, learn from each other about citizenship, leadership, and responsibility.

For the past 24 years, SSACE has dedicated monthly meetings to influencing legislation and adapting it to the changing needs of Connecticut students. It has conducted action research recommendations on critical topics such as reducing the achievement gap, reforming standardized testing, teacher diversity in schools, how to cultivate an interest in teaching in Connecticut, and instituting programs promoting health and wellness.

The monthly meetings for this school year are August 21, October 17, November 14, December 12, February 6, March 6, April 3, & May 22.

Applications for selections were sent to principals in May. For more information contact Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.



SEPT 25: PRESIDENT'S SYMPOSIUM

The President's Symposium serves as a launchpad for upcoming CASC activities and opportunities. This year's Symposium will be at the **Old State House in Hartford** and open to advisors and all high school and middle school student council/government leadership team members.

For more information please contact Christopher Tomlin at ctomlin@casciac.org.



SEPT-MAY: STUDENT EMPOWERMENT ADVISORY BOARD (SEAB)

CAS-CIAC is excited to continue the Student Empowerment Advisory Board this year. The SEAB helps bring awareness to inequity in Connecticut schools and collaborate on ways to enhance inclusion in schools for all students. Students will also develop and implement ideas and action plans to bring back to their respective leagues, schools, and communities.

Student Empowerment Advisory Board Meeting Dates:
Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10, Feb. 11, Mar. 11, Apr. 1, May 20, May 27 (Final Presentations).

Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org or Henry Rondon at hronon@casciac.org.



SEPT-APRIL: ESPORTS

Esports is the world of competitive, organized video gaming. Competitors from different teams face off in various games. Esports is a great way for students to build character, collaboration, community and respect, all while competing in fun and safe video games, monitored by coaches.

For more information on Esports please contact Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org, PlayVS name: connecticut@playvs.com or follow this link: <https://playvs.com/connecticut>



ESPORTS FALL CHAMPIONSHIPS TBA

SEPT 25: HIGH SCHOOL DANCE COACHES CLINIC

Dance coaches will meet at Hamden High School to review NFHS Sprit rules, CT Dance Competitions, CT State Championship guidelines, and judging and scoring procedures. Both new and veteran coaches will have a unique opportunity to have questions answered from the CAS Dance Committee which will prove to be invaluable.

Inquiries to Kathy Swillinger at kscoach32@gmail.com or Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.



DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS FEB. 28TH



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OCT-MAR: HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE

The Connecticut Debate Association (CDA) is the premier high school debate league in Connecticut. CDA has sponsored a regular program of competition for over 30 years.

Our debate format is cross-examination policy debate, but we change the resolution for each tournament and limit research so we have more in common with parliamentary debate at the high school and college level. The CDA season begins with a novice scrimmage in September to introduce new debaters to the format. We follow with tournaments one Saturday each month from October through March, followed by a state finals championship tournament. Debaters qualify for state finals by their performance at the monthly tournaments.

With as many as 500 debaters participating in some months, we run tournaments at two or three schools on each date to provide space for all, and, with luck, reduce travel time. Each tournament has a varsity and novice division to accommodate different levels of skill and experience.

Inquiries to Everett Rutan, Executive Director, at ejrutan3@ctdebate.org.



OCT-APR: MIDDLE SCHOOL DEBATE

The Connecticut Middle School Debate League (CTMSDL) is an organization that hosts competitive interscholastic parliamentary debate tournaments for middle school-aged students throughout Connecticut during the academic year. The year begins with a scrimmage in the early fall and continues with three tournaments throughout the year at host schools.

Middle school debate is the fastest growing student activity in CT! The CTMSDL follows the Middle School Public Debate Program (MSPDP) format begun in 2002 in Southern California. Motions to be debated are released weeks ahead of scrimmages and tournaments. On competition days, teams of three debate on both the proposition and opposition sides of the motion. High School debaters serve as judges whenever possible.

Inquiries to Jen Posner, Executive Director at jen.posner@ctmsdebate.org.



OCT-JUNE: STUDENT ATHLETE ADVISORY BOARD (SAAB)

CAS-CIAC is excited to announce the 5th year of the Student Athletic Advisory Board. Class Act schools will continue to be able to have a statewide advisory board of students to promote good sportsmanship within their leagues and to address other issues regarding athletics.

In addition, students will be able to share highlights within their leagues so that they can learn from each other and take great ideas back to their leagues. Students will continue to have a voice to educate and promote respect, teamwork, and character in all of our Class Act schools and beyond.

This year's SAAB meetings are scheduled on Aug. 20th, Sept. 30, Dec. 2, Feb. 3, Apr. TBA, & May 19.

Inquires and selections to Chereese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org



OCT 20: STUDENT EMPOWERMENT DAY

Join Connecticut students for an experience featuring inspiring panel discussions from the Men of Color in Leadership & Women in Leadership tracks, alongside interactive breakout sessions designed to amplify student voices and develop leadership skills rooted in identity and purpose.

This event delivers more than motivation—it empowers youth with tools, confidence, and community to create meaningful change in their schools and communities.

2 GREAT EVENTS | 1 POWERFUL DAY

CAS **CAS-CIAC** **STUDENT EMPOWERMENT DAY** **CIAC**

WED OCT 30 | 9-11:30 AM | BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL
MEN OF COLOR IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

WED OCT 30 | 9-11:30 AM | BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL
WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
 MAY 27, 2025 9:00-11:30AM

EMPOWER MINDS | IGNITE JOY

10 | 20 | 25
 8:30AM - 1:00PM
 FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
FREE FOR CAS MEMBER SCHOOLS

REGISTRATION

<https://casci.ac/11958>



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DEADLINE DEC 2: HEART OF THE ARTS

The NFHS has developed its "National High School Heart of the Arts Award," which will be conferred to eight section winners as well as one national winner. The recipient must be an individual from a high school that is a member of an NFHS-member athletic or activity association.

The CAS-CIAC state recipient can be any student, adult or group associated with the school's performing arts program. This award, which is similar to the Spirit of Sport Award, covers a plethora of performing arts disciplines: Music, Speech, Debate, Theatre, Visual Arts and other performing arts activities that state associations may sponsor.



<https://casci.ac/11978>



This award seeks to recognize those individuals who exemplify the ideals of the positive heart of the arts that represent the core mission of education-based activities. The award may be given in recognition of a specific act or for an activity of longer duration.

For example, it could be awarded to an individual (or group) that:

- has demonstrated exemplary "heart," sportsmanship and/or citizenship
- has exceeded normal expectations in assisting others within the school or community; or
- has overcome adversity or a challenging circumstance.

Inquires and selections to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.

DEC 5: HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

High school student leaders and their advisers will convene at **Southern Connecticut State University** for a full day of intensive leadership training. This student organized conference will include sessions that center on collaboration, communication, diversity awareness, problem solving, and mental health awareness, all tailored to bring out the student's unique talents and leadership skills to the fullest.

Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org



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DEC 16: MOCK LEGISLATIVE SESSION DAY

Mock Legislative Session Day at the Capitol building in Hartford is an opportunity for high school student council/government members from across Connecticut to work with the Connecticut General Assembly staff and legislators, to learn how a bill becomes a law. Students will experience the committee and public hearing process, bill analysis, fiscal analysis, and the process of putting a bill's intentions into legal language, in preparation for Mock Session where students will debate their mock legislation on the House Floor.

For more information please contact Christopher Tomlin at ctomlin@casciac.org.



JAN TBA: MENTAL HEALTH NIGHT

Join us for an engaging **VIRTUAL EVENT** designed to enhance mental health awareness and well-being through two dynamic sessions.

This workshop provides practical tools for improving mental health and contributes to a larger conversation on youth well-being.

Some of the session features:

- A 20-minute keynote address
- A breakout module where participants can choose from three interactive options. For example, "How to Host an Exam Party," "Meditation Mayhem," or "5 Words – Practicing Self Awareness and Gratitude."
- A second session offers another 20-minute breakout module with options including "How to Balance School and Life," "How to Set up Zen Spaces at School and Home," and "Introducing... Youth Peer Support!"
- Concludes with a 20-minute "Mental Health Huddle," a group discussion focused on brainstorming new mental health projects for inclusion in the Mental Health Handbook.



JANUARY 2025: ELEMENTARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

These annual conferences provide students in grades 4-6 with a unique opportunity to develop leadership skills. Participants will be engaged in hands-on activities designed to foster 21st century leadership skills. The four strands are: creative problem solving, communication, decision making, and productive thinking.

Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.

1

NAUGATUCK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WATERBURY



January 7, 2026
Snow Date: January 8th
<https://casciac.org/12242>

2

EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY WILLIMANTIC

January 9, 2026
Snow Date: TBD
<https://casciac.org/12244>



3

ASNUNTUCK STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENFIELD



January 12, 2026
Snow Date: January 15th
<https://casciac.org/12245>

4

HOUSATONIC STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BRIDGEPORT

January 13, 2026
Snow Date: January 14th
<https://casciac.org/12246>



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JAN 16: MIDDLE LEVEL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

This annual conference will demonstrate the use of multiple-talent approaches to help middle level learners develop four important leadership skills – productive thinking, communication, creative problem solving and decision making. The breakout sessions will be led by top notch teachers, counselors, high school students and administrators.

Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org. Registration Link: <https://casciac.org/12403>



2025-2026: "BATTLE OF THE FANS" SHORT VIDEO CONTEST

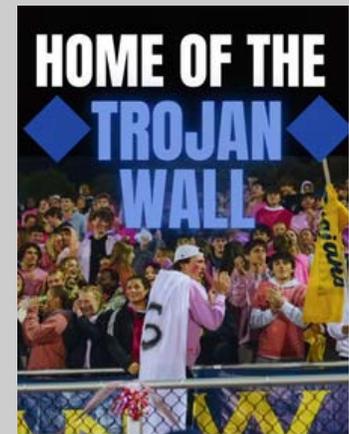
CONTEST DEADLINE JANUARY 24, 2026

Does your high school's student section demonstrate the best mix of spirit, creativity, and sportsmanship? CAS Student Activities and CIAC invite you to produce a TikTok video or Instagram Reel, which displays positive fan behavior, school spirit, and a "Class Act" overall approach to the value of education-based school athletic programs.

It's never too early to start collecting video footage from fall sports to pep rallies to other service related initiatives leading up to and throughout the winter athletic season.

Please note: Videos need to be submitted by January 24, 2026. The winner will be recognized at the CIAC Basketball State Championships in March, 2026, at Mohegan Sun Arena.

Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org or John Holt at jholt@casciac.org.



Click on the image or scan the QR code to view Simsbury High School's winning video. <https://casciac.org/11979>



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FEB TBA: CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETIES (CANHS) ADVISER CONFERENCE

The annual CANHS advisers conference provides new NHS and NJHS advisers with support and guidance to navigate the challenges of overseeing a new or existing chapter at their school. The conference will review CANHS information, as well as process for selecting faculty advisors, electing student officers, completing community service hours, and hosting inductions.

This annual conference is an ideal opportunity for NHS/NJHS student members, faculty council members and advisers to come together to create enthusiasm for scholarship, stimulate a desire to render service locally, and enhance and promote leadership activities while focusing on student character building strategies.



For more information please contact Dr. Nadine Mills at nmills@casciac.org.



MARCH 18: "ARTS IN THE MIDDLE" HANDS-ON ART WORKSHOP FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

"Arts In The Middle" is an all-day conference for outstanding art students. Connecticut middle schools are invited to send art students and an art teacher to the annual "Arts in the Middle" conference, sponsored by the University of Hartford School of Arts.

The event features hands-on workshops taught by practicing artists from around the state. The goals of the program are to: give statewide visibility to the fine arts; promote the arts among middle level students; provide opportunities for art students from diverse backgrounds to work together; offer middle level art students a high caliber artistic challenge; and, give art teachers an opportunity to create their own works of art.

Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.



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MAR 6: CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS (CASC) ANNUAL CONVENTION, NORWICH FREE ACADEMY

Join student leaders and advisors from across the state for a day of learning, inspiration, sharing, leadership and fun. During the day, student leaders and advisors will have the opportunity to hear motivational speakers, attend large and small workshops, resolution sessions, as well as participate in a convention-wide service project.

This convention is unique in that it offers opportunities to authentically explore leadership and the democratic principles of our American government through council/government sponsored workshops and resolutions.

For more information contact Christopher Tomlin at ctomlin@casciac.org.



MAR-APR: CAS-CIAC ENDOWMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Through the generosity of our partners, the CAS-CIAC Endowment and Flanagan Grant Program is able to annually provide grants to new or existing projects that meet the endowment's and fund's requirements and would not otherwise be afforded by CAS member schools. In order to ensure the best use of funding, programs must be sustainable through future Board of Education budgets, have a broad and far-reaching impact, and address a need within the school, district, and/or athletic league. Awards made by the CAS-CIAC Endowment and Flanagan Grant Program may be used to expand existing programs in new and innovative ways, or develop other worthy projects or programs. Member schools may look for the annual RFP in late February for the highly competitive application process.

Inquiries to Chereese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.



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MARCH 7TH: BOWLING CHAMPIONSHIPS -

Strike up excitement for the 2026 CIAC Bowling State Championships at Callahan's Bowl-o-Rama in Newington! As we roll into the 13th annual tournament this March, there's never been a better time for your school to join the ranks of Connecticut's finest high school bowlers. This prestigious event is the pinnacle of competition, bringing together the best and brightest young talents from across the state. With more schools participating than ever before, the future of bowling in Connecticut is shining brighter each year. Encourage your students to take part in local leagues and high school tournaments to hone their skills and experience the thrill of the lanes. Don't miss out on the chance to be part of this exciting tradition—let's make 2026 our most memorable championship yet!



MAY 17: HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS CHAMPIONSHIP

The annual CAS/NE FIRST Robotics State Championship is the ultimate "Sport of the Mind" where imagination and innovation come together as over 20 high schools will vie for the coveted state championship. By combining the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology, teams are challenged to design and build a robot to perform specific tasks against a field of competitors. It is taking place at Glastonbury High School. Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.

2025 ONLINE PROGRAM

<https://casciac.org/11981>



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MAY 20: STUDENT COUNCIL "ADVENTURES IN LEADERSHIP" CONFERENCE

This annual conference at Winding Trails in Farmington, is an ideal opportunity for Student Council Members and advisers to get together to build adventure and excitement for the CT Association of Student Councils, create community service action plans, and enhance and promote leadership activities while focusing on student character building strategies.



Inquiries to Christopher Tomlin at ctomlin@casciac.org or to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.



MAY 30-31: FLAG FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

CAS-CIAC was excited to introduce Girl's Flag Football as a CIAC Activity in 2025, and in year one, ten teams came together to compete for the first ever state championship. Flag football has become extremely popular in states across the country, and the CIAC is invested in growing the sport in the state of Connecticut. Categorized as a CIAC activity rather than sport, student athletes can participate for their school's flag football team *while also playing a spring sport*.

Flag football offers a great opportunity for young girls to remain active, learn the values of teamwork, and a chance to compete in one of the most rapidly growing sports in the U.S. We see the value in what flag football brings to schools and student athletes in our state, and it is our goal to continue to increase awareness and participation every year moving forward.

Competitions will take place during the spring season, with a state champion crowned at the end of May/early June. The state tournament and championship dates are TBD.

For more information or if you have any questions regarding girl's flag football, please contact Corey Plasky at cplasky@casciac.org or Henry Rondon at hrondon@casciac.org.



MANCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL
CHAMPION



EAST WINDSOR HIGH SCHOOL
RUNNER-UP



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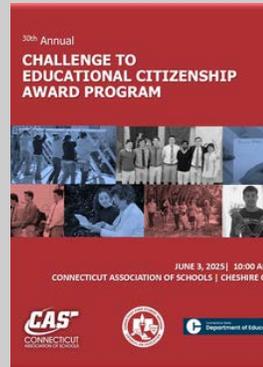
JUNE 2: CHALLENGE TO EDUCATIONAL CITIZENSHIP AWARD CEREMONY

The State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) is pleased to offer schools throughout CT the opportunity to apply for recognition in the annual Challenge to Educational Citizenship Award program.

This program was the “brain child” of the 1996 edition of SSACE as a way of promoting citizenship through co-curricular programs. The recipients embody the spirit of citizenship and commitment to serving others, as well as altruism. Submitted projects are judged by the high school student members of the council. The submissions are evaluated on the basis of the depth, breadth, and quality of impact on others in the school community.

Applications will be sent out to school principals at the end of February. The deadline is April 28, 2024.

Inquiries to Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.



JULY TBA: NATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT, INDIANAPOLIS, IN



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

Each year CAS-CIAC offers a unique opportunity for students within our membership groups to apply to go on an all expense paid leadership trip to the National Student Leadership Summit (NSLS) in Indiana. This 3-day, intensive student leadership initiative is one of the most rewarding opportunities a student can experience. The NSLS will focus on relevant and contemporary issues. Students will hone their leadership skills and realize the privilege and power of their influence in their school, community and state.

For more information please contact Cherese Odukwe at codukwe@casciac.org.



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CONNECTICUT PERFORMING ARTS K-12

The Performing Arts Committee is dedicated to supporting Connecticut music, theater, and dance programming. We aim to provide administrators with a central point of access for high quality arts resources, critical information and program support through collaboration with other state and national arts organizations. We strive to create and promote equitable and equal arts access for all Connecticut K-12 students and educators.

The Committee is currently working on new resources and guidance for Connecticut School Leaders specific to arts scheduling, leadership roles and important safety and training specific to K-12 Arts programming.

We are currently working to spread awareness to school leaders about tremendous resources and guidance developed by the NHFS for school arts programs.



<https://casci.ac/12031>



Thank You

CAS STUDENT ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE BOARD MEMBERS FOR YOUR HARD WORK, DEDICATION AND INSPIRATION!

KRISTIN BERNIER - THOMASTON CENTER SCHOOL - CHAIR
JARRID CLIFTON - TIMOTHY EDWARDS MIDDLE SCHOOL, SOUTH WINDSOR
RUSSELL CRIST - FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, FARMINGTON
JENNIFER DERAGON - GEORGE HERSEY ROBERTSON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL, COVENTRY
LAURA DIXON - JOHN BARRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MERIDEN
DAVIS FRIEDMAN - H.C. WILCOX TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL, MERIDEN
CHERYL GONZALEZ - STRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL, DURHAM
KIMBERLY MONROE - ANA GRACE ACADEMY OF THE ARTS, BLOOMFIELD
KENDRICK MOORE - CAS-CIAC, CHESHIRE
CHERESE ODUKWE - CAS-CIAC, CHESHIRE
KURT OGREN - WOODLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, BEACON FALLS
GINA RIVERA - CHARTER OAK INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY, WEST HARTFORD
HENRY RONDON, CAS-CIAC, CHESHIRE
ALICIA SWEET DAWE - STONINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, PAWCATUCK
STAFFORD THOMAS - STAPLES HIGH SCHOOL, WESTPORT



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