

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The Fifty-Eighth Annual Meeting

May 13, 2010

2009-2010 Annual Report

CONNECTICUT STUDENT ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE BOARD OF CONTROL

Submitted by Scott Leslie, Chair

The Connecticut Student Activities Conference oversaw an expanding number of activities during the 2009-10 academic year, fulfilling its mission of meeting the evolving needs of non-athletic student activities throughout our member schools. 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 school / communities.

The following is a brief summary of CSAC initiatives for 09-10:

• **Student Leadership Conferences**

The Connecticut Association of Student Councils, led by Executive Director Sarah Jones, Manchester High School, sponsored six half-day workshops in addition to the popular overnight conference in March at Wesleyan University. The half-day workshops were planned in conjunction with the Berkshire, Southwest, Eastern, Naugatuck, Technical and Central Athletic Leagues. Lewis Mills, Pomperaug, Naugatuck, Griswold, E.C. Goodwin and Rocky Hill High Schools hosted the programs that featured amazing speakers and break-outs that explored the themes of 21st century leadership skills. More than 1000 student leaders participated in these workshops! A summer leadership camp opportunity with specific activities linked to 21st century leadership skills is planned for Connecticut high school student leaders at Nichols College, MA, in July.

The Elementary Student Leadership conferences were held for the 17th consecutive year at Asnuntuck and Naugatuck Community Colleges. An additional site was added to the program at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich. In total, the three conferences enrolled more than 600 students, an all-time high. Co-Chairs Jean Barbaro, Lauren Elias and Chris Pomroy coordinated the programs that featured teacher volunteers from across the state providing highly interactive leadership activities for students in grades four through six.

CSAC also hosted a student activity advisors workshop on November 13 that provided faculty advisors with a toolkit of ideas and strategies to jump start their programs for the new academic year. The featured keynote session was led by Attorney Julie Fay, who explored the legal ramifications for advisors in the digital / social networking age that we all find ourselves immersed in! 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 Sarah Jones and her advisory board. It is also anticipated that the goals and objectives of the CIAC Sportsmanship Committee will be linked to future leadership conferences offered next year.

• **KiDSMARATHON**

After a successful pilot project with KiDSMARATHON in 2009, CSAC launched the 2010 program with a press conference anchored by Jocelyn Maminta, News Channel 8 Health Education Coordinator on February 25th. Working with the Rod Dixon Foundation in Los Angeles, CA, CSAC put together our Connecticut version of KiDSMARATHON, an amazing life fitness program for students ages 7-12 that features an 8-10 week program of running with nutritional guidelines. Final celebrations are set later this spring at Southington and Norwich as over 1,000 runners are set to complete their last mile in a marathon before cheering family and friends. KiDSMARATHON is very fortunate to have received corporate sponsorship from Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and Sodexo Foods. The prospects for this initiative, aligned with First Lady Michelle O'Bama's "Let's Move Campaign", are bright.

• **Dance Championships**

The 4th annual state dance championship was held at Hamden High School on February 27th. A record number of dance team entries – 48 – competed in the event witnessed by a standing room only crowd. Teams were crowned champs in the hip hop, jazz, kick and pom categories. Most impressive was the display of cheering and sportsmanship by all the teams for one another.

• **Cheerleading**

Kudos to the Cheer Committee, chaired by Jackie Sullivan, for another outstanding year of regional competitions leading up to the state championship at the New Haven Athletic Center on March 12 and 13. 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.

• **Robotics**

CSAC established a new partnership with CT First, an organization that sponsors Robotics Tournaments for elementary, middle and high school teams. CT First's goal is to inspire in students an appreciation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to show them how an understanding of these fields can enrich their lives. CSAC hosted a workshop for high school teams in March and invited all interested high schools to visit the regional competition in April in Hartford. The prospects for this partnership are limitless as students build not only science and technology skills, but also self-confidence, leadership, and life skills.

• **Debate**

Under the direction of newly appointed chair, Everett Rutan, the Connecticut Debate Association had a terrific year. Six regional extemporaneous debates were held in 2009-10 leading up to the state championships at Amity High School on March 27th. Each regional tournament averaged over 25 schools and 250 students participating in each tournament! A fall workshop was held at CAS in an effort to recruit interested schools to get on board with this "higher order thinking skill" activity!

• **Geno's Reading Team**

This fall over 70 elementary schools signed up with Coach Geno Auriemma's Reading Team, a program designed to encourage students to read at least 20 minutes daily. The CAS Elementary Board developed a syllabus of books that were jointly read by the UCONN Women's Basketball Team and elementary students. Videos were posted by the UCONN players for the teachers and students to view. Coach Auriemma invited all the schools to attend a pep rally in January, jointly sponsored by CAS and ESPN's first "Woman's College Game Day". Over 1,000 student members of "Geno's Reading Team" attended the pep rally.

• **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 with an opportunity to *recognize* their top student activities. CSAC board members plan to make on-site presentations later this May to elementary, middle and high schools who were selected for their significant contribution to their school / community through exemplary 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 Dr. Mark McQuillan, the Commissioner of Education. The SSACE number one project this year produced a "Teacher Feedback Form" that was pilot tested in a number of high schools. The form permits high school students with a vehicle to provide instructional feedback to their teacher in a non-threatening manner. The initial reaction to the document was very favorable. SSACE also selected the recipients of the Governor's Challenge to Citizenship Awards that are an annual recognition of school / community service projects.

• **The Governor's Scholars Committee**

Chaired by Laura Ferrante-Fernandes, Assistant Principal, Jockey Hollow School, the committee annually designates Connecticut's finest junior year students as *Governors' Scholars*. Formed fourteen years ago at the urging of then Commissioner of Education Ted Sergi, the program has been sponsored for the past ten years by Big Y World Class markets. Each selected school nominee 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 Beresick, Director of Arts for the Bethel Public Schools and Laura Ferrante-Fernandes, Assistant Principal, Jockey Hollow Middle School, this committee annually plans the high school arts banquet recognizing two outstanding arts students from each high school. One hundred thirty five high schools were represented this year. The arts committee is very pleased to have Josten's as a corporate sponsor.

• **The Connecticut Association of National Honor Societies**

Under the direction of Don Gates, Executive Director, CANHS embarked on another impressive service project this fall. Working with Tom Murphy from the CT Department of Education, the executive leadership spearheaded the development of a monograph entitled, "Intergenerational Activity Guidebook". The document features cross age activities that encourage NHS members to get involved with nursing homes and senior centers throughout Connecticut. The booklet was mailed to every middle and senior high school honor society chapter in an effort to encourage service projects. On May 27th CANHS will host its annual spring conference for all middle and high school chapters of the National Honor Society .