

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting

May 11, 2006

2005-2006 ANNUAL REPORT

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Submitted by Gina Vance, Chair

The 2005-2006 school year has been a year of expanding programs and services for the elementary schools of Connecticut. A major goal and focus this year was to further our collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education. This was accomplished by CAS and the SDE working together in sponsoring several workshops and conferences. In October, The Connecticut Association of Schools' (CAS), elementary division, (CAESP), and the Connecticut State Department of Education collaborated in presenting four science education workshops during the week of October 17 -21 to principals, administrators and teachers. Dr. Lawrence Lowery, professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkley, and the Principal Investigator for the FOSS Science Curriculum Program, presented "Minds-On Science" at EASTCONN, Education Connection and the Orange Marriott. Through a mix of lecture, group work and hands-on activities, he engaged participants in learning how current research on brain development could improve curriculum design and teaching strategies. The Friday session, held at CAS, was focused specifically for principals and administrators, dealing with assessing the effectiveness of science teaching, how to assess what children have learned and how to support teachers teaching science, including providing time for science learning experiences and high quality science instructional materials. In March, CAS and CSDE jointly sponsored the "First Annual Public School Data Showcase", facilitated by Dr. Douglas Reeves. "The two day event was held at the Connecticut Grand Hotel in Waterbury and drew over 400 participants, in addition to special presentations to the Connecticut State Board of Education and to a group from Higher Education. Plans are already in place for the Second Annual Public School Data Showcase next April at the Connecticut Convention Center.

Our Fall 2005 workshop featuring Dr. Douglas Reeves focused on the use of data in school improvement, "*Beyond Islands of Excellence: The Journey From Isolated Improvement To System Wide Success.*" Principals of schools not making average yearly progress (AYP) had their registrations paid for by a SDE grant. Other goals enumerated in the document that follows include: Starting a Retired Principals' Council, improving and expanding our resources on the CAS website, using SDE people as consultants to the CAESP Board and our Professional Studies Committee when planning staff development opportunities for principals and teachers, and networking with SDE representatives to serve on SDE committees as appropriate. The elementary division serves close to 700 public, private and Catholic schools throughout the state. This was a year of continued growth in services provided by the various committees under the direction of the CAESP Board. The CAESP Board continues to assess the needs of its member schools in the areas of professional development and recognition for schools, principals, teachers, parents and students.

ELEMENTARY BOARD 2005 - 2006

The Connecticut Association of Elementary Schools Principals, CAESP (Chaired by Gina Vance, Vice Principal, Gideon Wells Elementary School, Glastonbury) - The Board devoted much of the year implementing and reviewing the Three-Year Plan adopted in the 2003-2004 school year. A number of Board members attended the Northeast Regional Elementary School Principals' Council held in New Hampshire in early December. The Northeast Council consists of the following states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Next year Rhode Island will host this annual meeting of states. The Board also coordinated a large CT delegation to the NAESP Convention in San Antonio Texas where they were feted to a special dinner on behalf of CAS and Knowledge Industries, Inc.

ELEMENTARY COMMITTEES 2005-2006

- **Elementary Program Committee** – Co-chaired by Renata Lantos, Principal, Bielefield School, Middletown and Gina Vance, Principal of Gideon Wells School in Glastonbury. This committee planned and carried out two conferences this year. The CAS Fall Conference featuring Dr. Douglas Reeves and the Spring Conference featuring Tony Flach, both from the Center for Performance Assessment. Dr. Betty Sternberg, Connecticut's Commissioner of Education, will be the keynote luncheon speaker at the Spring Conference..
- **Elementary Level Professional Studies Committee** - (Chaired by Bridget Braney, Principal, Orchard Hill School in South Windsor). This very active committee held four fall workshops featuring the nation's top guru in Science, Dr. Larry Lowery, presenting at four Connecticut locations. The winter CMT workshops were held in January at CAS and LEARN featuring Patty Foley, from the CSDE School Improvement and Literacy Unit and Charlene Tate-Nichols from the CSDE Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction Mathematics Unit. They presented the updated information on student assessment, and changes in the CMT's. These workshops were attended by more than 100 principals from across the state.

- **Elementary Leadership Conference Committee** (Chaired by Jean Barbaro, Teacher, Anna Reynolds School, Newington; & Co-Chaired by Lauren Elias, Principal, Tinker School, Waterbury) Connecticut students in grades four and five could attend either of two statewide leadership conferences sponsored by CAS. The first was held at Naugatuck Valley College in Waterbury, the second at Asnuntuck College in Enfield. Attendance at both conferences were higher than usual and over 200 parents of student attendees attended a parent workshop on Leadership. Because of the new dates for the CMTs this year we moved both workshops from March to January. The move proved to be a good one.
 - **Environmental Science Conference Committee** (Chaired by Howard Reed, Principal of Hooker Elementary, Bridgeport.) This Committee organizes the Annual Environmental Science Conference for elementary school students throughout the State. This year's conference was again sponsored by the Long Island Sound Foundation and **eesmarts**, a division of United Illuminating. It was held at Wesleyan University and had the higher number of student registrants than usual. This student conference was also moved out of March and held in January due to the change of date this year for the CMTs.
- For the third consecutive year Marine Science Day will be held at the University of Connecticut at Avery Point, New London. This should enable us to accommodate the number of schools we had to turn away in previous years. This year I am happy to report that over 400 students will be attending Marine Science Day on May 12, 2006. Two boats are being used to conduct classes for students while doing hands-on activities in Long Island Sound.
- **CAS Arts Committee** (Chaired by Maureen Berescik, Assistant Principal at Bethel High School) –The task of this Committee is to give public recognition to the Arts in general and to students and teachers who excel in the visual and performing arts. This was the seventh year that the committee sponsored the Elementary Arts Festival where two elementary students from each school are recognized for excelling in either the visual or the performing arts. This year, for the fifth time, two evenings had to be devoted to the event because of the number of schools participating. It is anticipated that next year we will have to go for three nights. More and more of CAS's 700 elementary schools are participating in this
 - **National Distinguished Principal Selection Committee** – A sub-committee was formed to select Connecticut's National Distinguished Principal for 2006. Following the guidelines established by NAESP, the committee members were selected by the CAESP Board based on applications received from those individuals interested in serving on this committee. The selected committee members reviewed applications and portfolio information and then visited the schools of the four finalists before making their final selection. The winner was Loretta Rubin, principal of Farm Hill School, Middletown, who was selected as Connecticut's NDP for 2006.
 - **Volunteer Parent Recognition Awards Committee** – plans the annual Parent Volunteer Recognition Banquet. Each year this Awards dinner grows as more and more schools feel a need to recognize volunteers. This year approximately 650 educators and volunteers were in attendance.

ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES 2005-06

1. **The Annual Elementary Program Recognition Banquet** - This banquet is planned by CAESP Board members each year. Teachers and staff involved in the programs being recognized accept plaques on behalf of their schools. The banquet this year is scheduled for May 4th. Dr. Camille Vautour, Superintendent of Schools in Rocky Hill will be the guest speaker and Frances Rabinowitz, CSDE, Associate Commissioner will present the awards. A program booklet, listing in paragraph format all the programs being recognized, will be distributed to attending schools. Hopefully many of these excellent programs will be replicated in other schools throughout the state. Teachers Insurance Plan sponsored this special event.
2. **The Governor's Summer Reading Program** - This event is co-sponsored annually by CAS in conjunction with the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Governor's office. Students are encouraged to read books over the summer. The school submits a tally, and those schools having the largest percentage of books read are declared winners and are recognized personally by the Governor at a special ceremony in their honor..
3. **Parent Volunteer Recognition Banquet** - A most successful fourth year program. Co-chaired by Mark Proffitt, Principal, Spencer School, Middletown; Lou Pear, Principal, Myrtle H. Stevens School, Rocky Hill; and Gina Vance, Assistant Principal, Glastonbury and Renata Lantos, Principal, Bielefield Elementary School, Middletown. The program rewards the efforts of school volunteers across the state. Each awardee received a framed certificate and a booklet listing all who have been honored. Arbella Insurance was the sponsor of this special event.
4. **Annual Recognition Awards** – Awards given by the elementary division annually are: National Distinguished Principal, Teacher of the Year, School of the Year, Educational Project Grant, Exemplary Principal Program Award for Special Education, The Marjorie Bradley Curriculum Award, William Cieslukowski First Year Principal Award (Aug.), John Wallace Awards for sons or daughters of CAS members who go into teaching or teachers going into administration, John C. Mulrain Community Service Award, and Thomas R. Flanagan Student Activity Memorial Grant.
5. **Elementary School Blood Drive Program** - The Elementary Division of CAS and the American Red Cross teamed up for the seventh year to continue this program in our elementary schools. The objective of the program is to provide students an opportunity to make a difference by sponsoring a blood drive at their school or co-sponsoring a blood drive in their community. The goal next year is to have over 150 of our elementary schools holding blood drives. What a great way to teach youngsters about community service, and while doing so, save lives. This is the second year that CAS is receiving the Governor's Award – the only recipient of this award ever to have received it a second time. Quite a distinction for CAS because it recognizes that CAS is a leader among the states in fostering schools to run blood drives.
6. **Catholic School Technology Conference** – This Conference was two years in the planning. It was attended by Catholic school

administrators and technology personnel from each of the three Catholic dioceses – the Archdiocese of Hartford and the dioceses of Norwich and Bridgeport. It was the first time that a program was held that brought educators of the three dioceses together. Hopefully, other opportunities will enable the three dioceses to plan programs together and meet their common needs.

7. **National Honor Society Fundraiser** – With the help of President Don Gates, the CANHS has been asked to undertake two fundraisers this year. 1) Assist a young 10 year old boy in Sri Lanka suffering with a potentially fatal bone marrow disease called Aplastic Anemia. His name is Uditha. This medication will allow this boy to survive and cover some important medical expenses. 2) The second fundraiser will assist families in Sri Lanka by helping families rebuild their homes. For every \$4000 raised by CANHS will allow them to sponsor a family and rebuild their home. Every National Honor Chapter has been asked to contribute a minimum of \$100. Each chapter will earmark which fundraiser they would like their monies to be applied to.
8. **Family's Role is Student CMT Performance** – A CAS Committee of principals, superintendents and a number of State Department of Education consultants is looking at the achievement gap that exists when students began their formal education and looking for ways to provide a level playing field for all students. We know the achievement gap only gets wider as students move up the grade and parental involvement in the early years is critical to a child's success in school. A pilot project with Federal, State and corporate dollars hopefully will improve CMT test scores thereby leaving no child behind. Senator Christopher Dodd, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and Ct's Commissioner of Education, Dr. Betty Sternberg have given their support to this very interesting project that hopefully will improve test scores on the fourth grade CMTs
9. **Getting Retired Principals to Remain Active in CAS** – A Retired Principals Luncheon is being held of Thursday, June 8th, for all retired CAS principals. The purpose is to take advantage of their expertise in a number of areas resulting from their many years in education. They are needed as mentors to new principals who will actually be able to spend time in a mentee's school. They can provide workshops in their specialty areas, operate a CAS Principals Hotline and numerous other projects. These and other ways to use their talents from time to time will be discussed at this luncheon. CAS could also sponsor workshops and conference breakout sessions and other activities that could help meet the needs of our retired administrators.
10. **Flanagan Monetary Awards** – given annually to schools needing funds to conduct worthwhile school based student projects. Schools are encouraged to apply for these SABC competitive grants

2005 – 2006 PROGRESS ON THREE YEAR PLAN

- In addition to the goal progress enumerated in the introduction, such as networking with the SDE and the establishment of regional networks with regional directors and regional services, progress was made in the following areas as well:
- **Establishing A Retired Principal's Council** – The Elementary Retired Principal's Council is merging with the Middle and Secondary levels. The Council is planning a retirees luncheon in June and hopes to recruit retired principals to help with mentoring and input on committees. WE will honor this year's retirees and invite them to join the Council.
- **Improving & Expanding Resources on the CAS Website** - A number of e-mail alerts regarding upcoming CAS and CAESP events and activities were posted on the site this year. All of our events increased in number as a result. Registration for workshops, conferences and events online has been very well received.
- **Using SDE Personnel As Consultants to the CAESP Board and Various Committees** – State Department consultants work very closely with the CAESP Board, Program Committee, and the Professional Studies Committee in planning our statewide conferences and other staff development opportunities for Connecticut principals.
- **Servicing More Urban Leaders**—Through our professional development mentor/mentee program we are servicing more urban leaders. We continue to discuss and are hopeful to begin to schedule meetings in different RESC areas. As our professional development committee has done in CMT information and science workshops. We will encourage participation in our association at these meetings where we seem to be attracting more and more participation.
- **Increasing NEASP Membership.** Lou Pear is overseeing this effort and encourages our new administrator mentees to become members at the local and national levels. Most new administrators who participated in our mentee program were from districts who are already CAS members.

Board member Renata Lantos has been instrumental in coordinating our science workshops and chairing conferences and programs this year and it to be recognized for her efforts. Lou Pear continues to represent us well as state representative for the state NAESP, and Ed Handi has represented us with federal relations. Rose Anne O'Brien-Vojtek and Dale Bernardoni are to be recognized for their efforts on behalf of the professional studies committee. They assisted in changing the criteria for our program recognition which now welcomes celebrating schools' successes and will be working on a publication on school success over the next year. And, I would like to take the opportunity to thank our new assistant executive director, Regina Birdsell, on behalf of the CAESP. She has excelled at her work at the State Department which has brought hundreds of administrators together at three workshops all focused on student learning.