

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting

May 22, 2009

2008-2009 Annual Report

CONNECTICUT STUDENT ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE BOARD OF CONTROL

Submitted by Scott Leslie, Chair

The Connecticut Student Activities Conference Board of Control met three times during the 2008-09 academic year, fulfilling its mission of meeting the expanding and evolving needs of non-athletic student activities. With its eye on the future potential growth of student activities across the state, the board moved forward with implementing a series of new initiatives for students to develop leadership skills in service to their respective schools/communities.

The following is a brief summary of CSAC initiatives and standard committee reports for 08-09.

Student Leadership Conferences

The Connecticut Association of Student Councils sponsored five half-day workshops in addition to the popular overnight conference at Wesleyan University in March. The half-day workshops were planned in conjunction with the Berkshire, Southwest, Eastern, Naugatuck and Central Athletic Leagues. Lewis Mills, Masuk, Manchester, Griswold and Holy Cross hosted the programs that featured amazing speakers and break-outs that explored the themes of 21st century skills. More than 900 student leaders participated in these workshops – an all time record! A summer leadership camp opportunity with specific activities linked to 21st century skills is planned for Connecticut high school student leaders at Nichols College, MA, in July.

CAS also hosted an advisors workshop on October 1st that provided advisors with a toolkit of ideas and strategies to jumpstart their programs for the new academic year.

Future student leadership initiatives and conferences will be aligned to the curricular modules of service, ethics, decision making, team building and communication that are being developed by CASC Director Sarah Jones. It is also anticipated that the goals and objectives of the CIAC Sportsmanship Committee, chaired by Karissa Neihoff, will be tied to future leadership conferences offered next year.

RSVP

On November 19th, Bolton High School sponsored an RSVP workshop for CAS member schools. RSVP stands for Raising Student Voice and Participation, a leadership program endorsed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The number one goal of RSVP is to increase student involvement in the key decisions that really matter to students. RSVP asks students what they care about; what actions need to be taken in cooperation with the school faculty; and how might action plans be implemented for positive change. Ten high schools – fifty participants – were trained by Karen Cordero, student council advisor, in this exciting civic-minded program.

Geno's Cancer Team

The CSAC Board hosted Hall of Fame Women's Basketball Coach Geno Auriemma at a press conference on November 17th. Coach Auriemma and his Cancer Team were placed on the approved list of student activities that morning before a large crowd of dignitaries and member school groups who have been doing charitable activities in the area of cancer awareness. The audience heard moving stories from elementary, middle and high school students who, through student activities, have reached out to raise funds and spread the message of caring for others. Auriemma noted, "One of the reasons why I like this collaboration is that it is not about you personally winning the game or your team beating another team. It is a lot bigger than that." Many schools followed Auriemma's lead and undertook philanthropic student activities this year to promote service and charitable contributions to their schools/communities.

Dance Championships

The 3rd state dance championship was held at Branford High School on February 28th. A record number of teams – 41 – entered the event witnessed by a standing room only crowd. Teams were crowned champs in the hip hop, jazz and pom categories. Most impressive was the display of sportsmanship and cheering by all the teams for one another.

Cheerleading

Kudos to the Cheerleading Committee, chaired by Jackie Sullivan, for another outstanding year of regional competitions leading up to the states at the New Haven Athletic Center on March 13 and 14. More than 100 schools participated in the competition which drew large, spirited crowds on both dates. Connecticut High School Cheerleading also represented the state in fine fashion at the New England championships.

Debate

Under the direction of newly appointed chair Jeremy White, Social Studies teacher at Stamford High School, the Connecticut Debate Association had a busy year. Six regional extemporaneous debates were held in 2008-09 leading up to the state championships at Amity High School on March 28th. A spring workshop is planned in an effort to recruit interested schools to get on board with this “higher order thinking skill” activity!

Thomas Flanagan Student Activity Awards

In spite of the loss of the sponsor who provided grant awards, the CSAC board modified the program this year and offered member schools an opportunity to recognize their top student activities. The board plans to make on-site presentations to elementary, middle and high schools who are selected for their significant contributions through student activities.

State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE)

The State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE) consisted of twenty seven high school students who met regularly with the Commissioner of Education. Their projects this year included examining ways students could provide feedback to teachers for improvement of instruction and testifying on state legislation to have at least one student representative on each board of education. They also selected the recipients of the Challenge to Citizenship Awards that are an annual recognition of high school and middle schools community service projects.

The Governor’s Scholars Committee

Chaired by Laura Ferrante-Fernandes, assistant principal of Masuk High School, the committee annually designates Connecticut’s finest junior year students as *Governor’s Scholars*. Formed thirteen years ago at the urging of then Commissioner of Education Ted Sergi, the program has been sponsored for the past eight years by Big Y World Class Markets. Each honoree receives a Governor’s Scholars certificate from CAS and the thirty finalists are celebrated in May at the Governor’s Scholars Luncheon. Finalists receive monetary stipends, plaques and the opportunity to take free courses at thirty-three Connecticut colleges and universities. The University of Connecticut offers each scholar who matriculates there a scholarship valued at half tuition for four years.

The Arts Committee

Co-chaired by Maureen Berescik, director of arts for the Bethel Public Schools, and Laura Ferrante-Fernandes, assistant principal of Masuk High School, this committee annually plans the high school arts banquet recognizing two outstanding arts students from each high school. One hundred thirty four high schools were represented at this year’s banquet. Since its inception fourteen years ago, the program has been sponsored by the Westfield Corporation. Josten’s joined the program this year as a co-sponsor. The three Westfield centers will provide student artists and performers the opportunity to share their work; and three students will be selected for the *Bruce Eagleson Memorial Scholarship Awards* based on voting by visitors at the centers. One \$1000 and two \$500 scholarships will be awarded.

The Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies

Under the direction of executive director Don Gates, CANHS was awarded the prestigious *Ardis Kyker Service Award* at the National Conference of Honor Societies this fall. The award recognized the CANHS service project which featured the preparation of 500 gift packs for Connecticut veterans living at or receiving services from the Rocky Hill Veterans Home. The project was designed to promote community service and encourage giving back to people who put their lives on the line for our country. On May 28th, CANHS will host its spring conference with the theme of “Generation To Generation,” a planned connection of NHS students with senior citizens in another creative service project.